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FROM RAGS TO RICHES

**An analysis of the
Faith movement and its
relation to the classical
Pentecostal movement**

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A project of the Institute for Theological Research

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PREFACE

This study from the project on Pentecostalism of the Institute for Theological Research at Unisa is a valuable contribution toward a Pentecostal understanding of developments within and on the fringes of classical Pentecostalism during the last two decades. The development of a large part of the Charismatic Movement into the Word or Faith Movement has challenged the Pentecostal Churches particularly in the areas of faith, vision and liturgy.

Dr Nico Horn's evaluation of the theology of this movement shows clearly that with regard to its doctrinal content there are significant deviations from, as well as similarities to, the broad spectrum of classical Pentecostal thinking. With regard to its practical and experiential content, however, the differences are less discernible. Dr Horn has managed to combine a realistic appreciation of doctrinal deviations and their potential for future tensions with a sympathetic evaluation of the vision, ministry and liturgy of a movement which is, after all, closer to classical Pentecostalism in its experience and aims than to any other group.

Horn's commitment to a distinctively Pentecostal evaluation, his versatile approach to alternative sociological perspectives, and the spirit in which he discusses criticism of the Faith Movement, makes this work a distinctive contribution to contemporary Pentecostal literature. He has also provided much valuable data and insight into the role of divine healing, itself a lively topic of discussion among Pentecostals.

The Pentecostal Churches in South Africa are indebted to the Pentecostalism Project and its leader, Prof Henry Lederle, for the scope and quality of the work currently being produced by the researchers. May this co-operation between the University and the Churches enjoy a fruitful future.

Prof Lederle's efforts in the final preparation of this document for publication are also noted with gratitude.

Mathew S Clark
Apostolic Faith Mission of S A

FOREWORD

When the Charismatic movement reached its peak in the mid-seventies, two strong theological trends were dominating the independent or non-denominational part of the movement. The strongest of the two was the so-called shepherding or discipleship group, led by Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, John Poole, Charles Simpson, Ern Baxter and Don Basham, all from Fort Lauderdale. This group became discredited when the movement suspected them of laying the foundations for a new denomination. The major part of the Charismatic movement was, of course, the denominational Charismatics such as the Catholic charismatics, the Lutheran charismatics, the Anglican charismatics, etc.

The other independent stream stood much closer to the traditional Pentecostal movement. Its unofficial leader, Kenneth Hagin, came from a Pentecostal background and many of its early leaders had some kind of relationship with the traditional Pentecostal movement. The movement became known as the Word or the Faith movement, because of its emphasis on faith and the fact that its leaders claim to get their teachings and sermons only from the Word. For the purpose of this study I shall use the term Faith movement to refer to this theological stream.

After the decay of the shepherding group, the Faith movement gained momentum and influence both in the traditional Pentecostal movement and in the Charismatic movement. The Faith movement sees itself as part of the bigger Pentecostal tradition. Some even see the Faith movement as a restoration of classical Pentecostal teaching (Steele 1986:136). Three of the four major themes of classical Pentecostals, salvation, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and divine healing play a prominent role in the Faith movement. The fourth theme, the second coming of Christ, does not feature as strongly. It is true that the Faith movement also shares common ground with non-Pentecostals like

Robert Schuller and Norman Vincent Peale and Christian Reconstructionists like Gary North. But its emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and on miracles distinguishes it from the Protestant positive thinking movement and the more rational Reconstructionists.

In this study I shall look at the Faith movement as a Pentecostal phenomenon. Being a Pentecostal myself, this study is not an objective theological study of the Faith movement, but rather a Pentecostal perspective on some theological trends in the movement.

Like many other traditional Pentecostals I have followed the development of the Faith movement with much interest. Traditional Pentecostals and other mainline Christians have been amazed by the phenomenal growth and apparent high spiritual level of the Faith movement from the outset.

I personally hold these attributes of the Faith movement in high esteem. It is undoubtedly true that their enthusiasm, their zeal for evangelism and their emphasis on true worship had a positive influence on the Pentecostal movement. In the Apostolic Faith Mission, the oldest and biggest Pentecostal denomination in South Africa, most of the congregations no longer sing the old hymns and choruses of the holiness and Pentecostal revivals, but the new songs that originated in the Faith movement. Like most Faith churches, they no longer use a songleader, but three or four *voorsangers*.

The Faith movement is experiencing a tremendous growth around the world. The Rhema Bible Church in Randburg, South Africa, started in a house in 1979 with only thirteen people. By the beginning of 1988 it was claimed that the church had a membership of more than 11 000 people. (Perhaps 7 000 might be a more realistic assessment.)

There are several reasons for the phenomenal growth of the Faith movement. It is, however, true that hundreds if not thousands of people are receiving new life in Christ at the Faith churches. No Pentecostal would want to deny the reality of these new births.

Pentecostals often feel very much at home in the services of the Faith movement. The worship (both the singing and the spontaneous praise sessions), the evangelistic approach, the emphasis on the baptism in the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit are very attractive to traditional Pentecostals. It is not surprising that the Faith movement is becoming a strong influence in the traditional Pentecostal movement. The faith message can already be heard from many traditional Pentecostal pulpits.

Unfortunately there are also negative aspects in the movement, their theological basis being the most important one. The faith theology operates with the presupposition that Christ overcame all suffering in his atoning death. Therefore Christians should not suffer at all. I will point out that this specific form of realised eschatology has its roots in the early Pentecostal movement and the healing revival of the fifties. In taking over these theological presuppositions, the Faith teachers ignored or rejected new insights formed later within the traditional Pentecostal movement. I will also try to show that the Faith teachers radicalised the realised eschatology of the early Pentecostals. Although this study is not an evaluation of Pentecostal theology, but an evaluation of Faith theology from a Pentecostal perspective, I will make some critical comments regarding the logical consequences of my own tradition.

Many Christians believe that doctrine only divides and therefore believers should rather concentrate on their spiritual unity. It is, however, not possible to make a clear distinction between the theology and the spiritual basis of a religious movement. I will try to establish the consequences of the presuppositions of the Faith movement for the doctrine of God, Christology, anthropology and the doctrine of revelation.

It is not my intention to attack the Faith movement, or to declare it to be heretical. Neither am I questioning the bona fides of the leaders and followers of the movement. I appreciate what the Lord is doing in their midst. Unfortunately there are unhealthy trends that will only harm the Pentecostal message in the long run. By pointing them out, it is my hope that our brothers and sisters in the Faith movement will at least take a second look at some of their unique doctrines.

CHAPTER 1

The historical development of the Faith movement and its relation to the Pentecostal movement

‘Copeland and other Faith teachers are living what I and others have been preaching for fifty years.’

Lester Sumrall (1984)

1 THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE HEALING EVANGELISTS

1.1 Background

No theology develops in a vacuum. It is always influenced by several other theologies, other movements, social circumstances and historical events. The so-called Faith movement is no exception to this rule.

The concept Faith theology here refers to a particular theological stream within the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement which has a distinctive doctrine on faith. According to this teaching God has provided for all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ and every Christian should now share the victory of Jesus Christ. Therefore the believer has a right to the blessing of God (both spiritual and material) and he or she can claim the appropriate blessing by means of positive confession and active faith.

Farah sums up the main emphasis of the Faith movement in a caricature:

Under this teaching I no longer have to suffer privation, endure persecution, be thrown in jail, go hungry or thirsty, or suffer shipwreck for the gospel's sake. Jesus did it all for me. He became poor so that I could become rich; He suffered so I wouldn't have to suffer; He was persecuted so I need not be persecuted; He had no place to sleep at night so I could live in the Hilton; He had to walk so I could drive an air-conditioned luxury car; He went hungry so I could be full; He was hot and dusty so I could enjoy clean showers and temperature acclimated swimming pools

(Farah 1980a:146)

The main difference between the classical Pentecostal movement and the Faith movement lies in this sphere. Pentecostals in the traditional Pentecostal churches and the Faith movement also have much in common. At least three sides of the traditional 'Foursquare Pentecostal gospel' - Jesus the Saviour, Baptiser in the Spirit, Healer and coming King - receive strong emphasis in the Faith movement. It is only the emphasis on the second coming of Christ that does not receive the same attention in the Faith movement as in the classical Pentecostal teaching. It is not totally absent but because of the Faith movement's strong emphasis on God's acts on behalf of the believer here and now, eschatology is not in the spotlight.

Most of the Faith teachers subscribe to the traditional Pentecostal doctrines of the baptism in the Spirit, salvation and the gifts of the Spirit (especially healing), although they do differ on certain aspects of healing.

The faith message is not exclusively Pentecostal. Fee (1979:2) mentions Robert Schuller, a Reformed minister, as one of the better known figures of the movement. For the purpose of this study only those Faith teachers and ministers who are part of the broader Pentecostal/Charismatic movement will be looked at.

McConnell (1982:1, 2, 7ff) maintains that the Faith movement grew out of the Charismatic movement, while Lederle (1986:30) argues that the Rhema group (one of the biggest Faith churches) is in many ways Pentecostal.

The historical roots of the Faith movement lie undoubtedly deep in the classical Pentecostal movement. Kenneth Hagin (sr), commonly recognised as the father of the movement (Clark 1984:1; McConnell 1982:7ff), was a Pentecostal pastor and evangelist in the Assemblies of God from 1938 until 1962 (Harrell 1975:1860). Most of the other prominent leaders were either ministers in Pentecostal denominations or had other links with the classical Pentecostal movement. Kenneth Copeland studied at Oral Roberts University and worked as a pilot for the Oral Roberts evangelistic organization (Harrell 1985:424). Ray McCauley, pastor of the biggest Faith church in South Africa (Steele 1986:10) was converted in the Full Gospel Church, and Lester Sumrall had close relationships with two Pentecostal pioneers, Howard Carter and Smith Wigglesworth.

An even closer link can be established between the Faith movement and the Healing evangelists of the 1950s. Although the major figures in the Healing revival were almost without exception Pentecostal ministers, there had always been tension between the Pentecostal movement and the Healing evangelists. Although divine healing was a major theme in the Pentecostal movement from the outset, very few ministers and evangelists made it the main emphasis in their ministries. Among those who did were Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the Church of the Foursquare Gospel, who had a big healing ministry in her church, Angellus Temple in Los Angeles, John G Lake, who had healing ministries in Johannesburg, South Africa and later in Spokane, Washington and Portland, Oregon, and the Jefferies brothers in Britain (Bloch-Hoell 1964:63).

The doctrine of divine healing has always been emphasised by Pentecostal churches, and although it has been practised only intermittently, the healing and deliverance messages were not something completely new to the Pentecostal movement when the healing revival started (Nichol 1966:221). Although the Healing evangelists were severely criticised by the Pentecostals, they were merely teaching the doctrine of divine healing and faith that early Pentecostals used to teach. This traditional doctrine was still taught by Richard Vinyard at the Fifth World Pentecostal Conference in 1958 (Hollenweger 1977:358). On the whole, second and third generation Pentecostals did not teach, like the pioneers, that every sick person should be healed. They laid much stronger emphasis on the sovereignty of God.

The Healing evangelists rejected the new emphasis of second generation Pentecostals on the limitations of humans and the sovereignty of God (Hollenweger 1977:356). For them the acceptance of the Scriptural promise 'by His stripes we are healed' was imperative. The early Apostolic Faith Pamphlet

stated explicitly: 'Sickness is of the Enemy. God is not the author of disease, it is from the devil. God is the healer of His people' (quoted in Bloch-Hoell 1964:148). A variation is discernible if this is compared to the words of Howard Carter in 1946: 'So sin and sickness are closely allied in many instances, but not in all' (quoted in Bloch-Hoell 1964:148; *italics mine*). Bloch-Hoell (1964:148ff) is thus clearly wrong in not making a distinction between the later doctrines of the denominational Pentecostals and the message of the Healing evangelists who rather followed the original teaching of the Pentecostal pioneers.

Like Howard Carter, many Pentecostal pioneers later realised that their belief that sickness is always the direct work of the devil and that sick people should always receive healing instantaneously after prayer, could not stand the test of time. John G Lake, the father of the South African Pentecostal movement, is a typical example of this. In 1935 he wrote a letter to P L le Roux who became president of the Apostolic Faith Mission after Lake had left South Africa. In this letter Lake expressed his frustration with evangelists who maintained the old doctrine and practice.

One of the things that we were endeavour (sic) to correct in the teaching of healing was the practice of evangelists everywhere of praying for the individual once and then turning them loose while the public was given to understand that they were thoroughly healed In many of these cases evangelists had these people testify before great audiences that they were fully healed, only to discover in a few days or weeks that they were not really healed, and many in disappointment went home to die.

(Lake 1935:2)

The Healing evangelists became prominent as a group in the late forties and early fifties. Although there were always travelling evangelists, including those who believed in divine healing, they were seen as individuals rather than as a group. The Healing or Deliverance evangelists, however, were part of a bigger revival almost from the outset. This was the result of the fact that these evangelists preached a more or less similar message which differed from that of the mainline churches and even the Pentecostal movement of their day.

Gordon Lindsay, one of the early Healing evangelists, played a prominent role in bringing the like-minded evangelists together. In 1948 he launched a magazine, *The Voice of Healing*, in which he reported healings and other miracles of

the deliverance campaigns. A year later he launched the first convention of Healing evangelists (Harrell 1975:54f). Harrell (1975:55) remarks that this '*historic conference* symbolised the vitality and cohesion of the revival'.

Lindsay, like many of the Healing evangelists, was an ordained Assemblies of God minister. He tried hard to avert a clash between the evangelists and the church. Like one of the most influential Pentecostal ministers of that time, Donald Gee, Lindsay felt that the churches and the evangelists should work together. Gee saw the church and the evangelists as 'extreme wings in the army of Emmanuel' and hoped that their work would be complementary, and not contradictory (quoted in Harrell 1975:111). Although Lindsay and other Healing evangelists formed a loose fellowship or association of evangelists in 1950, Lindsay promised the authorities of the Assemblies of God that they would not start a new denomination (Harrell 1975:55).

Tension within the Pentecostal movement started to build up in the early 1950s. Jack Coe, an ordained Assemblies of God minister, was the first Healing evangelist to lose his credentials with his denomination. This happened in 1953 (Harrell 1975:111). In 1955 the Assemblies of God withdrew the ministerial licence of another prominent Healing evangelist, A A Allen, after he had paid an admission of guilt fine on a charge of drunken driving. Both Coe and Allen proceeded with their ministry as independents. Most of the others followed in their footsteps, with only a few exceptions, notable among them Kenneth Hagin (sr.) (Assemblies of God) and Oral Roberts (Pentecostal Holiness) who remained in fellowship with denominational Pentecostalism until the sixties.

The main reasons for the breach between classical Pentecostals and the Healing evangelists were the unorthodox style of the evangelists, their claims of financial prosperity, coupled with their extraordinary fundraising methods and their strong emphasis on physical healing. Brumback (quoted in Hollenweger 1977:358) stated the reason for the tension between the two groups was the claim of the evangelists that the gospel provides for financial prosperity, and their emphasis on healing. Harrell (1975:107) refers to the financial needs of the evangelists, as well as their style and conduct, as the reasons for the initial confrontation between the churches. In 1957 Donald Gee, for years a peacemaker between the churches and the evangelists, 'speculated that the sensationalism of the revival was attracting the mentally unstable' (Harrell 1975:93). But it was teaching on healing and practices of the evangelists that caused the biggest problem for the churches. When Jack Coe was disciplined by the Assemblies of God, he claimed that the church 'denied that divine healing was in the atonement' (Harrell 1975:111). The Healing evangelists were

not satisfied with the adaptation in Pentecostal healing practice and belief. They revived the old teaching that ‘just as God wants everyone to be saved from sin, so also does He desire everyone to be well’ (Nichol 1966:221). All people are not saved, because they refuse to appropriate God’s gracious provision for them. Likewise all people are not cured of their ills because they do not appropriate the healing which God has provided through Jesus Christ’s suffering (Nichol 1966:221).

There is a strong historical link between the Healing evangelists and the Faith movement. Many prominent leaders of the Faith movement played an active role in the healing revival. Kenneth Hagin (sr) was part of the healing and deliverance movement almost from the outset (Harrell 1975:185). Don Gossett worked with one of the pioneer Healing evangelists, William Freeman, in the early 1950s (Gossett & Kenyon 1971:205) and Kenneth Copeland studied at Oral Roberts University and worked for Roberts as a pilot (Harrell 1985:424), as has been mentioned above.

It is thus only logical to expect the Healing or Deliverance movement to have had a big impact and influence on the Faith movement. The role played by the Deliverance and Healing movement in creating the three major doctrinal differences between classical Pentecostals and the Faith movement will now be investigated, namely the doctrines of healing, prosperity and faith formulas.

1.2 The doctrine of healing

Generally it is God’s will to heal, but you cannot take away from God his sovereignty. ... I mean that God is God and He reserves to Himself the power to do what He will do, even if it sets aside one of His own rules There are those sovereign cases ... that God may decide not to heal.

Oral Roberts (Harrell 1985:455)

1.2.1 The relation between the Healing evangelists and the Faith movement

The Healing evangelists undoubtedly laid the foundation for the later faith message. They took the traditional Pentecostal belief that healing is grounded in the atonement (Harrell 1975:85) and radicalised it. Thus Allen proclaimed that God ‘created man healthy and strong, and that God meant for him to continue in that state ... until we fulfill the number of our days.’ (quoted in Harrell

1975:85, italics his). Although Allen added that it does not mean that a person of 75 years can actually be twenty years old, God's promise to 'renew our youth' meant that 'God would take away the sickness, the disease, the infirmity, even the deformity, that causes one to feel, act, think and live like an old person' (quoted in Harrell 1975:85).

Faith played a prominent role in the understanding of healing by Healing evangelists. Oral Roberts made faith an important aspect of his healing ministry. He urged his partners for decade after decade to 'release your faith in order to receive healing' (quoted in Harrell 1985:451). As late as 1971 Roberts stated that by laying hands on the sick and then proclaiming 'God heals', he was not trying to manipulate God, but he was merely being positive in his own faith (Harrell 1985:451f).

Oral Roberts was also probably the first evangelist to give a formula for healing in his booklet *If you need healing - do these things* (Roberts 1947). He gave a list of thirteen instructions to be followed in order to receive healing. Many of these formulas were taken over by the later Faith teachers, e g 'Stand on the Atonement, Understand that sickness is Satan's oppression, Know that God's perfect will is to heal you, turn your faith loose, close the case for victory, change your outlook on life', etc.

