

BIOGRAPHY OF PAUL HERBERT COLLINS

by *Mark Hutchinson*

**Collins, Paul Herbert (born 8 Nov 1936, Christchurch, New Zealand -),
and Alexandra ‘Bunty’.**

Pentecostal evangelists, missionaries, church planter, and teachers/ publishers.

The son of a prominent Christchurch businessman, Collins grew up in a Methodist home in which his mother (‘a beautiful, gentle lady’) was a keen church-goer, but his father was for some time fairly nominal. Paul’s early goal was to play rugby for New Zealand, and indeed rose to the level of playing first grade for the Canterbury Crusaders with many who went on to play for the All Blacks. As a young man, he was involved in the family company (Collins’ Quick Lunch Parlours), and left school at St Andrew’s College to become an apprentice pastry cook. The suggestion at the time was that he and his father go into catering for weddings, but the sale of the business and his own re-direction towards interior design in a department store saw him move to design education at Canterbury University. The disturbing factor was his conversion in the Methodist church.

Alan Collins heard preaching in the park in Christchurch, and was dramatically converted into the Salvation Army during a ‘very deep visitation’ in that movement in the early 1930s. Though facing persecution in his own ‘very godless family’, he would preach on street corners in his uniform, and went on to train in the Salvation Army College. Just before World War II, he left the Salvation Army (as Paul remembers from feelings of inadequacy in the roles he played) and joined the YMCA. Through WWII he was a YMCA officer, preaching to troops in the Middle East and providing chaplaincy services. Returning to Christchurch after the war, he became President of the YMCA. In terms of churchgoing, they joined a Methodist church in which the revival tradition of Wesley still had significant echoes, and so it was there in 1949 that the 13 year old Paul confessed personal faith in Christ.

Drafted into the army at the age of 19, Paul began to meet people of faith and his faith ‘really came alive in a new kind of way.’ This gave him a passion to see non-churchgoers become involved in the church, and perhaps his father’s YMCA connections saw him begin to reach out to youth. Resigning his bible class leadership, in 1956 he convinced his local church that there was a need for a youth

club. He opened the club in a church hall, and used his rugby connections to develop a sense of camaraderie and outreach. (This latter also showed his lifelong entrepreneurial flair – he raised the money for club uniforms by buying tickets to the Springboks test in Christchurch and selling them back at a higher price). The club ran gymnastics, formed a library, and he played jazz and Peter Marshall records to them. It was at a camp for the club – organised with the help of his father and his brother Terry – that he had his first opportunity to preach. Ivor Powell, the Welsh evangelist, had just been through town, and the small group of young men that Paul took to hear him had accepted Christ as Saviour. (Powell’s tours of South Africa and Australasia c. 1949 produced a great crop of converts, and energised the church) Paul went up on a water tower sought God for a message to preach, and came down with a message on the talents. Despite his own personal doubts about the quality, numbers of young people were profoundly moved. In chat sessions that ran all night, one by one, 114 young people confessed faith in Christ. This, and his father’s conversion experience in Salvation Army revival, left him with a de facto theory about God’s action as happening through sovereign visitation rather than through personal talent. This sovereignty would be what he relied on for eventual justification of his determination to set his own path – his father was preaching that Sunday at Bryndwr Methodist chapel, and had many of the young people who were converted give their testimonies. The fruit of the much criticised youth club was sufficient to silence its critics.

This experience produced a personal crisis – Paul had to choose between his career (design), his sport (rugby) and his calling. He had begun as assistant window dresser, rising to running whole household displays (‘a whole household for £911’) It was there amidst his work at McKenzie and Willis (founded in 1906 but then operating out of the old Queen’s Theatre site at 120 Hereford Street) that he heard God prompt him to enter ministry full time. After discussion with Merv Betts and his father, in 1957 he decided to train at the YMCA College in Sydney just as the family’s Methodist experience was being augmented by visits to Sydenham AOG. (Later, as we shall see, this connection with Sydenham AOG and the ministry of Dennis Barton would become important for the larger charismatic movement in Australasia.) A brief visit there before leaving impressed him deeply – walking into the meeting, he saw David Bridges (later principal of Commonwealth Bible College, Sydney) playing in the spirit on the piano as the congregation raised their hands and worshipped God. He remembers thinking to himself ‘I’m sure it must have been like this for Israel’. Having come from an old school family not given to

showing affection, this integration of emotional as well as intellectual and professional life was refreshing.