The very popular faith formulas of the Faith movement for healing and success undoubtedly originated in the teachings of Oral Roberts and other Healing evangelists. However, unlike the Faith teachers, Roberts was willing to accept responsibility for many people who did not receive healing. In 1968 he said some cases may be too hard for his faith. On the other hand, he shares the belief of the Faith movement that a lack of faith on the part of the sick person can often be a hindrance to healing, but adds that a lack of power on his part may also be a problem (Harrell 1985:455).

For most of his ministry Roberts believed that it is the will of God to heal everybody. Harrell (1985:455) points out that in the 1970s, in association with mainstream Protestant and Catholic Charismatics, Roberts accommodated a much stronger sense of mystery and sovereignty in the healing sphere. In 1971 he stated his belief to a group of students. This is so crucial that it is quoted again here although it was also used at the beginning of this section:

Generally it is God's will to heal, but you cannot take away from God his sovereignty. When I use the word sovereignty I mean that God is God and He reserves to Himself the power to do what He will do, even if it sets aside one of His own rules There are those sovereign cases ... that God may decide not to heal.

(Quoted in Harrell 1985:455f)

The Faith teachers chose to ignore the testimony of the more mature Roberts and rather linked up with the radical Healing evangelists. The faith of the early Pentecostals that healing is part of the atonement laid the foundation for both the emphasis on healing of the Healing evangelists and the later faith message.

Although the atonement as the foundation of healing was probably the strongest element in the healing teaching and as such received the main emphasis, the pneumatological side of healing has always been present. Oral Roberts believed that he had a special gift of healing which manifested itself in different ways, a sensation in his right hand being the most common (Harrell 1985:449). The gift of the evangelist to heal and healing as a gift in general, were also recognised in the healing revival (Harrell 1975:84f).

The link between the Faith movement and the Healing evangelists is nowhere better illustrated than in the healing teachings of the former. Steele (1986:134ff) echoes almost all the sentiments of the Healing evangelists when he describes the healing debate in South Africa around the Rhema Bible Church and other Faith churches. According to him John G Lake brought the healing and deliverance message to South Africa, and 'many Pentecostal preachers, afraid of adverse publicity or criticism, began to soft-pedal divine healing' (Steele 1986:135f). It was people like Ray McCauley who revived the healing ministry (Steele 1986:136). Steele (1986:138ff) quotes McCauley stating, like the Healing evangelists, that 'physical healing is an integral part of the atonement', that God would not give His children 'cancer or other sickness under the New Testament Covenant', that all sickness are 'initiated by the devil', that Jesus' wants to heal everybody, that if Christians meet all the conditions, they will be healed, that a lack of faith is a hindrance to receiving from God, etc.

The fact that the Faith teachers, like the Healing evangelists and many early Pentecostals, see healing as part of the work of Christ in the atonement, together with the fact that most of the Faith teachers believe in the free will of

humans to accept or reject salvation, result in a very superficial and mechanical approach towards healing. If Christ died for everyone and if salvation and forgiveness of sins are available for everyone who is willing to repent, then the same rules should apply to healing.

It's not a matter of His healing you. He's done all He is ever going to do about it. Two thousand years ago He laid your sickness on Jesus and Jesus bore it for you. With His stripes you were healed way back there and you won't accept it and you won't believe it. You're trying to get Him to do what He has already done for you. If you will come to the place where you will willingly and gladly praise God for what He had done, and believe it, and confess it, then the manifestation will come.

(Hagin (jr) 1980:90)

The problem with healing is that many people will still be sick even after they have applied all the rules and preconditions. Capps (1981:38f) finds the answer to this problem in James 5:15. If someone cannot accept his or her healing because the symptoms are still there, his or her faith is based on feelings and not on the Word of God. K Copeland ([s a]:29f) says if your body has symptoms of sickness and is screaming with pain, you must get your faith in operation by going to Matthew 8:17 and I Peter 2:24 to establish the will of God.

Now you are beginning to look at healing through the eyes of faith. Your faith is looking beyond the symptoms in your body. Then you say, 'Father, First Peter 2:24 says that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed. I apply this Word to my body, and I command it to be healed in the name of Jesus. The Word says I am healed. I say that I am healed. Sickness, I speak to you in the name of Jesus and I command you to leave my body'.

(Copeland [s a]:30)

Thus Capps (1980:26) can say it is not the prayer that heals, but the Word and faith. Faith will work, even without prayer, but prayer cannot work without faith. K Hagin (jr) (1979:50) says there are many people in the Faith movement who are not receiving from God because they are not believing for themselves.

Like their forerunners, the Healing evangelists, the Faith teachers do not overlook the pneumatological aspect of healing completely. Thus McCauley holds that Jesus will sometimes heal somebody who knows nothing about healing or even the gospel. 'Then it is a "sign" and a demonstration of His divine power.' (quoted in Steele 1986:140). In the same way K Hagin (jr) states:

There is a difference between the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and special anointing where faith has to be exercised. When the gifts of the Spirit, working of miracles and other gifts are in operation, things just happen. But when it is a special anointing or where you are wanting something for yourself, you - YOU - have to activate the power of God with your faith.

(Hagin (jr) 1979:68)

It is clear that the pneumatological aspect of healing plays a very insufficient role in the teaching of the Faith movement. The thrust of the doctrine of healing in the Faith movement is the atonement and a strong Arminian interpretation of grace. The possibility that God may not want to heal a Christian under certain circumstances, is not taken into account.

The question that needs to be answered is whether the faith and healing practices of the Faith movement are a logical result of Pentecostal thinking.

1.2.2 Healing ministries that influenced the healing doctrines of the twentieth century

Divine healing had a long history in both Europe and America long before the rise of the Pentecostal movement (Barron 1987:35ff). The major theological premiss of the Healing evangelists, the presumption that healing was part of the gospel, played a prominent role in Protestant thought long before the rise of the Healing movement of the fifties or even the Pentecostal movement at the turn of the century.

Two prominent Protestant ministers paved the way for a new emphasis on healing by the end of the nineteenth century. Johann Christoph Blumhardt was a minister in Germany and Alexander John Dowie was a Congregational minister in Australia and later an independent minister in America.

Despite many differences (Blumhardt remained part of mainstream Protestantism, while Dowie moved out of the traditional church), there are also similarities in their theological thinking. Their contribution to the healing ministry of the church is possibly the biggest common factor.

The healing ministry of Blumhardt is recounted in Karl Barth's book *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (1973). It started in 1842/3 when there was a young girl in Blumhardt's assembly who suffered from psychosomatic illness. Blumhardt identified her condition as demon possession on the analogy of New Testament narratives. Blumhardt believed that only Jesus could save the young girl through direct action.

The end of the struggle was the complete healing of the girl. For Blumhardt in the midst of pietism this breakthrough represented a quite unpietistic discovery and recognition. The contrast was not between Jesus and the unconverted heart of man, but between Jesus and the real power of darkness, in which man finds himself. This was what the struggle was about, and it was here that Jesus proved victorious.

(Barth 1973:644f)

The healing of the girl resulted in a healing ministry that drew many people who sought healing to Blumhardt's congregation in Möttlingen. In 1852 Blumhardt moved to Göppingen where he started his well-known healing house, Bad Boll.

Although Blumhardt regarded sickness, suffering and death as abnormal, he did not see the answer to it in the 'eschatological Jesus' or in the 'pietistic Jesus', but in 'the present, living Jesus' (Barth 1973:646ff). Blumhardt was a firm believer in the Second Coming of Christ, but he also expected a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and 'the dawn of a new time of grace on the earth' (Barth 1973:651).

There is thus a contradiction in Blumhardt's expectation of the ultimate return of Christ and the blessing that would precede Him. 'Blumhardt did not take the last step that should have been taken, the clear subordination of the penultimate to the last things' (Barth 1973:651).

There are indications that Blumhardt considered his own healing ministry as a sign of this last outpouring of the Spirit. The fact that he expected the coming of Christ soon and his emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit point in this direction.

From what has been said about Blumhardt, it seems clear that his understanding of healing was primarily grounded in the mighty power of Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit. Unlike early Pentecostals and the Faith movement (and many believers in healing in the Holiness movement), the atonement did not play a prominent role in Blumhardt's thinking on healing. Barth (1973:650f) points out that Blumhardt did not treat Christianity as merely a concern of the individual. The Lord, according to Blumhardt, is concerned with the redemption of the whole world. Therefore, his emphasis was on the victorious Jesus here and now and not merely on his redemptive death and resurrection.

Unlike other believers in divine healing in America in the late nineteenth century, Alexander Dowie followed the pneumatological grounding of healing rather than the soteriological. Dayton (1983:175f) points out that Dowie did not share the general views of the Holiness people. He quotes Dowie saying at a meeting of the Divine Healing Association in 1890 that the object of the Association was to promote the doctrine of healing through faith in Jesus. Dowie indicates this as being the point of difference between the Association and the Christian Alliance, 'which has for its motto 'Christ our Saviour, Christ our Sanctifier, Christ our healer and Christ our Coming King'. Dowie wanted to take healing out of the soteriological rooting in redemption and give it a more distinctly Pentecostal character.

Healing becomes more a manifestation of Pentecostal 'power' and an evidence of 'God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers (miracles) and by gifts of the Holy Spirit.'

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:177)

Unlike in Dowie and Blumhardt, the main emphasis of the Holiness movement of the late nineteenth century was the soteriological aspects of healing. A B Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance is, according to Dayton, a good example of the grounding of healing in the atonement. He said:

Some twenty-seven years ago, I floundered for ten months in the waters of despondency, and I got out of them just by believing in Jesus as my Saviour. About twelve years ago I got into another deep experience of conviction, and I got out

of that by believing in Jesus as my Sanctifier. After years of teaching from and waiting on Him, the Lord Jesus Christ showed me four years ago that it was His blessed will to be my complete Saviour for body as well as soul.

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:161)

It is clear that Simpson regarded healing as being grounded in the same theological basis as salvation and sanctification.

Redemption finds its center in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and there we must look for the fundamental principle of Divine Healing, which rests on the atoning sacrifice. This necessarily follows from the first principle we have stated. If sickness be the result of the Fall, it must be included in the atonement of Christ which reaches as 'far as the curse is found'.

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:162)

Dayton (1983:164) points out that the healing doctrines of the late nineteenth century were closely linked not only with the teaching on salvation, but also with the teaching on sanctification. One of the best-known books on divine healing, written in 1882 by R K Carter, described the atonement as the basis for salvation and sanctification (the 'cleansing from all inbred sin') in the first two chapters before turning to 'bodily healing, as provided for in the atonement' (quoted in Dayton 1983:165).

Carter was forced to change his theology after twenty years because he got sick himself. For three years he suffered severely until a doctor convinced him to use medicine, which helped him to such an extent that he was able to return to his work. Carter wrote a second book in which he still claimed that healing was for his day. However, on two important points he changed his earlier views. He denied (1) that healing was 'definitely and mechanically' included in the atonement, and that sickness was always a sign of continuing sin or a lack of faith, and (2) that the use of medical help was to be avoided and was a sign of lack of faith (Dayton 1983:166ff).

Carter's own experience led him to state that all the results of the atonement are not yet available to 'the present living Christian'. 'In place of the more rad-

ical earlier doctrine of "healing in the atonement" Carter now teaches "healing" bestowed, sometimes withheld, according to "the supreme will of our Lord" (Dayton 1983:167).

Carter also contended that many of the leaders in the Holiness movement maintained the radical tradition of healing in the atonement in theory, yet in practice many of them either used medicine, wore glasses or were sick (Dayton 1983:168).

When the Pentecostal revival started in the early twentieth century, the doctrine of divine healing grounded in the atonement was firmly established in the evangelical community.

Although the Pentecostal movement had strong ties with Alexander Dowie (many early leaders actually came from his Zion City), the strong pneumatological emphasis of Dowie did not play an important role in early Pentecostalism. Neither did the insights of Carter influence the Pentecostal movement.

As we have already seen, the early Pentecostal movement was radical in its emphasis on healing. There was little doubt that healing was part of the atonement. The Pentecostal pioneers taught that all sicknesses are from the devil and that Jesus will heal those who trust Him (Pastor Le Cossec), that it is wrong to pray 'if it be Thy will, heal me' (Dr Lilian B Yeomans), that healing is for everyone who believes (Richard Vinyard), that healing was provided for in the atonement (the Yugoslavian Pentecostal church), and that the use of medical help is wrong (the Brazilian Pentecostal church) (Hollenweger 1977:358ff).

According to Bloch-Hoell (1964:149) the whole Pentecostal movement agreed that the atonement is the basis for divine healing. He quotes Barrett, the father of the Norwegian Pentecostal movement, saying that the atonement of Christ must have secured salvation from sickness as well as from sin, otherwise it would not be perfect.

The early Apostolic Faith Pamphlet stated that the unbeliever can go to the *science of man* for help, but for the believer it is a curse. A later statement of the Pentecostal Holiness Church did not condemn the practice of medicine as evil, but emphasised that there is a *more excellent way* (Bloch-Hoell 1964:150).

The case of John G Lake has already been mentioned briefly. Lake is often seen by Faith teachers as the father of the Faith movement (Steele 1986:135; Van der Westhuizen 1986). Unfortunately very little is known of his ministry

and teachings. Gordon Lindsay (1952) wrote a very brief biography of Lake, covering a few aspects of his ministry in South Africa. The main part of the book is just an epitome of a book by William Burton, *When God Makes a Pastor* (1934), on the life of Elias Letwaba, with a few personal notes from Lake. Apart from that, Lindsay edited two booklets containing sermons of Lake. The sermons are unfortunately not dated and it is therefore impossible to investigate developments in Lake's theology on healing.

In some of these sermons Lake uses the language of the Faith movement and the Deliverance and Healing evangelists. In a sermon called *Have Christians the right to pray, 'If it be thy will' concerning Sickness?* (Lindsay 1981:46f), Lake maintains that the words of Jesus should not be read without the last part of the sentence, 'as in heaven, so on earth'.

How is the will of God in heaven? For a little while I want your thoughts be turned with mine heavenward. We step over there, we look all about the city. We notice its beauty and recognise its grandeur. We see the Lamb of God. We do not see a single drunken man on the golden streets, not a single man on a crutch. Not a woman tainted with sin.

(Lake 1981:47)

There is no sickness in heaven because sickness is not the will of God. Healing is part of the atonement, and no one can doubt that it is the will of God that everybody should be healed. If an unsaved person would come to a Christian and tell him or her that he or she wants to be saved, there will be no doubt in the mind of the Christian concerning the will of God to save this person who is willing and ready to confess his or her sins. The same should apply for the sick person if the Scripture is taken seriously: 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy disease' (Lake 1981:48).

From the stories in the sermon it is clear that it was preached after Lake's return to the United States. A letter to P L le Roux in 1935 indicates that Lake did change his views in his later life. In this letter Lake (1935:2) stresses his discomfort with the Healing evangelists of his time, especially their custom of praying for individuals and then creating the impression that they were all thoroughly healed. Some even went so far as to have the people testify to their healing before audiences, only to discover later that they were not really healed at all.

Lake (1935:2) ironically calls the message of these Healing evangelists 'Dollar Christianity'. He tells Le Roux that he has followed the ministry of several of the great British and American evangelists and that he had secretaries taking the names of those who had testified in the services that they were healed. He found that a great number of those were still sick when he contacted them months later.

It was this practice, Brother, that in my judgement, has destroyed world confidence in the ministry of healing. It will never be restored until all who practice the ministry of healing in the name of Jesus Christ and by the Holy Ghost settle down to minister to the individual again and again until it is a finished job, and the devil, medical science, modernists or anybody else cannot deny the truth of the healing. This will be a demonstration worthwhile to the world.

(Lake 1935:2)

In this letter Lake once again uses his experience with a sinner who needs salvation as an analogy for healing practices, only this time to prove that a single prayer is not always enough to heal a sick person and that God does not always work instantaneously: 'If we pray for a sinner repeatedly until he is saved and knows it, and for the baptism in the Holy Ghost, why not for healing?' (Lake 1935:2).

The soteriological link between healing and salvation is still evident. Yet it is clear that the radical Arminianism which places salvation almost in the hands of humans (a doctrine that played an important role in the early days of the Pentecostal movement), is not very strong in the thinking of the older Lake. Salvation, Lake maintains, is not a mechanical thing. One is not saved only because he or she has said the right things or prayed a certain prayer. The same goes for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and therefore also for healing.

It was probably experiences like those of Lake that led the Pentecostals to understand that healing was much more complicated than they expected. Many second generation Pentecostals saw the pioneers later condemning their own theology, if not explicitly, then by their later lifestyle, which often included periods of sickness and the use of medical help.

Charles Price, a Healing evangelist who had close ties with the Pentecostal pioneer, Amee Semple McPherson, played an important role in helping the young Pentecostal movement to understand that healing does not operate

mechanically. Although Price also subscribed to the teaching that healing was provided for in the atonement, he laid a new emphasis on faith (1940:70ff).

No one did more to keep the spirit of healing revivalism alive than Charles S Price. He was a Presbyterian and an Oxford graduate who received the baptism of the Spirit under the ministry of Amee Semple McPherson (Harrell 1975:17ff). He became a full-time evangelist in 1922 and carried on with his healing ministry until his death in 1947. He never joined the official Pentecostal movement, but was greatly respected by its adherents.

Price's theology was a mixture of traditional Pentecostal thinking and Reformed principles. He tried to account for those who did not receive healing by referring to the sovereignty of God. He discerned between faith, which is a gift of God, and belief, which is a human ability.

To sit down and repeat over and over 'I am healed - I am healed - I am healed' is not only unscriptural, but extremely dangerous spiritually. I admit that such a spiritually unsound procedure might help a few neurotics, but it would never remove the mountains of which the Master spoke.

(Price 1940:15)

Price rejected the idea that the believer must 'act in faith' to receive healing from God. 'Remember that faith acts, but the act comes from faith, rather than faith from the act' (Price 1940:25). He made it clear that faith is not a good work or the ability of a human being to force God to act.

Between the covers of the sacred Book there is mention made of faith as the gift of God and faith as a fruit of the Spirit. Whether it be gift or fruit, however, the source and origin of faith remains the same! It comes from God. There is no other source of faith; for it is the Faith of God!

(Price 1940:71)

Price's position on faith is undoubtedly a Reformed corrective on early Pentecostal belief that 'men are not cured of their ills because they do not appropriate the healing which God has provided through Jesus Christ's suffering' (Nichol 1966:222). If faith is a gift of God, it goes without saying that it cannot be a distinctive attribute of a good Christian as opposed to weak Christians who do not have the same faith.