Paul trained in Sydney and helped in lay ministry in the Homebush Methodist church 1957-8. He studied under people such as Alan Loy and Doug Sharp, and returned briefly for his twenty first birthday late in the first year. His brother Terry had continued connection with Sydenham AOG and Percy Gosling's small Miracle Revival Fellowship, and had been baptised in the Holy Spirit. The comparison with his own experience in a school dominated by liberal theology could not have been more marked. Going to a prophetic ministry at an independent house meeting, Paul and Des Short received prayer, resulting in a prophecy that while Des would be a prophet to his own nation, Paul would go to many nations. Short's ministry would indeed be located largely at Faith Bible College, outside Tauranga (founded 1969), but this was the first inkling Paul had of his future direction. Shortly after this he was baptised in the Holy Spirit. The experience saw him rise up against the liberal teaching in his College, leading to a marked confrontation. More positively, Paul and fellow YMCA student Margaret Piper were invited to cooperate with the fledgling Australian television industry, which had a statutory requirement to allow 1% of air time for religious programming. Harry Howlett (the original 'Dave' from 'Dad and Dave', and a writer/producer on such programs as The Air Adventures of Biggles (2GB and 2CH 1949-1954); Bottle Castle (2CH, 1951); and Coffee Time (AWA) etc) produced a live program modelled on an American original, called 'Youth Wants to Know', on which two young men and two young women responded to phone inquiries. It was here that Paul met a young Baptist girl by the name of Alexandra (or 'Bunty' to her friends) who was connected to the WEC missionary agency. 'She gave all of her money to missions', Paul remembers.

After graduation, he returned to New Zealand in late 1958 and took over the North Shore YMCA in Auckland. Despite, or perhaps because, of his opposition to secular practices entering the organisation, the youth work of the YMCA grew rapidly. The organisational and management level of his work, however, irked – he desired to be free to do ministry. He prayed for an evangelical to replace him, after which he and his brother Terry went off to Tauranga to study at Rob Wheeler's 3 month bible college. It was an experience which taught them faithfulness through adversity, and which also introduced them not only to Wheeler's revivalist ministry but also the ministry of A. S. Worley, whose dynamic campaigns through Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand were to do much to spread the

emphases of E. W. Kenyon and others in the word-faith movement. Wheeler had been influenced by Ray Jackson and the Latter Rain/ Bethel Temple traditions, with their emphases on restorationism, perfectionism, and the laying on of hands, while Worley (who had been invited by Len Jones to replace a cancelled Tommy Hicks campaign) was a living link to the Healing Revival in the USA which was dominated by William Marion Branham and Oral Roberts.