The weakness of Price's position is that he does not make provision for those who never receive healing. He encourages those who have not received healing yet to wait upon the Lord for the moment of faith. Sometimes the Lord will withhold faith for a specific reason; the salvation of a loved one, for instance, or to expose a deceiver, etc (Price 1940:72f). Yet, from his illustrations one gets the impression that in the end the Lord will eventually impart faith for everyone (Price 1940:73f, 86). 'He gives us the necessary faith for all things that are in accordance with his blessed will' (Price 1940:86).

Price never preached prosperity as part of the gospel. Instead, he saw the peace and joy of the Lord as something that surpasses understanding and circumstances.

But the Christians can have imparted joy in the Holy Ghost, and rejoice in its manifestation under every condition of life. It is not dependent on surroundings, nor is it the slave of circumstance. It is the gift of God.

(Price 1940:94)

Although Price has not always been critical enough in his evaluation of faith and healing, he was much more than a mere echo of those in the Pentecostal movement who preceded him in the healing ministry. He also played a prominent role in the 1940s in keeping the emphasis on divine healing. The deliverance evangelists who succeeded him did not approach the problem of divine healing in the same balanced manner as Price. Most of them respected Price and often quoted him for their own purposes, but they almost completely ignored his correctives. They rather tended to go back to Alexander Dowie and the more radical early Pentecostals. To a certain extent they even radicalised some of the Pentecostal teachings.

Price died in 1947, just before the prominent first post-war evangelists started their ministry. Donald Gee saw the death of Price and that of Smith Wigglesworth, an English Pentecostal revivalist, within a few days of each other early in 1947 as the catalyser of the work of the Healing evangelists, who had 'a holy desire to pick up the torch of their ministry and carry it forward to new achievements' (quoted in Harrell 1975:20).

Although Price's meetings were romanticized by later generations, it seems that he had his limits and that there were more failures in his meetings than what one would conclude from reading his books. Anderson (1979:93f) quotes a report by eleven ministers, eight doctors, three professors and one lawyer

drawn up after a campaign by Price in Vancouver. They investigated 350 alleged healings resulting from Price's crusade. Of these only five were considered genuine. The committee concluded that medical treatment could have had the same results.

It is understandable that the 'new' perspectives on healing caused a stir in the Pentecostal movement. Some leaders in the movement wanted to re-evaluate the healing teachings. Leonard Steiner, a leading Swiss Pentecostal, asserted at the World Pentecostal Conference in Toronto in 1968 that God had not confirmed the message of the Healing evangelists because they so to speak made God their servant and ignored the limitation of all humans that is expressed by the formula 'Thy will be done' (Hollenweger 1977:357). In the same way Brumback accused the Healing evangelists of an overemphasis on healing (Hollenweger 1977:357). When Jack Coe was disciplined by the Assemblies of God, he said one of the reasons for the church's action was that the leaders did not believe that healing was in the atonement (Harrell 1975:111).

Hollenweger (1977:357) suggests that despite the opposition of the Pentecostals to the Healing evangelists, the theology of the latter was the unpaid account of the earlier doctrines of the Pentecostals:

The older Pentecostal denominations are now paying the penalty for often lacking the courage to make an open admission of their mistakes, for they spread and encouraged for many years the practices of the Healing evangelists, which they now condemn.

(Hollenweger 1977:357)

The rise of the Faith movement, and especially the popularity of its teachings among traditional Pentecostals show that the healing question is far from settled. During the healing revival, F F Bosworth, a former Pentecostal who left the movement because he could not accept the doctrine that everybody must speak in tongues to be baptised in the Spirit, criticised the Assemblies of God for the modern idea that God wishes to let some people suffer. According to him, this was never mentioned in the early days 'and it cripples the prayers of faith of the sick and prevents all from being healed' (quoted in Hollenweger 1977:358).

In the same way Steele (1986:136) asserts that 'Many Pentecostal preachers, afraid of adverse publicity or criticism, began to soft-pedal divine healing'.

The accusation of Steele is clear: The traditional Pentecostals neglected the faith of the fathers as far as healing is concerned and the Faith teachers are reviving this Pentecostal truth in the same way as the Healing evangelists did during the late forties. Steele (1986:135) mentions John Lake as one of the Pentecostal pioneers who still preached the correct doctrine of healing. Yet, as we have seen, the older Lake made many of the changes in his theology that Steele regards to be an unfortunate change of course.

It seems clear that it was the practical situation more than the theological insights of modern Pentecostals that led to the new views. While early Pentecostals accepted healing as part of the atonement and preached solely from this perspective, many Pentecostals (including John G Lake), like many people in the Holiness movement, found a contradiction between their theology and their experience.

No matter how strong the convictions of experience may be, this is not a good enough settlement for a theological question among Pentecostals. The question can still be asked if the Faith movement may not be right and if the traditional Pentecostals have not in fact moved away from a truth they originally adhered to.

I shall address this problem by first investigating the theological problems of the position of the Faith movement and then by answering the question of whether healing is indeed part of the atonement.

1.2.3 Some problems in the healing beliefs of the Faith movement

1.2.3.1 The question of medical help in healing

Despite the fact that most of the Faith teachers do not condemn medical science as demonic or sinful (something that often occurred in the early Pentecostal movement and the healing revival), their theology creates a vast gap between the 'spiritual' and the 'natural' world. Thus K Hagin (jr) (1979:48) maintains that everybody whose faith is not developed enough to receive healing, should go to a doctor: 'A lot of good doctors have kept a lot of people alive until they got enough of the Word in them to believe for their healing.' Like Hagin (jr), Capps (1981:39) explicitly asserts that doctors fight the same enemy as he. He also makes it clear, however, that medical healing is only for those who do not have enough faith. Ray McCauley also expresses his appreciation for doctors, but Steele (1986:143) contends that according to McCauley 'divine healing is obviously the better way - and cheaper'.

Farah (1980(a):2) tells of a faith teacher, Hobart Freeman, who was more radical than most Faith teachers and taught that anything in addition to faith (including medicine and medical science) is a sign of unbelief and should not be kept 'just in case'. The fact that at least ten women, six infants and a diabetic man had died as a result of refusing to take medicine, did not disturb Freeman's associates. According to Farah they shrugged it off by declaring that 'that's his interpretation of the Bible'. Farah (1980a:2) is correct in asserting that the deaths in Freeman's congregation 'were nothing more than theological outcome of his theology'. The case of the Parkers (Parker & Tanner 1980) is a good illustration of the difficulty of people knowing if they are 'acting in faith' and if they still do not have enough faith whether they should use medicine.

The Parkers did not attend a Faith congregation, but were members of a classical Pentecostal congregation. During their trial their minister testified that neither he nor the denomination believe in the faith message. However, he invited a minister who believes the faith teaching to preach in his church (Parker & Tanner 1980:29ff).

The Parkers responded to the faith message and accepted the healing of their diabetic son, Wesley. They did not believe the symptoms when he got sick again and discouraged him from taking an insulin injection. They kept on believing and confessing, but eventually their son died. The parents were accused of manslaughter and child abuse, and found guilty. During the trial they attended a service in which the minister preached on faith and healing.

He was telling the people to take verses from the Bible and claim them for personal use. 'God, that's what we did', I reasoned. 'If this is the right way to do things, where did we go wrong?' 'Now don't misunderstand what I am saying,' the speaker suddenly cautioned sarcastically, unaware we were in the audience. 'Don't act like your neighbours over in Barstow who didn't give their child insulin. They were definitely wrong.' ... I wanted desperately to jump up and yell, 'Hey, mister! We're the Parkers. We did exactly what you're telling everyone here to do. Why don't you tell us what we did wrong?'

(Parker & Tanner 1980:141f)

Faith teachers fail to give an answer to the serious question of the Parkers. When and how does a believer know that he or she has enough faith to abandon medical help? When is it a proof of faith not to receive medical treatment and when is it dangerous because faith is absent?

Although Faith teachers will not admit the possibility that healing or divine healing is not the will of God in specific situations, some make a distinction between their public ministry and their ministry to sick people. In a personal conversation a prominent faith teacher in Krugersdorp admitted that faith and a good Christian life are not always the only prerequisites for healing (Van der Westhuizen 1986). Referring to a prominent member of his congregation who did not receive healing, the teacher admitted that there are exceptions to the rule. However, he added, in his public ministry he cannot concentrate on these exceptions. Then he must be positive and build the faith of those who are present and desire healing from God. In his sermons he does not speak about the possibility that some may not get healed. On the contrary, he stresses that born-again Christians cannot be sick (Van der Westhuizen 1982).

The problem arises when one has to determine when a specific case should be treated as an exception and when one should proceed with the faith building process. The father of three ministers in a classical Pentecostal church attended a meeting of the evangelist in Krugersdorp and was prayed for. A few days later personal workers of the congregation visited him and encouraged him to accept his healing. They built his faith and told him that he would not die. Despite their efforts he died of the sickness that was prayed for (Hattin 1984).

1.2.3.2 The problem of doubt and people who do not receive healing

If healing should be completely provided for in the atonement, one wonders why all these extra safety guards are necessary. When the Faith teachers suggest that healing and salvation are on the same spiritual and theological level, they should have the courage to treat them as such. The mere fact that born-again Christians can go through a period of doubt does not mean that they lose their salvation. Why then does faith play a much more important role in healing?

Barron (1987:22) describes how difficult it was for the members of Hobart Freeman's church to explain why Freeman had a cripple leg and why the child of Freeman's associate and son-in-law, Bruce Kinsey, died. Freeman's own disability was almost ignored by his assembly. According to most of his mem-

bers the healing of his leg 'has been claimed by faith, but the manifestation has not occurred yet'. Others believed that it was, like Job's trials, something temporary to enrich his ministry. Freeman died without ever receiving his healing. The case of Bruce Kinsey's son was more problematic. Freeman blamed the death of his grandson on Kinsey, for lacking faith. This explanation was potentially damaging to the assembly: '(I)t is hard to maintain a ministry's integrity while claiming that one of its primary proponents was so weak as to cause his son to die' (Barron 1987:22f).

Contradictions such as these forced the healing teachers to develop the doctrine of ignoring the facts. Thus Gossett can say:

If I accept the Physical evidence against the Word of God, I nullify the Word as far as I am concerned.

But I hold fast to my confession that God's Word is true, that by His stripes I am healed, that My God does supply my needs.

I hold fast to that confession in the face of apparent contradictions, and He is bound to make good.

(Gossett 1977:9)

Because Gossett (1976:135ff) firmly believes that healing was fully provided for in the atonement, he refuses to even think of the possibility that some true believers may not receive healing (Gossett 1976:141). If healing does not occur instantaneously, he advises the sick to 'act like you are recovering' and to tell those who enquire that 'you are recovering because Jesus said so' (Gossett 1976:142).

The approach of Gossett and other Faith teachers may solve the problem temporarily but it does not answer the problem of those who remain sick even after all their positive confessions and refusal to accept their sickness.

Ray McCauley tries to give a more balanced view: It may be true that some people have come to our services and left disappointed, even angry with God. But these are often people who think that healing comes by some magical formula. They think God is a lucky charm. There are conditions which usually have to be met (quoted in Steele 1986:139f).

He then mentions a lack of faith, an unrepentant lifestyle, bitterness, an unwillingness to forgive, and doubt as reasons why some people do not receive healing (Steele 1986:140f). He refers to his mother and grandmother as examples of how healing works.

His mother was a negative person who would easily stay away from church when she did not feel well, and she was always on medication. Therefore she was never healed. His grandmother was always positive and often received healing (Steele 1986:142f).

Even though McCauley stresses that he does not condemn his mother and neither judges anybody else, his whole attitude leaves the impression that those who do not receive healing are not living up to the Christian expectations. His underlying belief is still that everyone who meets the conditions must be healed.

No matter how sincere the Faith teachers may be, their emphasis on the atonement as the ground for divine healing will always result in an unsolved problem as far as those who do not receive healing are concerned. The problem is clearly demonstrated in the case of the child of Bruce Kinsey (and other children who do not receive healing). According to Pentecostal and evangelical thinking one cannot blame the death of children on the lack of faith of the parents as Freeman did. Pentecostals believe that infants are saved because of the atonement and not because of the faith of their parents. If the Faith teachers were consistent in their thinking, the death of children should be seen as a total contradiction of the doctrine that refers healing, like salvation, completely to the atonement.

1.2.3.3 Teachings on the new birth and the curse of the law

The emphasis on the atonement and the Arminian teaching are not the only foundation for the healing teaching of the Faith movement. The teachings of the new birth and the curse of the law must also be referred to.

The new birth

The teaching of the new birth plays a prominent role in the healing teachings. McConnell (1982:102) contends that the Faith movement, like E W Kenyon, sees a human being always as either filled with 'Satanic nature' or with 'God's nature': 'Salvation, then, ... is two-sided: (1) it is the eradication of the Satanic nature and (2) the reinfusion of God's nature.'

Because of this view Hagin (McConnell 1982:102) and Van der Westhuizen see an analogy between the virgin birth and the new birth. According to Van der Westhuizen (1982) Jesus was an incarnation of God because of the virgin birth - He was born of the seed of God. In the salvation experience humans are born of the same seed. Thus Hagin can say that the believer is as much an incarnation of God as Jesus Christ (McConnell 1982:108).

The consequences of this anthropology and Christology will be analysed in a later chapter. This doctrine has interesting consequences for the doctrine of divine healing. Van der Westhuizen (1982) holds that the born-again Christian receives the seed of God through the new birth and this seed (or nature) does not have cancer and other afflictions.

The Faith teachers do not come to the same conclusion as far as sin is concerned. Hagin (1979:13f) believes in perfection, but does not claim to have arrived there yet. The distinction between spirit, soul and body makes it possible for these teachers to conclude that the new birth takes place in the spirit. Therefore, 'God isn't going to do anything with our body or our mind ... it is up to us to do something' (Hagin 1978:12).

The curse of the law

Paul's statement that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law ... in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles ...' (Gl 3:13, 14) plays a very important role in the Faith movement. Magliato (1981:51) contends that this text is the foundation of the erroneous teaching that being redeemed from the curse of the law means being freed from poverty, sickness and disease.

The root of this interpretation of the curse of the law undoubtedly lies in the healing and deliverance revival. Although they did not work out a theological framework for their teachings, most of the Healing evangelists saw sickness as a disease and an oppression in need of deliverance (cf Harrell 1975:6). K Hagin (1983b:1ff) uses Galatians 3:13, 14 and Deuteronomy 28 to develop a theological structure based on the basic position of the Healing evangelists. He asserts a clear link between Galatians 3 and Deuteronomy 28. The curses mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 are identified with the curse of the law that Paul mentions in Galatians 3:13f, while the blessings of Deuteronomy 28 are the blessings of Abraham mentioned by Paul. Most of the curses and blessings do not play a prominent role in the theology of the Faith teachers. The curse of the law is identified mainly as poverty and disease, while health and prosperity are the marks of the blessing of Abraham (Hagin 1983b:5).

With this interpretation Hagin places the atonement in a very specific theological framework. The redemptive work of Christ has to do with the whole human person, not only with matters spiritual. Atonement also means deliverance from the curse of the law, which is usually defined as sickness, poverty and death.

Without evaluating all the soteriological aspects at this stage, it is interesting to note that deliverance from sickness and poverty is taken literally, while deliverance from sin is referred to gradual perfection (Hagin 1983b:24ff). Deliverance from death is spiritualised. While testimonies of perfection and people raised from death appeared frequently during the healing revival, perfection from sin (and even holiness *per se*) and the raising of the dead are not themes of the Faith movement.

It can thus be concluded that the Faith movement stands very close to the healing revival of the 1940s and 1950s as far as healing is concerned. The Healing evangelists wanted to revive the older Pentecostal doctrines of healing and deliverance and the Faith movement not only linked up with the healing revival, but in many instances radicalised the doctrines of the Healing movement and ignored the doctrinal statements of the Healing evangelists who stood closer to second generation Pentecostal thinking.

It is furthermore clear that the Faith movement, like the Healing evangelists, stands close to the original Pentecostal teaching on healing. The teaching that healing was provided for in the atonement plays a prominent role in the Faith movement.

1.2.3.4 Eschatology and healing

In the early Pentecostal movement the link between healing and the atonement led to a strong emphasis on realised eschatology. Jonathan Paul, the father of the German and Swiss Pentecostals, realised that if healing was provided for in the atonement, and this means that Christians do not have to be sick anymore, the same ought to be said about both sin and death:

We do not say that a Christian can no longer sin, be ill or die.
But we assert with the word of truth in Christ Jesus that the living members of the body of Christ no longer have to sin.

And since He has borne their sickness, they no longer have to be sick. And the hour is near when they will no longer have to die either.

(Quoted in Hollenweger 1977:359f)

Not every Pentecostal pioneer had the theological abilities of Jonathan Paul. Most of them simply accepted that God wants to heal, that sickness was from the devil and that healing was part of the atonement without thinking of the logical consequences of these presuppositions for other Pentecostal doctrines. Jonathan Paul at least tried to work out the consequences of the centrality of healing in the soteriological sphere. He came to the conclusion that if one interprets healing as a radical result of the atonement, the same ought to be true of sin and death.

The Pentecostal movement as a whole never made the same logical conclusions as Jonathan Paul. Instead of accepting a radical realised eschatology, they mingled radical realised eschatology with fundamentalist dispensationalism (Hollenweger 1977:297f).

According to Pentecostals the kingdom of God was established by the ministry of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit. They also laid strong emphasis on the immanent second coming of Christ. Some claim that Pentecostal preaching is first of all eschatological. It can at least be asserted that the final outcome of things gets much more attention in the Pentecostal movement than in most other Christian traditions (Bloch-Hoell 1964:154), and that Premillennialism has been a major theme in Pentecostalism almost from the outset (Dayton 1983:178).

The use of dispensationalism by the Pentecostals - although in an adapted form - is to be understood historically rather than theologically or logically. The early Pentecostals simply took over the teachings concerning the end times of their predecessor, the Holiness movement. Pentecostals do not really find themselves at ease with the Premillennialism of the dispensationalists. It is actually curious that they have not developed a pneumatological eschatology (cf Dayton 1983:178ff).

When the early Pentecostals, like their spiritual fathers, were confronted with death and true Christians who remained sick, they changed their doctrine of healing without addressing the underlying presuppositions that healing was provided for in the atonement. The reality of sickness and death caused the Pentecostal movement to keep realised and unrealised eschatology in balance

without answering the question of what the consequences of the atonement were for the whole human person. The result of this was that while many Pentecostals were seeking for new ways of understanding healing, others maintained the traditional position.

Leonhard Steiner, the Swiss Pentecostal leader, questioned the atonement as basis for healing in a lecture entitled *Divine Healing in God's Plan for Redemption* before the World Pentecostal Conference in 1968 (cf Hollenweger 1977:357ff). He criticised the Healing evangelists for wanting to make God their servant. He also asked if it might not be possible that it is not the will of God to heal everybody. Steiner, like Carter, attempted to base healing in the sovereignty of God. Humans are always limited by the will of God, he said. Although his lecture was widely accepted, it also provoked violent objections (Hollenweger 1977:358).

It is not difficult to understand why the Healing evangelists and later the Faith movement saw the new stand of the traditional Pentecostals as a compromise of the Pentecostal message. On the one hand Pentecostals condemned them for proclaiming a gospel similar to that of the Pentecostal pioneers (Hollenweger 1977:357f). On the other hand the Pentecostals never admitted that the pioneers overemphasised the role of the atonement in healing. Neither did they take a second look at the presupposition that healing was provided for in the atonement.

Unlike the traditional Pentecostals with their strong ties to dispensationalism, the Faith movement came to the conclusion that the atonement not only provided for salvation and healing, but also for prosperity. This radical realised eschatology takes little note of the theological view that salvation in its perfect form will only be realised when Jesus Christ returns to the earth - a view held by traditional Pentecostals. In the theology of the Faith movement there is little tension between the eschatological 'already' and the 'not yet'.

It is clear that the traditional Pentecostal view that the atonement is the ground for healing created a strong realised eschatology in the Faith movement. Therefore it seems wrong to address the Faith movement without asking if healing has indeed been provided for in the atonement.

1.2.3.5 *The atonement as the foundation for healing*

The Faith movement, like the Healing evangelists, stands close to the original Pentecostal teaching on healing. The belief that healing is part of the soteriological sphere of salvation is the foundation of healing in both the main-

line Pentecostal churches and the Healing movement. Unless the Pentecostal movement addresses this foundation, their accusations that the Faith movement overemphasises healing cannot be taken seriously.

When the Healing evangelists of the fifties came on the scene and proclaimed a healing message similar to that of the Pentecostal pioneers, Pentecostal leaders like Carl Brumback of the Assemblies of God and the Swiss Pentecostal Leonard Steiner condemned them (Hollenweger 1977:357ff). Yet at the same conference a message similar to that of the Healing evangelists could also be heard (Hollenweger 1977:357).

The Pentecostal movement has never developed a pneumatological doctrine of healing (Dayton 1983:140ff), although Blumhardt (sr), Carter and Dowie did emphasise this aspect. But the mainstream of the movement adopted the traditional doctrine of the Holiness movement with its strong emphasis on both the atonement and perfection. It remains a question whether the soteriological basis of healing is indeed the best approach from a Pentecostal perspective. Although Dowie did not break with the idea that the atonement is the ground for healing, he extracted healing from the narrow soteriological rooting and restated it in a 'more distinctly Pentecostal vein' (Dayton 1983:177).

It is true that even leaders in the Faith movement do not completely ignore the pneumatological aspect of healing. Thus, McCauley asserts that there are usually conditions to be met before anyone can receive healing, but adds:

I say usually because we cannot restrict God's sovereign will. He sometimes heals a person who knows nothing about healing or even the gospel. Then it is a 'sign' and a demonstration of His divine power. This type of healing manifestation often happens in evangelical crusades.

(Quoted in Steele 1986:140)

Oral Roberts also emphasises healing as a 'gift'. Although he initially believed that God wants to heal everyone, he stated in 1971 that 'there may be exceptions when God will sovereignly say yes or no' (quoted in Harrell 1985:451f). Roberts thus emphasises the pneumatological aspect of healing even more strongly than McCauley. While McCauley believes that Christians should all be healed on grounds of the atonement, but that God is also free to heal people who do not believe as a 'sign', Roberts makes all healing dependent upon the sovereignty of God. Steiner says the same thing (Hollenweger 1977:357), and Lake in his later life, also stressed the will of God in healing.

Although Price (1940:11f), like the Healing evangelists and the modern Faith movement, referred healing to faith, faith was for him not a quality of Christians but a gift of God. Again, for Price healing was primarily a gift of the Spirit.

The question is still whether Pentecostals ought to reject their old position that healing, like salvation, was paid for in the atonement, or if the pneumatological basis for healing could perhaps be used instead of the soteriological one.

Farah (1980b:71ff) believes that Pentecostals and Charismatics can believe in healing as part of the atonement without making the mistakes of the Faith movement. According to him Isaiah 53:4 can only be interpreted as stating that Jesus bore our sickness on the cross. It is also true that God wills every person to enjoy perfect health of body, soul and spirit. When he answers the question why everybody who believes is not healed, Farah (1980b:76) calls healing 'a divine mystery'. According to his belief God does not want to reveal the reason why Christians who believe are not always healed 'and humility is our best approach to unraveling the answer'. He concludes that, theologically, salvation and healing should receive equal universality, however with the realisation that 'the actual experience of healing is not (even in New Testament times) enjoyed as universally as the grace of salvation by those who believe' (Farah 1980b:85).

Magliato (1981:85) sees the fact that Paul confessed his having an infirmity and accepted it (Gl 4:13, 14; 2 Cor 12:5, 10) and the fact that he prescribed medicine to Timothy, as proof that healing is not *guaranteed* in the atonement. But, like Farah, he rejects the fact that the atonement played a decisive role in healing. He admits that 'there is healing in the Word', but adds: 'There is a mystery associated with God's deliverance and healing, and I will not presume these mysteries with pat little answers' (Magliato 1981:96). He places healing in the pneumatological sphere when he asserts that healing is not a guarantee but a *benefit* of calvary (Magliato 1981:97). Like Lake and Carter, Magliato makes the sovereignty of God decisive with regard to healing. 'God as God desires because God is sovereign. We cannot accuse God of playing favourites. He is Lord. He does not have to discuss His moves with us' (Magliato 1981:98).

Barron (1987:86) sees a discrepancy in the theology of the Faith teachers in the fact that they grant that healing can be gradual, yet claim that their healing ministries are replicas of Jesus' healing ministry. There is, however, no evidence of gradual healing in Jesus' ministry in the Bible. The same can be said about the belief of the Faith teachers that healing was provided for in the

atonement. If healing is provided for as part of salvation, there seems to be no place for gradual healing. Like salvation, healing then should be instantaneous for everyone who accepts it.

Like Magliato and Farah, Barron (1987:87) does see healing as part of the gospel - without making it part of the soteriological sphere.

Gordon Fee (1979:14ff), a Pentecostal New Testament scholar, takes the same line after investigating the 'healing texts' of the Faith movement. He refers to a paper of the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God where it is stated clearly that the position of the Faith movement is actually a radicalisation of early Pentecostal doctrine. The Pentecostal pioneers accepted healing as provided for in the atonement. However, the pioneers did not regard healing in the atonement in the same way as salvation. According to this paper 'healing is "provided for" because "the atonement brought release from the ... consequences of sin", nonetheless, since "we have not yet received the redemption of our bodies", suffering and death are still our lot until the resurrection'. Fee looks closely at Isaiah 53:4 and argues that although Matthew applies the text with reference to the healing ministry of Jesus, he does not even mention the cross or the atonement. In 1 Peter Isaiah 53:5 is cited without reference to physical healing. It is clear from the context that 1 Peter makes metaphorical use of the original text.

Thus Peter says: 'He Himself bore our sins (Isaiah 53:12, cf 53:4 in the Septuagint) ... that we might die to sin'. He then goes on: 'By his wounds you have been healed (53:5), for you were as sheep going astray'. The allusion to both verses 5 and 6, joined by for and referring to 'sheep going astray', plus the change to the past tense, all make it abundantly clear that 'healing' here is a metaphor for being restored to health from the sickness of their sins.

(Fee 1979:15)

1 Peter follows the Septuagint rather than the original Hebrew text of Isaiah, and the Septuagint had already translated Isaiah 53:4 metaphorically ('He himself bore our *sins*' (not sickness) (Fee 1979:15). From the context of Isaiah 53, Fee (1984:15ff) concludes that even the author of the chapter used the word 'sickness' as a metaphor for the sins of Israel and Judah. 'In the context of Isaiah that refers first of all to the healing of the wounds and disease of sin' (Fee 1979:16). Since sickness was clearly recognised to be a consequence of the Fall, the metaphor can also have secondary literal meaning, which Matthew

picked up (Fee 1979:15). The Bible does not explicitly teach that healing is provided for in the atonement. ‘However, the New Testament does see the cross as the focus of God’s redemptive activity. In this sense, and in the sense that sickness is ultimately a result of the fall, one may perhaps argue that healing finds its focal point in the atonement’ (Fee 1979:14).

It is clear that although they regard healing as related to the atonement, Pentecostal critics of the Faith movement all agree that, like death, healing cannot be placed on the same level as salvation. The problem with the Faith movement is that they have overemphasised the relationship between healing and the atonement to such an extent that they fail to see that the ‘rules of salvation’ cannot be applied to healing.

There seems to be an undeniable link between healing and the coming of the kingdom. Even Hollenweger (1977:367) asserts that ‘the connection between salvation and healing cannot simply be denied’. It is not only the statement of Isaiah 53:4 and the fact that Matthew applies it to physical healings in the ministry of Jesus, that led Pentecostals to notice a link between healing and the atonement. The important role that healing played in the ministry of Jesus, confirms this position.

Yet it also seems true that the statement ‘He bore our sicknesses and carried our pain’ (on the cross) always needs some clarification from the pneumatological sphere. Healing cannot fully be explained in the soteriological sphere. One can only say that the atonement made healing a *possibility* and not an open *guarantee* (cf Magliato 1981:97)), or confess like Fee (1979:14) that one can only argue in a circuitous way for bodily healing in the atonement. Healing is never an automatic or mechanical act of God for everyone who believes. Rather, it should always be seen from the pneumatological sphere and in the light of the sovereignty of God. The emphasis on the pneumatological aspect of healing has never been absent in the healing and Pentecostal movements. Modern Pentecostals can learn from early pioneers in the healing ministry like Dowie and Carter who placed some emphasis on the soteriological aspect without forgetting the fact healing is a gift of the Spirit. For those who make faith, as an act of humans, the key to healing, the balance brought by Charles Price, is important. While the Faith movement makes faith the key to almost every healing, Price pointed out that faith is not an ability of humans, but a gift of the Spirit. Pentecostals and adherents of the Faith movement must take note of the experience of healing pioneers like John G Lake and Carter who gained new insights into the complexity of healing after they had experienced sickness themselves.

The difference between the Pentecostal movement and the Faith movement does not end with different interpretations of the relationship between the atonement and healing. The new emphasis of Pentecostals and Charismatics on the sovereignty of God (Steiner, the later Lake, Farah and Magliato) and on healing as a gift of the Spirit, are symptoms that they, like Blumhardt, did not expect heaven to be realised completely on earth before the return of Christ. The Faith movement, however, works with a strong emphasis on eschatology as a realised truth. Jesus has already overcome the sickness of the world. Therefore all the promises of God must materialise now and here.

This view is opposed by Barron who states that healing must be understood in terms of the *already* and the *not yet*. Although he accepts the fact that healing plays an important role in the Bible, he also stresses that '(t)he reality of sick and dying Christians ever since New Testament times suggests that physical healing may sometimes be one of those not-yet benefits' (Barron 1987:79). The acceptance of the fact that some aspects of salvation and deliverance have not been realised yet, must now not lead to a tolerance of sickness which 'may not be in harmony with the attitude of Jesus who repeatedly healed the sick' (Barron 1987:80).

Gordon Fee (1984:12ff) links an eschatological understanding of the New Testament with an emphasis on healing as a sign. According to Fee (1984:19) eschatology is the essential framework of New Testament theology. The Jews in the times of Jesus expected God to bring an end to the present age through his Messiah and usher in the New Age. But, despite the resurrection and the Spirit's coming in fullness and power, '... beginning with Peter's sermon in Acts 3, the church came to realise that Jesus had not come to usher the 'final' End, but the 'beginning' of the End' (Fee 1984:20). He concludes that the early believers saw themselves as truly eschatological people who lived 'between the times'. On the one hand the End and the new beginning have already come in the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, and with it the benefits and blessings of the future. 'But they still had to live out these benefits and values in the present world' (Fee 1979:20).

Fee (1979:18ff) argues correctly that the Faith teachers are not consistent in their dealing with suffering and sickness. They teach that 'Suffering is something external to us, which comes as a result of our following Christ Sickness and disease, on the other hand, are part of the Fall and the curse, and these have now been overcome by Christ'. According to Fee, the Bible does not make these distinctions. The most common word in both the New and the Old Testament for sickness is 'weakness'. Therefore all evil is the result of the Fall, not just sickness. 'Sickness, therefore, is not some unique part of the Fall,

deliverance from which is ours on demand, it is simply a part of the whole fallenness. We are promised healing; yet there is also a place in the present age for "a little wine" for one's frequent ailments' (Fee 1979:19).

Like the other Pentecostal and charismatic critics of the Faith movement, Fee (1979:21f) stresses the sovereignty of God in physical healing. He (Fee 1979:23) sees healing as a gracious gift of God. In doing this he follows the Pentecostal line of men like Leonard Steiner and the later Lake. There are so many unanswered questions, both practical and theological in the old Pentecostal theology of healing (the theology that has been revived by the Deliverance evangelists and which is being echoed by the Faith teachers today, that Pentecostals, like many of the people from the Holiness movement at the turn of the century (cf Carter) were forced to rethink their theology).

If Pentecostals desire to resist the fateful theology of Hobart Freeman and the like, it is important that they start at the right place: the wrong emphasis on the relationship between healing and the atonement and an overemphasis on realised eschatology. Only then will the Pentecostal movement be able to free itself from the mistakes of the pioneers. In doing so, the Pentecostal movement will not deviate from its original Pentecostal faith. On the contrary, Pentecostals will follow a tradition that started in the later life of pioneers like John G Lake, and was later followed by great Pentecostal leaders like Leonard Steiner and Carl Brumback. By taking healing out of the soteriological sphere, the Pentecostal movement will be able to develop a pneumatological doctrine of healing. This theological emphasis will not only be in line with Pentecostal thinking and theology that stresses healing as a gift of the Spirit. It will also be able to use the insights of leading figures in the Healing movement like Blumhardt (sr), Dowie and Price.

The biggest advantage of a pneumatological theology of healing is that it will give answers to the thousands who did everything the Faith teachers taught them to do without receiving healing, those who 'stood on the Word', 'confessed' their healing, refused to recognise the symptoms, who 'stopped their medication in faith', who received 'a touch of healing, and a Word of healing from the Lord' (often given by the faith teacher), and yet, remained sick. A pneumatological theology of healing accepts healing as a possibility, sees sickness as a result of the fall, healing as a sign of the coming kingdom and a gracious gift of God. Yet it knows that God is sovereign and He cannot be manipulated by humans. A pneumatological theology of healing, in line with Pentecostal thinking, has an eschatological vision. It knows that the church is living as an eschatological community 'between the times'. While believers are already experiencing the New World in salvation and deliverance

from evil, they are still living in a world that is predominantly evil, and they are waiting for the day when the kingdom of God will come as a fully realised reality.

1.3 The doctrine of prosperity

God used the faith message to finance the new churches

Tim Salmon
Rhema Faith Convention 1987

1.3.1 Prosperity as a fund-raising mechanism in the healing revival

From the outset prosperity teaching was closely linked to fundraising efforts. A A Allen was probably the first evangelist 'to gain support by appealing to the financial dreams of his followers' (Harrell 1975:74f).

Allen saw prosperity not as part of Christ's blessing to all believers, but as a charismatic gift given to him to bestow upon his followers. In 1962 he announced that God had given him 'a new anointing and a new power to lay hands on believers who gave \$100,00 towards the support of our missionary outreach and bestow upon each of them power to get wealth!' (quoted in Harrell 1975:200). He rejoiced in the fact that many other ministers started to preach a prosperity message shortly afterwards. Although he maintained that not everybody had the gift 'to bestow power to get wealth', he predicted that God will use more people to bestow this gift in years to come (quoted in Harrell 1975:200f).

In March 1963 Allen received yet another vision from God 'like a flash from heaven, a bolt out of the blue'. God revealed to Allen that He is a rich God who wants to give wealth to his followers and that those who want to share in this prosperity, must obey 'the servant of the Lord' (quoted in Harrell 1975:201). The first part of Allen's vision, which was later printed, is still a major slogan in the Faith movement. 'I am a wealthy God. I am not poor But I say unto thee, claim my wealth in thy hand, yea, in thy purse and in thy substance. For behold, I plan to do a new thing in the earth!' (quoted in Harrell 1975:201).

Thus Allen was not only the first healing evangelist to articulate the undertones of prosperity in the healing revival, but he was probably the first evangelist who linked the prosperity teaching to the doctrine of God.

The prosperity teaching gained quick popularity and by the late sixties testimonies of financial blessing came to outweigh healing reports in Allen's magazine (Harrell 1975:201). Don Stewart, who took over Allen's ministry after his death in 1970, developed the prosperity teaching into a successful fund-raising scheme. Meyers (1981:27) tested the validity of one of these schemes. He received a circular from Stewart which included a miracle prayer cloth which had touched Stewart's body.

Stewart claimed that his readers could unleash God's miraculous power by writing a wish or a prayer on the prayer cloth envelope, putting the cloth under his or her pillow and mailing it back the following morning. Then Stewart would pray for three days and nights over the cloth before once again sending it back to the reader.

Although Stewart did not ask for money explicitly, monetary offerings were also encouraged with the reminder of Jesus' words, 'Give and it shall be given unto you'.

Meyers (1981:27) decided to test this miracle system: 'I asked this man of the cloth to get God to stop Don Stewart from exploiting the suffering people with his arrogant self-deification'. A week later Meyers received an answer, printed to appear handwritten. Stewart assured him he had been praying for his special request and the cloth. He promised that victory was coming!

Oral Roberts, one of the most respected Healing evangelists, also played a prominent role in the development of a theology of prosperity. As early as 1954 Roberts promised financial prosperity to his followers. Initially he promised a sevenfold return on all money pledged to his ministry (Harrell 1975:105). Harrell (1975:158) calls Oral Roberts the pioneer of the teaching that giving would bring prosperity for the donor. In the early sixties he developed a Blessing Pact Covenant that he sent to his regular partners. This was later replaced by the Seed-Faith booklets. These booklets had monthly coupons for prayer requests and a place to note the amount of contribution. 'The key to prosperity, according to Roberts, was for a Christian to release his faith by planting a seed. In return, God would meet his needs' (Harrell 1975:158).

Like Allen's *Miracle Monthly Magazine*, Oral Roberts's Abundant Life devoted a fair amount of space to prosperity testimonies since the late sixties. Wayne Robinson resigned in 1969 as editor because of these testimonies (Harrell 1985:284).