Worley's campaign in the Centennial Hall in Timaru had remarkable results, requiring a part time lecturer at Tauranga (Ron Coady) and the now 21-year old Paul to travel to Timaru to assist in the campaigns. Under Worley, they both learned to pray in faith for miracles and to see the miraculous as a path towards conversion. 'I observed how he ministered, and he would pray for people "In the name of Jesus, be healed!" So, I get up there and I minister – there is a big crowd, and I minister and they come forward. I prayed for people "In the name of Jesus, be healed!" – and they were! So that launched me.' Collins and Coady began touring the South Island with remarkable results, and despite the fact that Coady was his senior, he gave Paul equal profile in the campaigns. Though not without press and other opposition, full page advertisements, direct invitations, circulation of Coady's Revival News magazine, and remarkable miracles ('in those days, nine out of ten people were getting healed') fuelled significant outreach throughout New Zealand: Waimate (over 80 people converted), Invercargill (200 people converted), Gore (600 converted out of a population of 5000) etc. Not only was Paul discovering himself (he actually opened the Gore campaign by himself, to be joined several days later by Coady) but at the height of the campaigns, he put faith to the test and wrote to Bunty, proposing marriage with the words 'I know what the will of the Lord is, it is time you found out too.' After a nervous three week wait, he finally heard back – 'Yes.' While they were waiting for Bunty to come to New Zealand, Paul connected her to a close friend of Peter Morrow's, the part-aboriginal prophetess, Evie Nicholson, who lived in Surry Hills. After several visits, Evie prayed for the young Baptist woman, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul prepared to leave New Zealand, heading home to Christchurch to combine family affairs with mission preparation and a number of revival meetings. These latter, held in Riccarton Town Hall, resulted in some 60 decisions and healings which (such as that experienced by Kindah Greening's deliverance from tuberculosis) launched people into ministry. The group of about 250 who gathered from this experience was taken over by Paul's brother, Terry, as a weekly meeting to which a variety of ministries (such as Rob Wheeler) were invited. As many of these people

were still linked to denominational churches (Anne Morrow, for instance, who was then a member of the Baptist church who played piano for Paul's Riccarton campaign) they deliberately tried to avoid founding a new church. It was difficult to maintain the momentum, however, and Terry left to pioneer in Dunedin while Peter Morrow took over in Christchurch, holding meetings at the YMCA before moving along to the Horticultural Hall and then later the New Life Centre. The growth of a new denomination out of this, and its later reorganisation under Max Palmer was to leave the Collins' out in the cold, an event which only reinforced Paul's early restorationist suspicion of organisation and ecclesial control.

Paul and Bunty were married in Sydney in 1961, living on Balmoral beach with Alexandra's parents. Ever the activist, Paul began small meetings through his Methodist connections, but though the meetings were good, they 'had a growing feeling about Asia'. Bunty's long existing missionary call and Paul's pioneering spirit prompted them to pray about going overseas, perhaps to somewhere others did not want to go. They started to prepare, and then suddenly a rush of information seemed to point them towards Thailand. Delegation and meetings in preparation drew them into 1962, a time punctuated by the birth of their first child, David, on 16 April, 10 weeks before they were due to leave on P&O's Arcadia passenger liner for Hong Kong. (The largest passenger liner east of Suez at the time, the Arcadia docked in Sydney on 4 July carrying among others Spike Milligan and his wife. In February the next year, on the way back to England, it developed engine trouble at Mumbai in India. The ship remained a popular cruise ship until the late 1970s. In 1979 she was sold as scrap.) It was a great adventure, while the poverty and need of Asia cried out in Manila, Hong Kong and Bangkok in such a way that they would never truly be able to detach themselves from Asia again. Meeting Paul Kauffman (1920-1997) and a number of other missionaries on the way also laid the ground for work beyond Thailand. (Kauffman, a Canadian, began the ministry in Hong Kong in 1966 – by his death it had grown to cover 20 countries and over 30 offices).

Typical of the anti-organisational bent of the early latter rain movement, the Collins' left with no organisational or denominational backing – as Ron Coady reported, they were leaving with 'no organisational support but God.' He appealed for people to remember them 'in a practical way' as well. (At first Paul's father handled any support that came their way, though in time their support was organised through Coady's 'Faith Enterprises', based in Nelson). In addition to

monetary support, however, they arrived in Bangkok on a Swedish tramp steamer without visas, and bearing three different passports (Paul – NZ, Bunty – British, David – Australian). They moved in next door to some Canadian Assemblies of God missionaries, but found themselves locked out of the normal missionary networks because of denominational rivalries and an anti-latter rain reflex among North American classical Pentecostals. Finally, they found friends among the Finnish Free Mission, who connected Paul to a translator (Brother Zombart, later Thailand director for Asian Outreach) who became a life long friend.