Many (if not all) of the popular proof texts of the prosperity teachings in the Faith movement originated with Roberts. The Seed-Faith principle was rooted in an early discovery of Roberts that 3 John: 1 & 2 endorses prosperity (Harrell 1985:461). K Copeland (1974:13) uses 3 John: 2-4 as the starting point for his prosperity teachings. He understands these Scriptures in such a way as to conclude that God's will is prosperity, that it is available and that it would be stupid of you not to partake of it (K Copeland 1974:51).

In Roberts's case the prosperity message was not self-centred, but grew out of an increasing feeling that poverty was an oppression which needed healing (Harrell 1985:461, 357). Roberts also believed that sickness was generally related to poverty and social oppression (Harrell 1985:461).

At that stage it was possible for Roberts to develop a stronger social emphasis in his theology. Although conservative on moral issues, Roberts took a strong stand against racial prejudice and discrimination almost from the beginning of his ministry. Equal rights for Blacks became a major theme for Roberts in the early 1960s (Harrell 1985:446). He had no sympathy for the oppressors of the poor and the Blacks. During the ghetto riots Roberts showed a great deal of sympathy for the cause of the Blacks and he even considered directing his ministry towards the healing of the social trauma of Blacks. 'But that was not to be. Roberts was not a social reformer, though his message continued to have a broad appeal to American blacks' (Harrell 1985:447).

Yet Roberts was also dependent upon the money of the affluent society to keep his ministry going. This possibly prevented him from moving more towards the poor and taking a stand against exploitation and economic oppression. When Oral Roberts University came into being, Roberts established close links with several prominent businessmen and staunch supporters of the free-enterprise system. He now directed his Seed-Faith principle more towards the middle-class. In a promotional pamphlet ORU is described as 'a free-enterprise university', and the Seed-Faith principle as the principle 'farmers and successful businessmen know ... well. What you plant is what you get, be it corn in the ground, or dollars wisely invested' (quoted in Harrell 1985:421).

Eventually Roberts was able to lay the foundation for the prosperity teachings. Like the prosperity teachers, he believes that there is a vast difference between tithing in the Old Testament and giving in the New Testament. Tithing in the Old Testament was owed. But since Jesus has paid all the debts of all people, those who give under the new covenant (not pay) should expect 'a great blessing' (quoted in Harrell 1985:461). Hagin used these basic roots to develop his prosperity doctrine.

In 1970 Roberts laid down three principles of Seed-Faith in his *Miracle of Seed-Faith*. These 'principles' clearly part with his older beliefs of prosperity as God's deliverance from poverty. Prosperity gradually became an end in itself.

The first key principle is that God is your source (Roberts 1970:13). Roberts quotes Philippians 4:19 to prove that God would supply abundantly. This principle was radicalised by K Copeland (1974:11) who said that even world shortages can have no effect on Jesus in heaven and because Philippians 4:19 states that all needs are to be met according to His riches in glory, it cannot affect the Christian either.

The second principle was taken from Luke 6:38, 'Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom'. Roberts (1970:6ff) sees this principle in close relationship with the atonement. According to his understanding the Seed-Faith principle operated in the atonement. God sowed his Son, Jesus Christ, in order to receive the harvest of redeemed humanity. Thus Roberts was able to draw a direct line from the atonement to the healing of the body and eventually to prosperity. If Jesus really came to set the whole human free, it seems logical that deliverance from poverty should be included.

Roberts places prosperity, like healing, in the soteriological sphere. With this switch in his theological thinking, his earlier conviction that poverty is a curse from which deliverance is necessary recedes into the background. The deliverance that is needed is no longer a gift of the Spirit, but merely an acceptance of the accomplishment of Christ on the cross.

K Copeland (1974:74ff) took over this principle and radicalised it to promise instant prosperity for Christians. He suggests that it is possible to make a covenant with God on the grounds of this Scripture and Mark 10:30 where Jesus 'promised a hundredfold return now in this time'.

Lastly Roberts taught his partners to expect a miracle. This aspect of the Seed-Faith principle was seen by many as a 'break-through' (Harrell 1985:462). Although giving has played some role in traditional Pentecostal doctrine from the outset, and has played an important role in the healing revival, Roberts was possibly the first person to teach Christians to expect to receive in return.

Roberts was also one of the first Healing evangelists who promised a fixed return, namely sevenfold, to those who supported his ministry (Harrell 1975:105). K Copeland (1974:74) used this principle to promise a hundredfold return.

Even the controversial emphasis on faith played a role in Roberts's theology. In his early years he used the phrase 'turning your faith loose' as a precondition for a miracle (Harrell 1985:4511ff). Like the later Faith teachers Roberts initially believed in positive confession. In his later years Roberts admitted that his early teachings did not take the sovereign will of God into account.

It is not incidental that Roberts has established new links with the Faith teachers from 1979. The new relationship started in the camp meetings of Kenneth Hagin (Harrell 1985:423). Roberts had some financial difficulties and Hagin gave him an offering of \$400 000.

Between 1981 and 1983 several Faith teachers attended the chapel services at ORU at the invitation of Roberts, despite protest from two prominent theologians and close friends of Roberts, Charles Farah and Howard Ervin, together with other staff members (Harrell 1985:426). Although the theologians believed that they had convinced Roberts of the dangers of the Faith theology, he has maintained close relationships with the movement. Harrell (1985:427) sees this relationship as a return of Roberts to his cultural roots. 'In the Hagin camp meetings, he was invigorated by the joyous worship and ecstatic moving of the Spirit, an atmosphere much like that in his own meetings in the 1950s. Oral was culturally at home there in a way he would never be in a Methodist church' (Harrell 1985:247).

Although his contribution to the prosperity doctrine was not as big as that of Allen and Roberts, T L Osborn, another Healing evangelist, played a prominent role in popularising this teaching since 1970 (Harrell 1975:77). Osborn used the Pact of Plenty concept in the same way that Allen used the Blessing Pact and Oral Roberts the Seed-Faith booklets.

The obvious difference between Osborn and the other early proclaimers of prosperity was their respective lifestyles. Roberts never lived in luxury. At one stage he actually experienced problems because the Seed-Faith principle did not work in his personal life (Harrell 1985:35). Allen directed himself mainly to the poor classes (often Blacks). Both Roberts and Allen initially saw poverty as a curse that needs to be addressed (Harrell 1975:74). The early Healing evangelists did not enrich themselves with their fund-raising efforts and 'theology of giving'. 'More often than not, high pressure fund-raising methods were a product of desperation, not greed. The financial pressures on the evangelists who aspired to national reputations were enormous' (Harrell 1975:105).

T L Osborn was obviously in another class. He was often criticised for his impressive headquarters building in Tulsa (the home town of Oral Roberts) which housed a museum of valuable artifacts and an expensive collection of antique cars. Despite his lifestyle, Osborn has had a tremendous impact on the Pentecostal world. He has started many new churches around the world and his organisation supports many ministers and missionaries from various denominations worldwide (Harrell 1975:71).

None of the Healing evangelists did more to promote prosperity teaching than Kenneth Hagin. He was an evangelist and pastor in the Assemblies of God from 1938 until 1962 when he resigned to start his own association (McConnell 1982:9). He is commonly recognised by other leaders in the Faith movement (like K Copeland, C Capps and Fred Price) as the father of the faith message. 'Hagin prophetically sanctioned and 'anointed' Copeland, who, in turn 'raised up' Jerry Savelle, his long-time associate, who now operates his own association' (McConnell 1982:11).

Being part of the healing revival himself, Hagin must have been influenced by the prevailing theology of the Healing revival and by the teachings of prominent evangelists like Oral Roberts and A A Allen.

The healing revival prepared the way for faith teaching. Many of the Faith teachers had links with either Tulsa (where Roberts is based) or Fort Worth (the home town of Hagin before he moved to Tulsa) (McConnell 1982:11).

1.3.2 The 'theology of giving'

It has been indicated that the prosperity doctrine is based on realised eschatology. It has also become clear that these teachings have a strong historical background in the fund-raising efforts of the Healing evangelists. This aspect

of the doctrine still plays an important role and it has been provided in a theological framework.

The role of prosperity teaching in the financing of the Faith movement is evident in the publications and sermons of the Faith teachers. Tim Salmon (1987) stated in a sermon at the Rhema Faith Convention in Randburg that God used prosperity teaching to finance the new Charismatic churches. This doctrine is mostly presented as a Biblical 'law'.

Possibly the crudest example of how the Faith movement grounded their theology of giving in the Scriptures is founded in a sermon, *Sow in Famine* preached by Jerry Savelle (1983) at the Rhema Faith Convention in Johannesburg.

As a text Savelle used Genesis 26 verses 1, 12 and 13.

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Abraham went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

And Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him and the man became rich and gained more and more until he became very rich.

Savelle used this text to proclaim his doctrine of a hundredfold return, and as an encouragement to the faithful to give to the Lord, even if they could not afford it, even if they were living in famine.

According to Savelle Isaac received a hundredfold return on what he sowed because he sowed irrespective of the fact that there was famine in the land.

The exegesis of Savelle needs closer scrutiny. It is quite clear that he uses the text merely as an allegory or a symbol of the 'truth' or doctrine that he wants to proclaim. This text has nothing to do with 'giving to the Lord' or anybody else for that matter. It is simply a story of Isaac and his relationship with Abimelech and the blessing of God upon Isaac. What is more, Isaac did not receive a hundredfold return in the land of the famine (verse 1), but in the land of Abimelech.

It can be argued that Pentecostal homiletic has never been too concerned about the specific exegetical value of a text, but that the truth behind the text, the illustrated truth is the important aspect of Pentecostal preaching.

This is indeed true of many Pentecostal sermons. However, in the case of Savelle the facts are a little different. He is not merely illustrating a well known and accepted Biblical truth. He is introducing a new concept of giving and reward. A new doctrine is emerging in the sermon: Those who are prepared to give to the Lord, especially in difficult situations, can expect a hundredfold return from Him. The aspect of giving is the real emphasis of the sermon and that is both exegetically and theologically unacceptable.

In his extraordinary exegesis of the story of the rich young ruler, K Copeland also emphasises the importance and blessing of giving:

If the (rich young ruler) had really known the Covenant, he would have thought, 'What does the Covenant say about giving to the poor?' He would have remembered Proverbs 19:17 that says, 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again' ... he didn't know God's system of finance.

(K Copeland 1974:64f)

Copeland (1974:67) then explains 'God's system of finance': 'Do you want a hundredfold return on your money? Give and let God multiply it back to you. No bank in the world offers this kind of return! Praise the Lord!'

Although giving plays an important role in the books and the sermons of the movement, it is seldom specified as giving to the poor. Hagin (1983b:2ff) quotes Luke 6:38, which clearly refers to giving to people and receiving back from people:

Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye meet withal it shall be measured to you again.

Hagin then relates a story of an evangelist who preached on this text during a revival campaign. At the end of the campaign he took up an offering of \$10 000 for air-conditioning for the church. Two businessmen who had financial problems gave more than they could afford and within thirty days both were out of the red.

In the next paragraph Hagin (1983b:4) quotes Malachi 3:10 and defends the New Testament basis for the giving of tithes.

The Faith teachers usually make the giving of tithes a prerequisite for receiving prosperity from God. Gossett (1976:61f) quotes Luke 6:38 to prove that God wants humans to give tithes so that He can give back to them. Thus he states that 'if you are experiencing poverty, you can give your way to prosperity. If you are poverty-stricken you can't do anything better than to give boldly to God' (Gossett 1976:63).

Lundstrom (1979:98) conveys the 'truths' for those who seek success and prosperity: 'First all wealth belongs to God. Second, the ability to gain wealth is God's gift to us. And third, *we should seek to use money to extend the kingdom of God on the earth*' (italics mine).

It is not difficult to see that the 'theology of giving' has an economic attractiveness attached to it. Like the Seed-Faith principle of one of the fathers of the Faith movement, Oral Roberts, the theology of giving is undoubtedly a proven success in fund-raising (see the examples of Jerry Savelle and Theo Wolmarans below). The theology has resulted in many practical mechanisms to either receive money for the church or for individuals to have their needs met.

Gossett (1976:64ff) relates that he gave his first 'prove God' offering under the ministry of the well-known healing evangelist, Jack Coe. Coe invited the audience to place whatever the Lord laid on the heart on an open Bible and then to claim the promise of Malachi 3:8-11. (It is interesting that Hagin (1983b:3f) also relates a story of an evangelist asking for the offering to be placed on the open Bible. The Bible seems to be playing an almost magical role in some of these circles.) Gossett had only one dollar and five cents in his pocket. That was all he had and he gave it all - although he really needed the money. The next day a businessman gave him \$100 and at a minister's meeting he got \$25.

Although the early Pentecostals never proclaimed prosperity, but rather rejoiced in the fact that they were not rich, it can be asked if the strong emphasis of the movement laid on the giving of tithes could not have been a latent ground for prosperity teaching. Almost all the Pentecostal churches believe in and encourage the giving of tithes. Hollenweger (1977:399) quotes Pentecostal denominations who explicitly state that tithes are meant for church expenses, to maintain the pastor, and not for the poor. Bloch-Hoell (1964:152) quotes the covenant taken by members of the Church of God, Cleveland. The members promise 'to pay tithes into the church'.

Reward for giving tithes was often indirectly present in the Pentecostal movement. In many Pentecostal churches one could not serve on the church board without paying tithes (AFM of SA, Church Laws). The promise that God would bless those who pay their tithes regularly, has always been part of the Pentecostal message. Anyone who attends a Pentecostal congregation for a while would hear many testimonies of people who have benefited from giving tithes. Some have found out that they could do more with the nine-tenths left than what they could have done with all their money before. Others would recount how God has multiplied their income since they have started giving tithes. Yet unlike the Healing movement and the Faith movement, the traditional Pentecostals never developed a theology of reward.

Presently the giving of tithes in the Pentecostal movement and the giving practices in the Faith movement have little in common. Still, the possibility that the giving of tithes can easily develop into a theology of reward is not excluded. In their relationship with the Faith movement, the classical Pentecostals will benefit if they can come to terms with the practice of tithing. If the giving of tithes carries a doctrine of reward with it, or if it is a legalistic doctrine trying to pressurise people to support the church financially, it has the same unacceptable basis as the 'theology of giving and reward'.

1.3.3 Redeemed from poverty and death - realised eschatology in daily living

Prosperity teaching not only has its roots in the healing and deliverance revival, but is also a logical consequence of the realised eschatology subscribed to by early Pentecostals and the Healing evangelists.

The Faith movement draws the line from the atonement to all spheres of life. If the Pentecostals could believe that the atonement provided not only for the spiritual well-being of humans, but also for their physical health, the Faith teachers concluded that all other curses and suffering were also paid for. The next logical step was to conclude that God does not only take the curse away, but also provides blessings, both spiritual and material.

Kenneth Hagin (1983b) wrote a book, *Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness and Death*, which is a good example of how this realised eschatology works in the Faith movement. His point of departure is the presupposition that if the atonement of Christ was for the whole human, it must include his or her financial position as well.

Hagin works with two major Scriptures, Galatians 3:13-14 and Deuteronomy 28:15-17 and 38-40:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

(Gl 3:13-14)

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

Cursed shalt thou be in the city and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.

Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shall neither drink of the wine, or gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.

(Dt 28:15-17, 38-40)

Hagin (1983b:7) quotes God saying to him 'The first thing I promised Abraham was that I would make him rich'. Therefore the first blessing of Abraham promised by Paul to the Christians in Galatians is prosperity. '... He is going to make us rich. You may not understand what the word "rich" means. The dictionary says it means "a full supply", or "abundantly provided for". Praise God, there is a full supply in Christ' (Hagin 1983b:5).

According to Hagin's understanding of these Scriptures the 'curse of the law' in Galatians 3 refers to the curses mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 (Hagin 1983b:1). However, he reduces the curses of Deuteronomy to three major curses, 'poverty, sickness and the second death'. Since all have sinned (broken

the law of God) the ‘threefold curses’ apply to everyone. Christ was made a curse for our sake and therefore removed the curse and opened the ‘threefold blessing of Abraham’ to all Christians.

In very clear language Hagin (1983b:2ff, 6ff) states that every Christian ought to be financially prosperous. He tells several stories of Christians who ‘gave to the Lord’ according to Luke 6:38 and received abundantly. ‘Why did God put all these things here, anyway? He surely didn’t put them here for the devil and his gang! If He did, then He loves the devil’s children more than He does His own children’ (Hagin 1983b:9).

Financial prosperity clearly plays a very important role in the Faith movement. It is clear from Hagin’s approach that prosperity is actually the most important aspect of the blessings of Abraham. It is not only mentioned before healing and life, but Hagin (1983b:7) explicitly states prosperity as the *first thing* God promised Abraham.

The realised eschatology of the older Pentecostal movement was not only taken over by Hagin, and other Faith teachers, but it was also radicalised. The realised eschatology of the early Pentecostal movement was often reflected in their hymns and choruses, e.g:

Christ is the answer to all my longings,
Christ is the answer to all my needs
Saviour, Baptiser, the Great Physician
O, Halleluja, He’s all I need.

In the theology of Hagin and other Faith teachers, Christ is also the Giver of prosperity. Where the Healing evangelists like Oral Roberts and A A Allen initially proclaimed their prosperity message as good news to those who experienced poverty as an oppressive force, Hagin proclaims it as an open promise of abundance.

A brief look at the way Hagin interprets Galatians 3 and Deuteronomy 28 reveals that he is clearly working with a preconceived idea concerning a threefold curse and a threefold Abrahamic blessing. His only ‘proofs’ that prosperity is the first blessing of Abraham are the words of the Holy Spirit related personally to him. He does not give any Scriptural evidence for his statement that the blessing of Abraham was threefold (Hagin 1983b:5).

When it comes to the curse of the law, Hagin's exegesis is even more arbitrary. He decides that there are three curses for breaking the law, namely poverty, sickness and spiritual death. The text he uses, refers to much more than three curses. It also includes unfaithfulness of the women (verse 30), oppression (verse 44), childlessness (verse 18), drought (verse 24), captivity (verses 49-60), and many more. Hagin has now decided that there ought to be three curses in Deuteronomy 28 that humans need to be delivered from and then, without Scriptural evidence, he concludes that therefore the blessing of Abraham must also be threefold.

Fee (1984:14) finds the biggest mistake of Hagin's interpretation of Galatians 3 and Deuteronomy 28 to be his 'concordance' interpretation. Since the word 'curse' appears in both Scriptures, Hagin concludes that they must be related. Yet, 'there is not even the remotest possibility that Paul was referring to the "curses" of Deuteronomy 28 when he spoke of the curse of the law' (Fee 1984:14).