Wanting to avoid competition and to prove God, Paul told his Finnish associates that he want to ‘go where no-one has gone’. Through Len Jones Paul had been greatly influenced by T L Osborn’s films, considering him then ‘the best evangelist in the world’. His first ideas about Thai mission were thus influenced by Osborn, taking form as a tent crusade. Eight hundred people turned up on the first night, and Paul began to preach in his usual latter rain fashion. He was quite disconcerted to find the audience break out laughing – the loud to and fro of the translation looked, to these rural people, as if a fight had broken out between the speaker and the translator. It was his first lesson in cultural sensitivity – he had to learn to bring the gospel in more potent ways to a nation so vast (in comparison to New Zealand) that all their preaching would not enable them to reach the whole nation. He determined on developing a literature ministry fitted to the circumstances and sent back a dramatic appeal to New Zealand:

s.o.s. s.o.s.

From Thailand

The following communique has just been received from Paul and Bunty Collins in Thailand—

"We are challenged by the fact . . . Literature gets results like nothing else can. It is only the mass media like literature that can make it possible to reach these people.

Thirty million people here are racing to a lost eternity!"

"Can You Help?" - "Could You Raise £1000 for literature? "

We could reach 500,000 people with the Gospel.

Men and Women of New Zealand. Will YOU help us to raise this necessary finance to stop the onrush of Atheistic Communism in Thailand and turn these masses to CHRIST?

Send in your Gift to-day, to—
FAITH ENTERPRISES,
BOX 11, NELSON,
and mark it "FOR THAILAND". (Revival News, August 1963, p. 7)

Within 5 weeks, Coady had the money collected, handing the cheque to Paul's father as a special service. Paul and Bunty wrote back about the book bicycles, wind up gospel recordings, and newspaper distribution that they had commenced: "Out in the villages of Chiangmai Province one of our workers distributes full time, village by village, house by house.

"In Bangkok, Tak and other places the Word is going forth and hundreds of replies are coming in. Now with this wonderful gift the response will be thousands. "We now have the money for literature. Plans are under way. The team is ready to advance for the Lord." (Revival News, December 1963, p.3)

The result was an ever expanding use of literature and new media (such as radio) to present Christ to Thai culture: the production of four colour, full plate inserts in a national news paper, for instance, a nationally-distributed bible correspondence course (with Paul Kauffman), early radio programs etc. In twenty major crusades, 246,000 people responded, including 98 Buddhist priests. Gatherings of ministers, numbering in the hundreds, resulted in the period 1966-1969, often addressed by Restoration ministries invited from the USA. It was during a visit by David Schock to New Zealand, for instance, that the funding was found to put out the largest single literature distribution ever attempted in Thailand (600,000 booklets aimed at Children's Day in cooperation with Child Evangelism Fellowship). It was a lesson in flexibility – 'We thought the Lord would move [through tent evangelism] and instead He moved this way.' It was out of this follow-up that they helped commence New Life Centre Bangkok, the name later used by Peter Morrow for his church in Christchurch, Graham Truscott for his church in India, and by extension to the 'indigenous' latter rain church movement across New Zealand.

The maturing of the New Life fellowship in New Zealand was not all good news for the Collins family – the movement was maturing, spending more of its resources on building, and now, of course, there were many more missionaries to be supported. 'We were having problems getting resources'. The plan emerged in Paul's mind to found a missionary church, and prayer, family and natural

inclination led them back to Sydney. Paul got into contact with Ray Jackson's brother, Dale, who was running a group in the southern side of the city. To create space, they agreed to work mainly in the northern part of the city (a decision which, despite the lack of Pentecostal churches on the north side, was not welcomed by the key Foursquare (Banton) and AOG (Duncan) pastors in the city. This was to change markedly later through their mutual involvement in the charismatic movement).

While they had been in Thailand, the interest in things of the Holy Spirit had increased markedly in Sydney. At St Andrew's Cathedral, Jim Glennon's Healing ministry had brought together the healing streams native to Anglican spirituality. In the Methodist church, interest in and sense of institutional crisis had opened the church up to Camps Farthest Out and global prayer ministries. In the Catholic Church, the Notre Dame revival had spread to Australia through the work of Alex Reichel, and there were a growing number of non-denominational charismatic prayer meetings and Christian intentional communities spreading through the city. Sydney Anglicanism's long fascination with missions had a subdued spiritual stream (particularly as represented by Stafford Young and the South Seas Evangelical Mission) which began to emerge as Young funded visiting ministries into the diocese (Derek Prince, Michael Harper, Ralph Mahoney, David DuPlessis and Judson Cornwall). This gave energy to young, vibrant charismatics with money in their pockets, many of whom became involved in the meaning structures provided by short term missions agencies such as YWAM. A growing dis-ease with institutional ecumenism, and the need to reach out into society in the sort of new and more powerful ways demonstrated by David Wilkerson's Teen Challenge in the USA, motivated people to search for more. Some on the north side of Sydney had been praying for a fellowship within reach – some, as an addition to their normal churchgoing, others because their charismatic expression had made them unwelcome in their original churches.

It was into this new mix that Paul and Bunty again brought restorationist Holy Spirit emphases along with a new missions-inspired flexibility and the inspiring music of New Zealand's latter rain worship tradition. It was a powerful and heady mix, which exploded in their Sunday afternoon services held first (to the concern of some) in the Masonic hall in Turramurra. Paul invited an old acquaintance (called, ironically, Sr Wonders) he knew could 'play in the spirit': on the first occasion 'We worshipped for two hours – I didn't preach.' The next Sunday there were 40

people, and the same thing happened. They were clearly tapping into a well of suppressed spirituality. Finally, Paul managed to get things in hand, but the same spirit – whereby control was loosely held and ‘body ministry’ and worship were encouraged – remained the stock in trade of the church. Several moves were needed to cater for the growth – St Ives, Pymble, finally brought them to St Leonards, where they hired a commercial building and set about establishing the ‘Christian Faith Centre’ (CFC) as a Church around a core of some 500 people. It was far and away the largest Pentecostal church in Sydney. While the history of the church will be dealt with elsewhere it is useful to suggest here that the outward focus of the church was undermined by three things, all of which were tensions in the emerging movement.

The first was its missions focus: as Paul himself noted, this was to be a missionary church, in part a solution to the continuing problem of lack of resources and organisational support which was chronic in the early charismatic movement. On the one hand, the church was remarkably successful in its short life in fulfilling its missionary mandate. At its peak, the church supported 35 full time people in the field, in one year adding to this 75 one-off missions were supported. People such as Michael Baré and David Young went off on multiple short and longer term missions, planting churches in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Many of these went on to be core members of larger charismatic independent ministries and churches – such as Derek Prince Ministries, the Christian City Churches, Frontier Missions, Servants of Asia’s Poor, WEF, and the like. While it released incredible energy, however, the church did not really solve the mission support issue – many of their missions were undersupported, their missionaries under-trained, and many felt as if, having been sent, they were underprepared for life when they came back. It is possible, however, to see this as part of the significant larger latter rain movement into Asia, which later emerged in such significant movements as the Hope of Bangkok.

The second element was the nature of ecclesial organisation. Collins had learned to be wary of ecclesial organisations and perhaps Faith Centre was another straw for that camel’s back. It was not agreed at the beginning that the Centre should have been a church, and in the end when the Collins’ moved on it was in part because of the position of Ralph Mahoney and others that one could not run both a church and a ministry to the larger body of Christ. Internally, this lack of agreement also made the church highly susceptible to shifts in interpersonal agreement and skill sets.