If there should be any relationship between Deuteronomy and Galatians - and that is by no means sure - it is more probable that Paul was referring to Deuteronomy 27:26, 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them'. Instead of seeing 'the curse of the law' as only a threefold curse, it is more feasible that it refers to the all-inclusive wrath of God.

The arbitrary way in which Hagin uses the Bible is evident from his exegesis of Deuteronomy 28. He quotes verses 20, 21, 35, 58, 50, 60 and 61, which all say clearly that the Lord will command certain curses upon those who do not obey the law of God:

The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee ... (verse 21);

The Lord shall smite thee with consumption, and with a fever ... (verse 22);

The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness ... (verse 28);

The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful ... (verse 59); etc.

However, without looking at the standard commentaries, or the Hebrew text, Hagin (1983b:12) decides that the translation must be wrong because in his theology God cannot put sickness and affliction upon his people. The only

authority that he quotes to prove his point is the American fundamentalist, Robert Young, who, according to Hagin suggested that the verb 'is in the permissive rather than the causative sense' (Hagin 1983b:12).

Hagin (1983b:12-13) 'corrects' not only Deuteronomy 28, but also Isaiah 45:7 ('I make peace and I make evil'), Amos 3:6 ('Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it'), and 1 Samuel 16:14 ('... and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him ...'). All these verbs must be in the permissive tense because 'God may permit evil, but he does not create it', '(creating evil) would make God a devil'. In the case of Saul 'God permitted the evil spirit from the devil to trouble him'.

Hagin (1983b:13) even gives a linguistic explanation for the 'weak' English translation: 'The original Hebrew of these Scriptures was in the permissive tense, because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative'.

The real reason why Hagin needs to change the translation (and the obvious meaning) of these texts is that it does not fit into his theological framework. In Hagin's Faith theology, God is a good God that wills prosperity, health and everlasting life for his children. The devil wants to take these God-given privileges away - and he succeeded for a while. Yet, on the cross Jesus has overcome Satan and therefore Christians are entitled to their share in the victory: wealth, health and everlasting life. A God who punishes or is able to use even the evil spirit has no place in the radical realised eschatology or in the concept of God of the Faith movement. If the Scriptures do not portray God in the same way as Faith theology, there must be something wrong with the translation.

However, even if it is possible to translate the verbs in Deuteronomy 28 in the permissive tense, it is still God who announced these curses and He is also the One who permits them. But the way in which Hagin treats God and the devil as two opposite forces puts the sovereignty of God clearly at stake. Although he portrays God as the Victor, God is not the Almighty One that controls the whole world. Neither is the devil just 'God's monkey' (Luther). (The doctrine of God in the Faith movement will be discussed in chapter 3.)

The question of suffering is important in Pentecostal thinking. The traditional idea that God is ultimately responsible for all pain and suffering in the world has always been rejected by Pentecostals. It has already been pointed out that pain and sickness were seen as the work of the devil.

However, the possibility that God also punishes, has never been denied by Pentecostals. In one of the earliest reference books on Pentecostal doctrine and practice, Paulk (1958:191-192) uses 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 17 to oppose the use of tobacco and alcohol:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

For Paulk (1958:191, 192) the sickness and suffering that is caused by the use of tobacco and alcohol is not only 'undue suffering' which humans inflict upon themselves, but also God's punishment.

Hagin clearly moved away from this accepted Pentecostal doctrine. The Scriptures in Deuteronomy 28 do not deal with the so-called problem of the theodicy (God's relationship with human suffering). On the contrary, it deals with the covenant relationship between God and his people.

If Deuteronomy 28 is compared with the writings of the prophets, the scope becomes clear. Amos prophesies against the exploitation of the poor and the oppressed. He quotes Deuteronomy 28:22 as part of God's judgement (Am 4:9). In this case disaster in nature is described as God's judgement on the oppressors.

König (1974:59) acknowledges the relationship between Amos 4:6-11 and Deuteronomy 28 and adds that God did not see the curses merely as punishment, but as calls to conversion.

The hard words of Deuteronomy 28:26, 'And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth; and there shall be no one to frighten them away', is repeated by Jeremiah in his temple prophecy (Jr 7:33). This prophecy of doom is a clear reference to the exile. The broken covenant resulted in the exile with all its devastating effects on the covenant people.

Hagin leaves no space for punishment. His treatment of Deuteronomy 28 can therefore not be seen as a continuance of the legitimate Pentecostal criticism of the traditional Reformed theology of providence. A strong tradition in Calvinist theology tends to see the hand of God's almighty government in everything that happens on earth and therefore also in all suffering. Dorothee Sölle (quoted in Durand 1978:98) calls this a sadistic understanding of suffering. The Pentecostal belief in a God who is active in life and who is working

through his church and by the gifts of the Spirit to negate the destructive work of the devil, is a correction of the static, sadistic (Sölle) concept of God in traditional Protestant (especially Calvinist) theology.

Hagin, however, takes the Pentecostal position to an extreme that is neither part of the traditional doctrine nor a logical consequence of it. The fact that the Deuteronomist included curses in God's 'covenant speech', does not make God a sadist or a loveless God. On the contrary, the prophets have pointed out that even these curses, when executed, were actually acts of love! - a loving call to repentance for the covenant breakers (Am 4:9) and an act of liberation for those who were oppressed by the covenant breakers (Jr 7:33).

The seeming consistency of the realised eschatology of the Faith movement falls apart when it comes to the question of death. While Hagin has no doubt that the first two curses of the law, poverty and sickness ought to be overcome here and now, he is not prepared to apply the same logic to death. Instead, he decides that the third curse for breaking the law of God is 'the second death' (Hagin 1983b:1). However, Deuteronomy 28 does not even mention the second death. If Hagin is correct and the curse referred to in Galatians 3 is a reference to Deuteronomy 28, then real physical death is without doubt one of the curses that Christ delivered us from.

Hagin spiritualises and relativises death by saying that humans are spiritual beings who possess a soul and live in a body (Hagin 1983b:24). He then identifies three kinds of death: spiritual death, physical death and the second death. Spiritual death is separation from God and the possession of 'Satan's nature' (Hagin 1983b:26f). Jesus redeemed humans from this spiritual death (Hagin 1983b:29) and because of the new birth they are also redeemed from the second death. He never addresses the question of physical death. He hints that it is insignificant because according to Luke 16:19-24 humans (or the human soul) can never die.

This is not in line with the emphasis that Hagin places on physical health and material prosperity. If spiritual and everlasting life is so important that it relativises the real physical life in the body completely, and if the body is merely inhabited by humans and is not really part of them, why should we be so concerned about the physical and material well-being of people?

This inconsistency clearly points to the weakness of the realised eschatology of the Faith movement: it can only 'work' with selected aspects of life. When it comes to the accumulation of wealth or perfect health, the failures can always be accounted for by stating that they had a lack of faith. Yet this cannot be

said about people who die. The Faith movement clearly lacks the courage of Jonathan Paul who proclaimed realised eschatology with all its consequences (cf Anderson 1979:359f).

Hagin has laid the foundation for Don Gossett to say 'What you say is what you get' (Gossett 1976). Gossett draws a direct line from the atonement to financial prosperity:

The moment you accept Jesus, your name is officially recorded in heaven And you have the right to claim as your own all the rights and privileges enjoyed by Jesus Christ No wonder What You Say Is What You Get!

(Gossett 1976:21f)

Avanzini emphasises two aspects of Jesus' victory over Satan, the fact that the kingdom of God has already come, and the fact that Christians can share and ought to share in the victory of Jesus by repossessing from Satan what actually belongs to Christians. Jesus destroyed the devil. The only power that he has is the power Christians give him (Avanzini 1984:29ff). 'There has been much power breathed into the devil by saints over the last 2000 years BUT THE WORD TELLS US WE CAN PUT OUR FOOT ON HIM AND HOLD HIM' (Avanzini 1984:30).

Avanzini spells out his radical realised eschatology much more clearly than Hagin and the other Faith teachers. He blames the church that they taught a theology of reward in heaven 'until we have about starved our people to death' (Avanzini 1984:44). He interprets the new heaven and the new earth (Rv 21) as a reality that is realised on earth now and here: 'A close look at End Time truth clearly shows that: God's closing heaven down and bringing it down here to earth' (Avanzini 1984:44).

Avanzini articulates the logical consequences of the theology of the Faith movement. It is true that most of the Faith teachers will not spell out their beliefs concerning the End Times in the same way. Most of them will probably still interpret Revelation 21 as a reference to the final outcome of history. However, in their theology there is little room for a heaven (or earth) where God will dry all tears. Avanzini's interpretation that heaven has already come and that the devil is actually dead and only living in the memory of believers, is the final conclusion of a theology where God promises only health, wealth and happiness.

The theological presuppositions of the Faith movement play a decisive role in their hermeneutical approach. It has been shown that Hagin did not approach Deuteronomy 28 and Galatians 3 exegetically, but instead was led by the theological presumption based on a radical realised eschatology. This is not an exceptional example, but almost the rule in the Faith movement, especially when it comes to interpreting difficult texts. Two examples will suffice to show the determination of the Faith movement to 'prove' that God wills prosperity.

Kenneth Copeland (1974:63ff), in his interpretation of the rich young ruler, suggests that before meditating on the Word 'you must *commit yourself* to the absolute truth of John 10:10' (italics mine).

Whenever I read something that seems contradictory to this, I immediately stop and straighten my thinking. The truth is hidden in some way and I rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal it to me. ... when you commit yourself to this basic truth, you block Satan and deal a deadly blow to deception. As long as you are open to it, Satan will prove that God wants you to live in poverty and in sickness to teach you humility. He will try to convince you that the rich young ruler couldn't receive eternal life because he had money; but Satan is a liar and the father of liars'.

(K Copeland 1974:63)

The consequence of this line of thinking is obvious. Even the Scripture must be wrong if it contradicts the basic theological presupposition that God wants humans to be rich and healthy. If any Scripture seems to say anything else, it must be the devil who inspired the interpretation. K Copeland received the 'correct' interpretation directly from the Lord (K Copeland 1974:63ff). The Lord told him that the young ruler was rich because he observed the law from his youth (Mk 10:20). He also told Copeland that He only asked the rich ruler for his possessions because He had given them to him in the first place. What is more, God would not 'ask you to give up something without giving you something better in return' (K Copeland 1974:64). The young ruler walked away from the biggest financial deal that had ever been offered to him. Had he stayed, the Lord would have given him a hundredfold! (K Copeland 1974:66). The words of Jesus to Peter in Mark 10:29-30 must be interpreted to mean that God wanted to give the young ruler a hundredfold return on his possessions! The words '... take up the cross ...' also need an interpretation that

takes the absolute truth of John 10:10 into account. "The cross we are to bear" is selfish, unlovely people. ... We must stop strife with the love of God. This is our cross' (K Copeland 1974:65).

The hermeneutical presupposition here functions in such a way that the understanding of any Scripture is dependent on Copeland's 'absolute truth', even if it leads to an absurd interpretation and even if it means relying on a personal 'word from the Lord'.

Another Scripture that poses a problem to the Faith movement is 1 Timothy 6:10: 'The love of money is the root of all evil'.

All the important teachers of the Faith movement argue that the emphasis of the text is on 'the love of money', and not on money per se (Hagin 1983b:8f; Gossett 1976:73; K Copeland 1974:14). You could be guilty of that sin and not have a dime. Yet the Faith teachers do not explain (or try to explain) the negative tone of Paul's reference to money.

It has already been indicated that the difference between the traditional Pentecostal movement and the Faith movement lies primarily in the eschatological sphere and not only in a differing interpretation of a few insignificant texts. The Faith movement not only overemphasises the realised aspect of eschatology, but also completely ignores the fact that there is still an unrealised aspect of eschatology, that the End Time is still in the future.

1.4 The Faith teaching and realised eschatology

Anything that the Bible promises you now, you can receive now.

Kenneth Hagin

Job missed it in the area of faith. He operated through fear ... and this is what opened the door in the first place ... and permitted the serpent to come in and bite.

Don Hughes

The eschatological promises of the Faith movement are available to every Christian. But they are not automatically available. Believers must *claim* them by *faith*. In the Faith movement the *faith* of the believer is of vital importance.

But the ‘claiming’ of the promises is equally important. Words play a prominent role in the realisation of the eschatological promises. If your confessions are positive and you believe, you can ‘write your ticket with God’ (Hagin). On the other hand, if you confess negatively, you can even neutralise faith.

Hagin (1983a:4ff) recounts how the Lord had appeared to him in ‘an open vision, the highest type of vision’, saying: ‘If anybody, anywhere, will take these four steps or put these four principles into operation, he will *always* receive whatever he wants from me or from God the Father’ (Hagin 1983a:5). Whereupon Hagin (1983a:5f) declares that ‘you can receive anything in the present tense, such as salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, healing for your body, spiritual victory, or finances. Anything that the Bible promises you now, you can receive now by taking these four steps’. The four steps ‘to write your ticket with God’ are ‘say it, do it, receive it and tell it’ (Hagin 1983a:6).

The power of words is evident. Hagin (1983a:9) states that Christians are only defeated if they defeat themselves with their own lips. If you confess sickness or talk about your difficulties or a lack of money, ‘it will develop sickness’, ‘your faith will shrivel and dry up’ and ‘it will stop the money from coming in’ (Hagin 1983a:10). Thus Don Hughes can explain the difficult book of Job in such a way so as to conclude that Job was responsible for his own misfortune! *‘Job missed it in the area of faith. He operated through fear ... and this is what opened the door in the first place; This is what broke down the hedge, and permitted the serpent to come in and bite’* (Hughes 1981:20). Job also misunderstood God (Hughes 1981:23), and was selfrighteous (Hughes 1981:27). If Job had operated in faith and understanding without blaming God, the devil would not have been able to harm him!

The examples of the power of faith and positive confession can be multiplied from the books of the Hagens, the Copelands, Don Gossett, Charles Capps, and other Faith teachers. It is evident that the kingdom of the Faith movement is being realised and kept by human faith and positive confession.

The Faith movement is concerned with stressing that its emphasis on faith has nothing to do with the mental healings of metaphysical cults like Christian Science. Hagin (1980c:5) explicitly states that divine healing is not only mental, as Christian Science claims, but neither is it just physical. When one reads the books of the movement, it nevertheless becomes clear that its health, wealth and victorious lives are not dependent on God who intervenes in the lives of humans, but rather on the faith of the believer.

For Hagin (1983a) the question that needs to be answered is whether the Christian is using the 'power' that is always present. According to Charles Capps prayer will not work without faith, but faith will work without prayer (quoted in Barron 1987:111).

The logical conclusion of the theology of faith and positive confession is even clearer when we understand it in the light of the radical realised eschatology of the Faith movement.

Poverty, sickness and (spiritual) death have been overcome by Jesus on the cross and in the pit (see chapter 3). *The power that He has is the power He gets from believing Christians.* Faith and positive confession unlock the door to eternal health, wealth and spiritual life.

The real question is once again whether this eschatological interpretation of faith and positive confession is the correct one in terms of a Pentecostal perspective. Everything that has been said about the eschatological interpretation of healing and prosperity is also applicable to faith and positive confession. However, the question as to a genuine Pentecostal emphasis on faith remains.

A genuine Pentecostal position would be for Pentecostals to understand themselves as an eschatological community, like the early church living between the first and second coming of Christ, between the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

Pentecostals are still struggling to find a place between two opposed interpretations of eschatology. On the one side is the Dispensationalism of the evangelicals, who share many of the beliefs of the Pentecostal movement (the new birth, holiness, a personal relationship with God, etc). However, the Dispensationalists have always been radically opposed to the Pentecostal experience. According to their interpretation, the spiritual gifts stopped when the canon of the New Testament was completed. In the last few years some Dispensationalists have made some adaptations to their theology to leave at least some place for the gifts of the Spirit to operate. Yet as far as spiritual intervention in the lives of people is concerned, Fee (1979:16f) is correct when he states:

One must ruefully admit that evangelical Christianity by and large does not expect much from God. He is given credit for the ordinary things in our lives ... but most Christians' expectation level, when it comes to the miraculous, is somewhere between zero and minus five. ... The God of standard-brand evangelicalism is very much a God of the ordinary.

On the other side of the religious spectrum is the Faith movement, which expects God to give its members 'every promise in the Book' now and here. Like the Dispensationalists, they share much of the spiritual heritage of the Pentecostal movement. Unlike the Dispensationalists, the Faith movement shares what is distinctive about the classical Pentecostal movement (the emphasis on an experience with God, the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, the liturgical practices, etc). But the Faith movement has made a paradigm shift, as Gary North (1986:1ff), a Christian Reconstructionist who shares the optimistic eschatology of the Faith movement, has correctly observed. He endorses the view of Hunt (cf Hunt & McMahon 1985) that, although most of the Faith teachers do not recognise it, '*they have become operational postmillennialists*. They have unquestionably broken *psychologically* with the older fundamentalism' (North 1986:3) (italics mine). North (1986:3f) identifies the paradigm shift as one from negative eschatology.

Dayton (1983:182) points out that although pre-millennial fundamentalism is part of the nineteenth century heritage of the Pentecostal movement, it is not clear that the Pentecostal message fits into the Dispensational mould. Wilfred Meloon (1971) an independent Baptist and Charismatic teacher, points out that Dispensationalism was something completely different from Pentecostalism belief and practice.

It is true that Pentecostals have tried to fit their thinking into the Dispensational mould almost from the outset, although they rejected the aspects of dispensationalism that are contrary to Pentecostal doctrine. They 'Pentecostalised' Dispensationalism by rejecting a separate dispensation between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the completion of the New Testament canon. Pentecostals maintained their faith in an active God, who blesses his church with the gifts of the Spirit and yet they also accepted the Dispensational truths. Avanzini (1984:44) is nevertheless probably correct that the theology of the Dispensationalists and the Pentecostal followers has often led to what he calls 'pie in the sky in the sweet bye and bye' theology. Some critics of the Faith movement like Dave Hunt (1985) and David Wilkerson actually criticise the Faith movement for not recognising the coming catastrophe.

The problem with the Faith movement from a Pentecostal perspective is not that it has broken with Dispensationalism. There is a case to be put that Dispensationalism was from the outset something completely different from genuine Pentecostal belief and practice (cf Meloon 1971). Dayton, for instance, (1985:179) finds it strange that Pentecostals have not developed a genuine pneumatological eschatology, while Hollenweger (1977:421) suggests that

Pentecostal pastors should read the works of Moltmann with their emphasis on realised eschatology. If they can come to grips with this, Hollenweger believes, they will find a vision of heaven without giving up or betraying the earth, which hopes for the second coming without giving up any part of the work in society.