Paul was the glue, Howard Carter was the great organiser, and the third leader John Ferguson was more pastoral in orientation. Their spread of interests made the church unstable when Paul was absent, and Howard found the discipleship message (of Mumford, Baxter, Ortiz and others in the Fort Lauderdale school) an attractive theological legitimization of a highly centralized approach to church life. When discipleship teaching began to tear at the agreement in the church, Howard was prepared to take it over. Lack of accountability also left some leaders open to moral failure and others open to personal manipulation. With Paul away in Hong Kong, many relationships soured: prayer counselling became a vehicle for criticism: 'I'll tell you what is wrong with you if you tell me what is wrong with me.'. 'It was a cancerous job... and then they started to turn on us.'

The third element was free worship. While Faith Centre acted to import the latter rain worship style into Australia, such cultural elements were not unique. It was possible (indeed likely) that the musical culture would shift and so expressions of spiritual passion also shift. Again, the Centre was highly successful – Collins could see the influence of the church in the churches built in other states by Peter Vacca, Hal Oxley, and Trevor Chandler in Brisbane, among others. But the commitment to freedom meant that the church could not hold onto its advantage, and increasingly the spread of charismatic worship music (in particular through its commercialisation by the Garretts' Scripture in Song) ate away at its uniqueness. The same could be said for the natural source of its growth, the charismatic movement – Temple Trust (Alan Langstaff) and Logos Foundation (Howard Carter) were better organised and more tightly focused than CFC, and though Collins never thought in terms of competition, it is clear that others progressively stole Faith Centre's thunder as the 1970s progressed. In particular, they became the major routes for international visiting ministries, the life blood of the conference movement. CFC's double life as an international ministry centre and a local church in the long run was doomed to fail.

Such divisions in the light of a significant building challenge created incredible tensions. When Paul returned from Hong Kong, David Jackson and Roger Waters faced him and said that 'it is either you or me'. Collins walked away – the building trust collapsed, and while the church staggered on under Jackson and Carter as a cell-group movement, the days of Faith Centre were numbered. The Collins' returned to their beloved Asia – after a year spent among Asian students attached to Peter Morrow's church in Christchurch, they spent most of the next period in Hong

Kong working with Paul Kauffman at Asian Outreach. They were not finished with Sydney, however. Towards the end of 1978, they began preparations to return. Moving to Dee Why, the team they gathered prayed '8-12-8' every day for 2 years in order to gain a break among the surf culture of the area. By the end of 1979, they had built the church to around 50 people. In the interim, a young couple they had known from the Sydenham AOG in Christchurch, Phil and Chris Pringle, had had a vision for Sydney, and had begun work in Roseville. Again, Asia called – Loren Cunningham, whom they had met in the USA and knew well through their Faith Centre connections to YWAM, approached them and asked them to consider undertaking a more apostolic ministry with the YWAM ship ministry, Anastasis. While preparing to go, they were also approached by Paul Kauffman for help in Hong Kong. Personal loyalties spoke loudest – the Collins' invited the Pringles to take over their 'Christian Ministry Centre' in Dee Why, and left for Hong Kong. Shortly thereafter it was renamed Christian Centre, Northside, and then to Christian City Church. Another seed had been planted, only to be watered and taken on by someone else – CCC would grow into one of the more significant global charismatic movements, with (by 2003) some 4000 people worshipping in the Oxford Falls complex alone. 'Phil took me out to lunch one day and said "You know, your trouble [Paul] is that you always give away the initiative." And that is true.'

Hong Kong was a profound experience for the Collins'. Again, they had a seeding ministry - working with Jackie Pullinger, printing bible studies in Romans for mailing to 10,000 separate pastors and leaders every week, creating Project 21 for the Philippines- in an effort to energize and equip the Christian leadership of Asia. It was with gratitude that they heard years later from an Indonesian pastor that 'these studies have done more for the Indonesian church than anything else that has ever been done.' They were not as young as they had been, however, and so had to find a place for themselves which was sustainable and from which the younger generation of leaders did not see them as a threat. 'Like Faith Centre, though it appeared to be a disaster, everywhere we go people come up to us and say "There have never been meetings like that."'

In 1993, they returned to Australia, leaving one son married and working still in Asia, and another working with them in bible college resources. With the emergence of the internet, they moved increasingly towards online bible college work. In a sense, the world had finally caught up with them – providing a means

which matched their restless global vision. While they could not find a church form which fitted their particular gifts (one church, in Darwin, did not take off, while another, in Newcastle, by the name of the Fountaingate Trust, was eventually folded in order to allow them to continue their global focus) the internet allowed them to form communities not linked to the churches which they had influenced, but which had by-passed or forgotten them. Four months of reflection in Hong Kong left them convinced that – for all the revival, evangelism, and church growth of the last 30 years - the church in the 1990s was in a worse state than it had been in 1965. Collins summed up the conundrums of the church in the three tests of Zadok the Priest. Zadok had to choose between Saul and David (tradition vs the anointing); then he had to choose between personality and principles (over Absalom); finally he had to choose between apparent results and the word of the King (Adonijah vs David's will to have Solomon anointed.) The Church, Collins felt, had failed on all three counts. His comfort lay in a theory of history which made sense of his restorationism - what he took to be God's program in Hebrews 6: 1-3. Martin Luther had seen the restoration of repentance and justification through faith; water baptism had been restored by the Baptists; Pentecostalism restored the Baptism in the Spirit (in 1906); and through the laying on of hands, the Latter Rain movement from 1948 had restored the release of understanding of ministry in the body of Christ – five fold ministry. That, he thought on interview in 2003, left repentance and deep cleansing, and after which eternal judgement would come upon the church.

History is not always kind to founders. Collins repeatedly began things and then moved on. Successors inevitably write their history from their own perspective, and the temptation is strong to associate impermanence with insignificance or even failure. There is little reference to Collins in most accounts of the charismatic movement except in passing. (The filtering out process can be seen in Restore magazine, for instance, which Howard Carter took over after Paul and Bunty's departure for Christchurch in 1976. After their departure they are never mentioned again despite the fact that they had bought the magazine with them from Christchurch and had edited it for many years. There is also little reference to him in the published records of either New Life Centre Christchurch or Christian City Church) This is inevitable in a movement with a strong emphasis on 'Now' which has become well located in institutions. It is clear, when one takes the larger view and follows the intellectual history of the charismatic movement, however, that Paul and Bunty Collins have led remarkably influential lives. Not only did they

start numerous institutions which went on to have widespread impact, but their media and literature campaigns, their ability to bring into one focus the many streams which were impinging on the charismatic movement of the 1960s and 1970s, their ecumenical heart and ability to be on the right spot at the right time meant that they were often thought leaders even among people who did not know they were being led. It is perhaps best to categorize them in the term used by leadership analysts, as ‘indirect leaders.’

There is no leader in history who is perfect. Collins had flair, passion and a driving personality – but with his strong ideas and the authority of maturity, he could be threatening to second generation leaders without even understanding why. He certainly could not easily play second fiddle, as David Jackson found when Paul turned down his offer of returning to Faith Centre as an elder. With a powerful restorationist experience in his early background, he was better fitted to be a starter than a builder: he was not ruthless enough to develop the single vision required by organization builders, a tendency to refer always to the heart rather than the head, to the spiritual rather than to the organisational principle. In management terms, he was to be an interpreter of the times, but not a ‘clock builder’. These were emphases reinforced by his early understanding that a move of God had to be a sovereign move, rather than worked up by men; by his restorationist anti-organisationalism. Nor did he early gain the wisdom which marked his later work – that one could do anything, but one could not have or do everything. Focus and coherency were not his strong points, at least in terms of institution building. Moreover, as they aged Paul became an isolated first generation survivor as the early, less structured start up ministries collapsed or were swallowed by institutions. Nevertheless, their own ministry remained steadfast, their approach to spreading the gospel they loved flexible, inventive, and still of some influence in a world where they were competing for public attention much more intensely than had been the case in the 1960s. Any final assessment must include them as significant contributors to one of the most profound global transformations in human history.

Mark Hutchinson

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