The emphasis of the Faith movement on realised eschatology is an attempt at precisely this: to develop a pneumatological eschatology. It is an earnest attempt to come to grips with the present world. But in their reaction against the 'pie in the sky in the sweet bye and bye' theology, they have forsaken the real world. They want to create heaven on earth and in the process they are doing the opposite of their Pentecostal fathers - they are losing their vision of heaven.

Early Pentecostals understood 'faith' in a double sense. On the one hand 'faith' was the vehicle used by God to heal the sick, deliver the captives and bring people to Christ. On the other hand 'faith' was also understood as trust in the coming God.

Criticism of the Faith movement from a Pentecostal perspective will have to look self-critically at the often 'other-worldly' emphasis on faith in Pentecostal theology. Like the Dispensationalists, Pentecostals often gave the present world to the devil (apart from the 'spiritual realm' where God is at work). It is no wonder that the Faith teachers have reacted against this by developing a realised eschatology.

The problem is now that the Faith movement, in its brand of a realised eschatology, is using faith as an escape from the world. The Faith teachers must be credited with the fact that they want to apply the gospel to all areas of life. Unfortunately their theology does not give an answer to the real questions of life, like the global problem of poverty, neither does it give answers to the needs of terminal patients.

Not that Pentecostals have yet come up with 'a Christian response to the needs of the poor' (Fee 1979:11). The Pentecostal movement is still to apply faith in a living God to the problems of this world without stopping to address the spiritual problems of humans and without forgetting about the hope of the coming God. Although the Pentecostals have often failed in this, applying their faith only to 'spiritual things' and, under the influence of Dispensationalism, rejecting the present world, the theology of the Faith movement is not a correction, but rather an overreaction to the Pentecostal position.

2 OTHER INFLUENCES ON THE FAITH MOVEMENT

2.1 E W Kenyon, the unrecognised 'father' of the Faith movement

Hagin may be the founder of the Faith movement in the limited sense that he popularized Kenyon's teachings ... (but) Kenyon is, in fact the true founder and original 'prophet' of the Faith movement.

Daniel McConnell

The relationship between the Faith movement and the Pentecostal movement or the Faith movement and the Healing movement could easily be demonstrated. There was, however, also a lesser-known non-Pentecostal influence - E W Kenyon. Although one or two leaders in the Faith movement had a loose relationship with Kenyon before his death, his real influence came through his books.

Many of the unique teachings of the Faith movement can be traced back to Kenyon. This includes the importance of words, the mystical power carried by the name of Jesus, the power of positive and negative confession, and the spiritual death and rebirth of Jesus Christ.

The first academic to point out the influence of Kenyon on the Faith movement, was Charles Farah (1980). One of his students, Daniel McConnell, has shown the extent of this influence.

McConnell's book (1982) is one-sided in that it over-stresses the influence of Kenyon, with a short introduction on the Charismatic movement, without referring to the historical link between the Faith movement and the Healing evangelists. This obvious weakness must be seen in context. The book was written as a M A-thesis at Oral Roberts University, a university in Tulsa, Oklahoma founded by Oral Roberts, one of the most prominent Healing evangelists of the fifties. Roberts is still president of the university. This may have made it very difficult for McConnell to be critical of the healing revival. Between 1980 and 1983 there was a great deal of controversy concerning the Faith movement. Roberts invited several Faith teachers to chapel services - to the dismay of several faculty members (Harrell 1985:424ff). One of McConnell's mentors, Farah, played a prominent role in opposing the Faith theology at ORU (Harrell 1985:426).

Nevertheless, McConnell's study opened up an important perspective on the Faith theology. The connection between the Faith movement and Kenyon was also picked up by Matta (1987) and Barron (1987).

McConnell demonstrates that the authors of the Faith movement were not only influenced by Kenyon, but that they often even repeated his works verbally in their books. He quotes at length from the most important books of Kenyon with equally long citations from books and articles written by Hagin (e.g. McConnell 1982:26ff). One example taken from McConnell (1982:26) will be enough to show the extent of the literal verbal dependence of Hagin upon Kenyon:

Kenneth Hagin

"The 22nd Psalm gives a graphic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus - more vivid than that of John, Matthew or Mark who witnessed it".

"He utters the strange words,
'But thou art holy.'
What does that mean?
He is becoming sin ..."
His parched lips cry,
'I am a worm and no man.'
He is spiritually dead - the worm."

"Jesus dies of a ruptured heart
When it happened, blood from all parts of His body poured through the rent into the sack which holds the heart. As the body cooled, the red corpuscles coagulated and rose to the top, the white serum settled to the bottom. When that Roman spear pierced the sack, water poured

E W Kenyon

"The twenty-second Psalm gives a graphic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is more vivid than that of John, Matthew or Mark who witnessed it".

"But He says the strangest words,
'But thou art holy.'
What does that mean?
He is becoming sin.
Can you hear those parched lips cry,
'I am a worm and no man.'
He is spiritually dead. The worm."

"Jesus had died of a ruptured heart.
When that happened, blood from all parts of the body poured in through that rent, into the sack that holds the heart. Then as the body cooled, the red corpuscles coagulated and rose to the top. The white serum settled to the bottom. When that Roman soldier's spear pierced the sack, water poured

out first, then the coagulated blood oozed out, rolling down his side onto the ground. John bore witness of it."

"Christ, Our Substitute"
The Words of Faith, (March, 1975), pp 1, 4, 5, 7

out first. Then the coagulated blood oozed out rolled down His side onto the ground, and John bore witness of it."

What Happened from the Cross to the Throne (Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1969), pp 44-45.

McConnell (1982:24ff) convincingly argues that the Faith teachers are dependent upon Kenyon in each of the five major doctrines of the movement, namely the doctrines of identification (including the spiritual death and rebirth of Jesus Christ), faith, healing (including the emphasis on the atonement as ground for healing), prosperity and revelational knowledge. He concludes that Kenyon, not Hagin, is the founding ideologue of the Faith movement. Put in terms of '-isms', Haginism is, in fact, Kenyonism (McConnell 1982:64).

Despite the very strong influence of Kenyon on Hagin and the Faith movement, it does not nullify the influence of the early Pentecostal movement and the healing revival. The similarity between these movements has already been demonstrated. According to Hagin (1981:preface) he read the first book of Kenyon only in 1950, two years after Kenyon's death. He then realised that they preached faith and healing in similar terms.

McConnell (1983:24ff) concludes that since that time most of Hagin's books are almost a literal rewriting of Kenyon's books. The other possibility is that Hagin must have had identical revelations, something which is highly unlikely. However, if we bear in mind that many of the teachings of the Faith movement were already preached by the Healing evangelists, it is possible that at least some of the doctrines were shared by Kenyon and the predecessors of the Faith movement. Hagin, who is not an original thinker, used the books of Kenyon as a vehicle to spread the teachings he and other Faith teachers had already known and taught.

This does not deny the role and influence of Kenyon. The Healing evangelists were not analytical thinkers or theologically orientated men. Although they expressed the power of positive confession, faith, etc, they needed someone to systematise their teachings. When Hagin and other Faith teachers discovered the works of Kenyon, they also found theological ideas that were not part of their religious background (e.g the spiritual death of Jesus, the extraordinary

role that words play in our lives and positive and negative confession). Together with providing a vision of a radically realised eschatology, Kenyon played a prominent role in aiding the Faith movement to develop a integral theological structure.

One central question that needs to be answered is whether the influence of Kenyon can account for theological trends in the movement that are contrary to Pentecostal doctrine.

Although Kenyon ministered with Pentecostal Healing evangelists such as Bosworth and MacPherson, he never was a Pentecostal. On the contrary, he was often openly hostile towards the movement. He openly stated that he found the Pentecostal movement equally as destructive as inspirational and instructive (McConnell 1982:75). Kenyon never spoke in tongues, he never encouraged the spiritual gifts in his services, and his teaching on healing lacks a Pentecostal orientation (McConnell 1982:75f). His teaching does not fit into the Holiness teaching on healing either. According to McConnell (1982:75) it lacks an emphasis on holiness, sanctification and the second work of grace.

Kenyon had a long history of association with the metaphysical cults. He studied at a college with a strong cultic tradition and atmosphere, grounded in the metaphysical New Age and Christian Science doctrines. He was well-accustomed to the metaphysical cults, and although openly hostile towards them, he admired their growth and the fact that they offered miracles to their followers, something which he saw as a challenge to the church (McConnell 1982:77ff).

McConnell (1982:95ff) tries to establish that the unique trends in the theology of Kenyon are the result of influences from the metaphysical cults. He admits that there is a historical problem with his conclusion in that it is the later writings of Kenyon that demonstrate the most involvement with the use of metaphysical terms (McConnell 1982:89). His earlier writings were much more in line with evangelical theology (McConnell 1982:87). McConnell (1982:89f) suggests that the growth of the metaphysical cults during Kenyon's later ministry forced him to respond to them, 'a response for which his studies at Emerson College prepared him well.'

Matta (1987:21ff) also stresses the influence of the metaphysical cults, especially New Age, on Kenyon, and through him, on the Faith movement.

The remarkable similarity between New Age teachings and the distinctive doctrines of the Faith movement cannot be denied.

Both Matta (1987:29f) and McConnell (1982:98f) refer to the fact that Waldo Trine taught a doctrine of prosperity very similar to that of the later Kenyon and the Faith teachers. Trine, a popular New Thought writer and a former teacher of Kenyon at Emerson College, says the same things about 'the Spirit of Infinite Plenty' as the Faith movement does about God.:

This is the Spirit of Infinite Plenty, the power that has brought, that is continually bringing, all things into expression in material form. He who lives in realization (knows!) of his oneness with this Infinite power becomes a magnet to attract to himself a continual supply of whatsoever things he desires. If one hold (sic) himself in the thought of poverty he will be poor.... If he hold (sic) himself in the thought of prosperity, he sets into operation forces that will sooner or later bring him into prosperous conditions.

(Quoted in Matta 1987:29)

If we only replace the words 'the Spirit of Infinite Plenty' with 'the God of Infinite Plenty' this quotation could easily have been the words of one of the Faith teachers. Thus K Copeland (1974:69ff) can speak of his banking account in heaven from which he can draw whatever and whenever he has a need! Hagin (1983a:10) sounds even more like Trine: 'If you confess lack of finances, it will stop money from coming in'.

McConnell (1982:99) points out that although the Faith movement and Kenyon baptise their 'law of prosperity' with a more sophisticated proof-texting than the New Age, 'the philosophical presupposition behind their doctrine is recognisable metaphysical deism'.

The influence of the basic Faith teachings on the doctrine of God will be discussed in chapter 3. At this stage it must already be clear that the radical realised eschatology of the Faith movement affects the sovereignty of God in a very serious way. God is not the Almighty sovereign God of the universe who can act independently of humans. He is a power one can 'plug into' (Hagin 1983:14f).

In the sphere of anthropology the influence of the pantheistic deification doctrine of the metaphysical cults is also established by both McConnell (1983:100ff) and Matta (1987:30ff). McConnell (1983:100) quotes Trine stating that humans are partakers in the life of God and that 'in essence the life of God and the life of man are identically the same, and so are one'.

According to McConnell (1982:101) pantheism always ends in the deification of humans. Trine states that humans must realise their identity and open themselves to the divine inflow before they can change from 'mere men to God men'. Kenyon links up with this deification doctrine when he teaches that humans have no nature of their own. The unconverted have demonic natures and when you are born again you receive 'the nature and life of God'. This vital identification of the Christian with God enables him or her to act like God. K Copeland (1979:16) sounds very much like Trine when he says that '(y)our spirit is just as big as God's because you are born of Him'. In the same way Hagin (quoted in McConnell 1982:102) can say that every born-again human is an incarnation. 'The believer is as much an incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth'.

McConnell (1982:103) concludes that Kenyon and after him the Faith movement unknowingly incorporated the pantheistic deism of the metaphysical cults into their own theology. The challenge of the metaphysical cults and the silent admiration Kenyon had for them, played an important role in the development of Kenyon's theology.

McConnell (1982:103ff) identifies the emphasis on the spiritual aspect of human life and existence at the cost of physical life and the physical world as an example of quasi-Platonism which sees the physical only as an illusion, the 'real' world being the spiritual. The denial of symptoms and the statement often quoted that humans live in a body, but like God are spirits (cf Hagin 1980c), are both examples of quasi-Platonism or dualistic Platonic anthropology. It is not difficult to see the relationship between the Faith movement and the metaphysical cults.

According to McConnell, faith plays an important role in the relationship between the spiritual and the physical.

Unlike Christian Science, New Thought and Unity do not deny the *reality* of matter (or of sickness or pain); they simply affirm the *superiority* of spirit over matter and deny the right of disease to exist in the body of any man "in tune" with the Spirit.

(McConnell 1982:104)

This explanation of the Platonic anthropology and epistemology of the metaphysical cults could just as well have been a reference to the theology of the Faith teachers. Thus K Copeland (1974:18) states that 'the spiritual world

and its laws are more powerful than the physical world and its laws. Spiritual laws gave birth to physical laws. The world and the physical forces governing it were created by the power of faith - a spiritual force'.

Hagin (1980c:5) argues in similar fashion that divine healing differs from the mental healing of Christian Science in that it is a physical healing through the human spirit. This distinction is identical with the distinction between Christian Science and New Age!

McConnell (1982:104) also interprets the doctrine of Revelation Knowledge of the Faith movement as being the result of a Platonic epistemology. For Kenyon, the 'unreliability of the physical senses to perceive reality' was the reason for the need of Revelation Knowledge. The same philosophical presuppositions are also evident in the writings of K Copeland, Hagin and other Faith teachers.

This brief discussion of the influence of the metaphysical cults on Kenyon, and his influence on the Faith movement is enough to show that the doctrines of the Faith movement are not merely a return to the traditional Pentecostal movement, although McConnell and Matta are perhaps one-sided in neglecting the latter aspect.

2.2 The role of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and the independent Charismatic movement

Despite the veritable 'legion' of theological voices whispering throughout the independent Charismatic movement, one voice increasingly began to prevail ... this voice was, and is personified in Kenneth E Hagin!

Daniel McConnell

2.2.1 The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI)

The role and influence of the FGBMFI on the Faith movement cannot be overestimated. Not only was it through this Fellowship that the Healing evangelists brought their message to the mainline churches and the traditional Pentecostal bodies; it was also one of the first Pentecostal movements that stressed prosperity as an integral part of the gospel.

The FGBMFI was founded in 1950 under the leadership of Demos Shakarian, a Californian farmer. Oral Roberts, one of the most famous Healing evangelists, played a prominent role in the formation of the Fellowship (Durasoff 1972:147f). The Articles of Incorporation were signed a year later (Durasoff 1972:148).

Shakarian's initial vision for the fellowship was to mobilise businessmen to sponsor Pentecostal evangelists (Durasoff 1972:146f). The FGBMFI soon became the 'noisiest ... promoters of the "second baptism" among non-Pentecostals' (Durasoff 1972:150). Prominent Healing evangelists like Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, R T Richey, Gordon Lindsay, William Marion Branham and Tommy Hick all played a prominent role in the early days of the movement. They were all regular speakers at the conventions of the fellowship (Durasoff 1972:156).

The vision of the FGBMFI was soon broadened. In 1954, Tommy Hick, a staunch supporter of the FGBMFI, became the first American to conduct an evangelistic campaign in Argentina (Durasoff 1972:158). Leaders of the FGBMFI started their own ministries. Bulson Chang, president of the Hong Kong Chapter considered the involvement of laymen in the spreading of the gospel in the East to be of vital importance. 'The peoples of Asia do not trust the motives of professional Christian missionaries or ordained clergymen but they respond readily to evangelism by laymen who "pay their own way"' (quoted in Durasoff 1972:161).

The FGBMFI also played an important role in the spreading of the Pentecostal message among non-Pentecostal businessmen (Durasoff 1972:149). Many of these businessmen received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Full Gospel Conventions. David du Plessis, often referred to as the father of the Charismatic movement, once stated that the 'Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship has been bridging the gap between Pentecostals and mainlines' (quoted in Durasoff 1972:150).

The FGBMFI emphasised the relationship between successful business ventures and the gospel almost from the outset. According to Durasoff (1972:151f) Shakarian stressed the financial success of the Fellowship members in order that Christian laymen may become better stewards of their possessions, power and popularity. Shakarian urged them to surrender the first place

in their lives to God. The belief that Christians do not have to cheat, lie or bribe to be successful in business, was always stressed in the movement. Success stories of businessmen who prospered because they were living a godly life were also frequent at the conventions and in *Voice*, the magazine of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.

The emphasis on prosperity was probably partly the result of reaction against the older Pentecostal belief that prosperity is something dangerous and deadly for a Christian (Durasoff 1972:154). The new generation of Pentecostal businessmen gained status and prosperity not even dreamt of in the early years of the movement. These businessmen replaced the old negative attitude towards money and possessions with a positive relationship between being a Christian and a businessman. Prosperity was no longer a weapon in the hands of the devil to tempt Christians, but 'a result of my surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ and putting Him first' (Durasoff 1972:155).

The FGBMFI not only played an important role in the spreading of the Pentecostal message among traditional Protestants and Roman Catholics, it also played a leading role in the Charismatic movement when it gained momentum in the late sixties and early seventies. Kenneth Hagin, the most prominent Faith teacher, was a frequent and popular speaker at the conventions of the Fellowship.

When part of the Charismatic movement became separatist, moving outside the churches in the mid-seventies, the FGBMFI provided the structures for the Faith teachers to spread their message.

2.2.2 The independent Charismatic movement

The vacuum in the independent Charismatic movement that resulted from the discrediting of the Shepherding-Discipleship movement, was an important reason for the growth of the Faith movement (cf McConnell 1982:9). The faith message was spread and heard in the Charismatic movement almost from the outset. However, the emphasis on authority, leadership, submission and discipleship got much more attention in the early Charismatic movement.

In the mid-seventies the leaders of the discipleship movement (especially the Fort Lauderdale six, John Poole, Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Derek Prince, Charles Simpson and Bob Mumford) were under suspicion of wanting to start

a new denomination. The reaction in the Charismatic movement was so strong that the leaders of the Discipleship movement lost the confidence of the Charismatics and their message lost credibility. Kenneth Hagin filled the ensuing vacuum.

The ministry of Kenneth Hagin blossomed in the second half of the seventies. His Bible College had only fifty-eight students in 1974, but in the 1980-81 school year it boasted an enrolment of 1985 (McConnell 1982:10). The Bible School served as a catalyst for the faith message. Graduates of the Rhema Bible Training Centre eventually founded Faith churches all over America and in several countries abroad. In South Africa, the Rhema Bible Church, was founded in 1979 by a graduate of Hagin's Training Centre, Ray McCauley. Many charismatics eventually found a spiritual home in these independent Faith Churches.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The Faith movement is clearly part of the bigger Pentecostal movement. The historical roots of the Faith movement are firmly grounded in classical Pentecostalism. At the same time the claim of some leaders in the Faith movement that their theology is a revival of classical Pentecostal thinking is only partly true.

1. Although the Faith teachers are correct in their claim that they revived the original healing doctrine of the Pentecostal pioneers, it is not true that the modern Pentecostals watered down the original doctrines because of non-Pentecostal theological influences or a fear of people. The theological emphasis on the sovereignty of God can be traced back to an acclaimed pioneer like John G Lake. The Pentecostal movement and the Faith movement will have to reconsider the theory that healing was provided for in the atonement. Both classical Pentecostals and the Faith movement will have to give more attention to the grounding of healing in pneumatology as a gift of the Spirit. This emphasis has been present in both the Pentecostal and other Healing movements and also gets some attention in the Faith movement.
2. Although the prosperity doctrine has its roots in the realised eschatology of the classical Pentecostals and the healing revival, it is not in line with the traditional Pentecostal doctrine of the second coming of Christ and Pentecostal enmity towards the world.

The doctrine of prosperity is not merely a radicalisation of a Pentecostal truth. There were also other sources, namely the 'lay' theology of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, the 'fund-raising theology' of the Healing evangelists, the theology of the non-Pentecostal E W Kenyon, and the theology of the independent Charismatic movement.

3. The emphasis on faith has its roots in Pentecostalism, but like the doctrines of healing and prosperity, these Pentecostal doctrines were radicalised and influenced by other sources, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal.

Amidst all the links, both theological and historical, between traditional Pentecostalism and the Faith movement, there are also clearly big differences that cannot be ignored. It is not merely a difference of emphasis but, in many cases, differences that will affect many of the basic Pentecostal theological presuppositions and points of departure.

CHAPTER 2

A sociological assessment of the development in the broader Pentecostal movement from an anti-capitalistic and anti-prosperity theology to the theology of the Faith movement

Winning souls to capitalism has become equal to winning souls for Christ; to (white evangelical Americans) the West is equal to the Church and the East to the mission field.

Evangelical Witness in South Africa
(Concerned Evangelicals)

1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it became clear that the Faith movement stands very close to the traditional Pentecostal movement. Many of its distinctive characteristics are *either radicalisations of basic Pentecostal doctrines*, a resurrection of older Pentecostal doctrines that are no longer commonly taught, *or merely a repetition of common Pentecostal doctrines*. The emphasis on faith falls in the first category. The faith of the individual Christian always played a prominent role in Pentecostal thinking. ‘Science of man’ (medical healing) was seen by early Pentecostals as a possibility only for people without faith (Bloch-Hoell 1964:150). Harrell (1975:50) suggests that Oral Roberts’s healing message was aimed at motivating the faith of the supplicant.

The Faith movement radicalised the doctrine that the gift of healing operates in the sphere of faith. To the Faith teachers not only healing and spiritual gifts, but the whole life of the Christian is determined by his or her faith.

The teachings of the Faith movement on healing fall in the second category. Early Pentecostals maintained that healing was provided for in the atonement and is therefore available to everyone. Howard Carter, a Pentecostal pioneer, even stated that if someone had 'all the gifts of healing' then all sickness could be removed (quoted in Bloch-Hoell 1964:149). Later a shift occurred. A prominent Pentecostal leader, Brumback, criticised the Healing evangelists for overestimating the value of bodily healing (Hollenweger 1977:357). Hollenweger (1977:357) argues that the older Pentecostals condemned the theology of the Healing evangelist without admitting that for many years they have spread and encouraged exactly the same practices. The Healing evangelists can to a great extent be seen as the forerunners of the Faith movement (see chapter 1). What Hollenweger says of the relation between the Healing evangelists and the traditional Pentecostal movement is also relevant for the latter's relation to the Faith movement.

Traditional Pentecostal doctrines like the baptism in the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, salvation, etc fall into the last category. Most of the Faith teachers adhere to these classic expressions of Pentecostal belief.

The question that needs to be answered is whether there are radically new teachings in the Faith movement that cannot be seen as a revival of early Pentecostal thinking or as a radicalisation of a traditional doctrine. The most controversial doctrine of the Faith movement is probably the belief that God wants prosperity for all His children. The traditional Pentecostals rejected the prosperity message almost from the outset. Brumback (1961:334) rejected the view of the Healing evangelists that prosperity is an irrefutable sign of piety. The roots of this notion must be sought elsewhere. In this chapter I shall try to uncover the social roots of the prosperity teachings.

It is not the aim of this chapter to find exclusively sociological or economic reasons for the rise of the Faith movement because most of the Faith teachings have theological roots in the Pentecostal movement. However, it is interesting to note that the social position of the Pentecostal movement underwent a radical change in the second and third generations (Hollenweger 1977:457). Although the prosperity teachings have theological roots in the Pentecostal movement, they still represent a radical change from the earlier condemnation of money.

The close relationship between theology, politics and economic structures is no longer disputed by theologians (cf Horn 1987). Although the theological roots of the Faith movement are not disputed, it still remains a question as to what caused the development of such an important part of the Pentecostal movement from an almost anti-capitalistic movement towards the prosperity message. The new-found social status and wealth of second and third generation Pentecostals undoubtedly played a prominent role in this theological development, as did the fact that the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and the Charismatic movement reached the upper middle class with the Pentecostal message.

2 THE SHIFT FROM CLASSICAL PENTECOSTAL THINKING ON MONEY AND PROSPERITY TO THAT OF THE FAITH MOVEMENT: THREE THEORIES

The early Pentecostal movement started as a religious movement whose adherents were predominantly drawn from the lower classes. First generation Pentecostals were mainly deprived people who found a refuge in Pentecostal churches (Hollenweger 1977:457ff). Many of the early leaders were even antagonistic towards capitalism. Two of the most prominent leaders in the early days, Charles Parham and Frank Bartleman, spoke out against capitalism (Anderson 1979:209). Some leaders even supported certain aspects of socialism. In 1920 the Canadian Pentecostals attacked the labour unions, but nevertheless stated that 'Pentecostals support all that is good in Socialism as against the greed of capital and the crime of profiteering' (Anderson 1979:210). If one bears in mind that the Pentecostal movement maintained a strong position against material possessions until after World War II, the switch of the Faith movement is even more remarkable.

There are different theories on the dynamic relationship between theologies and ideologies on the one hand and social structures on the other. In this chapter we shall concentrate on three of these theories: the Marxist view of the relationship between the so-called substructures (*Unterbau*) and superstructures (*Überbau*) of society, the theory of Max Weber, and the deprivation theories.

The first theory is chosen for discussion because of its relevance for the South African situation. The well-known *Evangelical Witness*, which was signed by many Pentecostals, accused the Faith teachers and churches of merely being apologists for capitalistic society.

Although Max Weber - who saw capitalistic society as a direct result of Calvinist theology and practice - developed his theory in a completely different society and situation, it is valuable to compare his conclusions with the developments in the Pentecostal movement.

The deprivation theories have been applied to the Pentecostal movement for a long time (see Anderson 1979:195ff; Hollenweger 1977:457ff) and are also being applied to the Faith movement (Morran & Schlemmer 1984:26ff).

The question that needs to be answered is whether the Faith message is merely a justification of the capitalist society and the affluency of the followers of the movement, or whether the Faith message did in fact bring about positive results for its adherents.

2.1 The Marxist theory of the substructure (Unterbau) and superstructure (Überbau) of society

According to Marxist thinking society can be divided into a substructure (Unterbau) and a superstructure (Überbau). The substructure consists of the needs of humans, production, powers of production (labour forces and natural resources), and means of production and production relations. The superstructure consists of theories, ideas, conscious ideologies, religion, etc.

The Marxist analysis of society is distinctive in that it does not regard the superstructure as the determinant of the substructure, but *vice versa*. If the Marxist theory is valid, prosperity teaching did not produce affluent Christians, but the economic structures in society (the Unterbau) produced the prosperity teachings (the superstructure or Überbau). Unlike the claims of the Faith teachers that their positive confessions and their correct faith produced prosperity, the Marxist theory will see the underlying and often subconscious factors determined by the economic forces as decisive for the development of the prosperity teachings.

That there is merit in applying the Marxist Unterbau-Überbau structure to the Faith movement, seems clear. Hollenweger (1977:476) concludes from his comparison between first, second and third generation ministers in the Pentecostal movement that ministers from the upper and middle classes and ministers with a higher educational training increased dramatically in the third generation to become the most prominent group in the ministry. Subsequently, the rationalisation for their lack of prosperity in the early days - 'the concentration of money in the hands of men like J P Morgan and John D

Rockefeller (are) signs of the Second Coming, foreshadowings of the Beast or the Antichrist' (Anderson 1979:210, 283) - became irrelevant and even a theological problem.

The problem of modern day Pentecostals with the older antimaterialistic theology is evident from a personal conversation I had with Nicky van der Westhuizen, a former minister in the Pentecostal Protestant Church and until very recently a very successful evangelist of an independent movement. He was also one of the leaders of the International Fellowship of Christian Churches, the umbrella organisation of several big South African independent churches and ministries, many of whom are proclaiming the prosperity message. According to Van der Westhuizen, in his former denomination poverty was seen as a sign of spirituality. That was one of the reasons why his ministry in the denomination became very difficult. The Lord then led him to resign and start an independent movement. Shortly after he had left the Pentecostal Protestant Church, the Lord led him into the Faith movement and he accumulated reasonable wealth.

If one bears in mind that the Faith movement was born in the United States and had a relatively small impact on the European Pentecostal movement, the influence of social and political issues on the doctrine becomes even more apparent.

In South Africa the movement started in the upper middle-class suburbs. Steele (1986:125f) discusses four cases where 'Biblical prosperity' has been taught 'successfully' in rural and poor communities. In every case he mentions that the pastor and the church started to prosper after they had implemented the prosperity teaching. Bearing in mind that the prosperity teachers expect of their adherents to 'act in faith' if they want to prosper, the financial prosperity of the minister and the church is no proof that the teaching is actually working for the poor people who listen to the message.

K Copeland (quoted in Steele 1986:125ff) tries to solve the problem of the implementation of prosperity teaching in different social settings. According to him 'prosperity is relevant to the individual's situation. A bicycle or a pair of shoes could be the height of prosperity for a person living in some parts of Africa or Asia'. Although K Copeland (1974:11) claims that even the world's shortages should have no effect on the prosperity of the Christian, he eventually ties prosperity to economic factors. If prosperity for the Christian is solely dependent upon 'His riches in glory', as K Copeland claims, there should be no reason to distinguish between Christians in Europe, America or Africa. The same rules and promises that apply for America should also apply for the

Third World. If 'the individual's situation' is really as relevant as Copeland claims, it seems even more true that prosperity teaching is a superstructure (*Überbau*) that is based, not on a religious experience or even a Biblical doctrine, but on an American, capitalistic substructure (*Unterbau*).

The Faith teachers fail to see a clear difference between Western, capitalistic values and the gospel. God is often portrayed as a 'rich God' almost in capitalistic terms. Thus K Copeland (1974:10) can say 'God always has more than enough. The rise in interest rates has not affected our ministry'.

When the prosperity teachers have to explain why the prosperity gospel works better in some places than in others, their teachings become even more suspect of being bound to Western thinking. K Copeland's notion that 'prosperity is relevant to the individual's situation' (quoted in Steele 1986:125), meaning that a person in Africa or Asia would be blessed in a far humbler way than somebody in North America, makes God a partner in the political and economic systems of exploitation. God almost becomes either a slave of the international monetary system, or even worse, a supporter of a status quo of an affluent First World and a starving Third World.

This explanation of Copeland also raises a question concerning the real power of positive confession, of giving to God and expecting a tenfold return, etc. If prosperity is a promise of a God who always 'has more than enough' (Copeland), and if giving to God is a good investment because of His tenfold return (G Copeland), it is difficult to see why God has to make it relevant to the situation of the individual. If K Copeland can trust God to provide an aircraft for one of his partners working in Africa (1987:13), why must the poor people from Africa be satisfied with bicycles? If the astronomic amounts of money that are flowing in and out of these ministries are taken into account, and the Faith teachers claim that they receive it from God, God seems to be a respector of persons (or countries or economic systems) if other people must be satisfied with a bicycle. In one newsletter K Copeland (1987:5, 8) reports that his ministry gave R800 000 to Reinhard Bonnke, an evangelist, to repair his tent, and also contributed an amount to him for the purchase of 'six heavy duty six-wheel drive, air-cooled diesel trucks' and two issues later K Copeland (1987:13) reports that his ministry gave an expensive Cessna aircraft to a missionary in Zimbabwe. The story of the Cessna aircraft is told in a regular article, 'Ministry to the Poor'. However, here and in similar articles in other editions of the newsletter, there are no testimonies of people in the poor areas who became prosperous because of the teachings of K Copeland and his partners.

Steele (1986:119ff) sees prosperity teaching as a corrective of irrelevant traditions that renounced wealth and glorified poverty. He blames theology and theologians, 'a modern day Baal to a large section of the Church' who 'have forsaken the Living God to worship at the feet of men', for the fact that the teachings of faith, divine healing and prosperity, which are merely an emphasis on Bible-based beliefs, have been discarded by the Church (Steele 1986:120).

Malan (1984:21f) blames the pagan worship of ancestral spirits and pagan gods in Africa for the prevailing poverty, while at the same time he credits the 'Christian heritage' of the West for its prosperity. This argument not only neglects evangelical and Pentecostal theology, but also glorifies Western tradition. Pentecostals, being evangelical, do not accept the idea of a 'Christian nation'. In practice Pentecostals do not regard it as 'sheepstealing' if unsaved people get saved in their churches and then resign their old assemblies. Therefore to speak of a Christian heritage of a nation or a group of nations, is completely out of bounds for Pentecostal thinking.

In the glorification of Western civilisation as the reason for Western prosperity, the colonial history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is completely forgotten! The fact that many developed countries obtained a vast amount of their prosperity from the exploitation of poorer countries during and even after these periods, is overshadowed in the minds of the prosperity teachers who glorify Western civilisation at the cost of the traditions of the Third World.

In South Africa the so-called Concerned Evangelicals accused the Rhema Bible Church, the biggest faith church in the country, and Kenneth Hagin and Ray McCauley of using their teachings to maintain the status quo and to fight communism. In a critique of their own evangelical tradition, the *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, the Concerned Evangelicals, many of whom are Pentecostals, express their concern for the fact that the whole faith message, especially prosperity teaching, is closely connected 'with the western tradition of oppression and exploitation' (Concerned Evangelicals 1986:30ff).

We are concerned that some of these groups are blatantly *capitalistic* and *materialistic*. They preach the gospel of prosperity claiming that this 'blessed' capitalism is from God by faith if one believes the Scriptures, confesses them and claims possession (material) desired! What a false 'God of materialism'. This sounds like idolatry of mammon!

(Concerned Evangelicals 1986:32)

The Concerned Evangelicals (1986:31) do not justify communism, neither do they reject the possibility that there might be a communist threat in South Africa. But according to them the term 'communist' is used against all who are opposed to the apartheid system in South Africa. When the prosperity teachers fight 'communism' in the same way as the government does, the Concerned Evangelicals see a close link between the aims of the defenders of the status quo and the Faith teachers. Therefore they also question the motives of the 'often, if not always, *whites*' who come to South Africa as missionaries from America. 'Winning souls to capitalism has become equal to winning souls for Christ, to them the West is equal to the Church and the East to the mission field (Concerned Evangelicals 1986:31).

The Concerned Evangelicals (1986:30) express the view that organisations like Rhema (and other Pentecostal and evangelical mission and evangelistic organisations) preach the gospel to blacks 'to make them submissive to the oppressive apartheid system of South Africa'. What makes Rhema even more suspect, is the fact that the American and South African flags are hoisted in front of their big church building in Randburg (Concerned Evangelists 1986:34). When young blacks protested against McCauley when he conducted a mission in Soweto, it was not because they are against evangelisation or Rhema per se 'but because of the outrageous motives which hurt blacks in this country' (Concerned Evangelicals 1986:32).

That the prosperity gospel in South Africa serves the ideals of capitalism, is undoubtedly true. Where the system of apartheid provided the possibility of black exploitation, the prosperity gospel may easily provide justification for the beneficiaries of the system, while leaving the victims without support. The victims may even get the impression that God has left them.

Although the Concerned Evangelicals (1986:34) may be overstating their case (e.g. that 'the flag of America symbolises enemy number one in the minds of the most blacks in the township'), it seems clear that at least the Rhema Bible Church has a strong tendency towards the political right (see Lederle 1986:71). Although Ray McCauley does not support a specific political party, he once made the church building available for a political meeting of former President P W Botha. In an invitation to President Botha to the opening of the new church buildings, Ray McCauley used words that remind one very strongly of American civil religion:

Mr President, we see you very much as Americans see their President. As a God-fearing fellow believer who has only one desire in his heart and that is to see his country united, at

peace and prospering under the mighty hand of the Lord Our nation has a rich Christian heritage and was founded by men who feared God and we believe this has been a major reason for the many blessings poured out upon our land.

(McCauley 1985:1)

This does not mean that one has to see the prosperity teaching only as a fabrication of a capitalist or oppressive society. Neither does it mean that the prosperity teachers are actually blatant capitalists promoting their own ideology in a religious or Christian jacket. The prosperity teachers may even be dedicated and sincere Christians. However, it is clear that they have worked out their theology from a capitalist, Western perspective. Prosperity teaching did not come to the church in South Africa as a rediscovery of an old forgotten Biblical truth, but it developed from a capitalistic world-view.

The danger of the teaching, as the Concerned Evangelicals have clearly indicated, is that it can be misused to justify an unjust situation. In South Africa the prosperity teaching can easily strengthen the position of those who are still using the opportunities that the apartheid system is giving them to gain more wealth at the cost of the oppressed section of society. For the oppressed people in South Africa prosperity teaching does not really give any hope. If the oppressed are not rich, they must believe that they are doing something wrong and therefore God does not want to bless them. And if they are living in poor areas like the poverty-stricken rural areas of the homelands, they cannot gain the promised prosperity from God because for him or her prosperity is relative to his or her situation.

2.2 Capitalism and the Protestant ethic - Max Weber

That the foundation of prosperity teaching is the so-called American dream has been argued by many critics of the movement. Magliatio (1981), who calls his book on the Faith movement 'The Wall Street Gospel', states:

In America we are surrounded by peace and protected by nuclear missiles. We are living in a sea of abundance. We are full, rich and reigning, just like the Corinthians. We must not make the mistake of thinking that we have all this because we are superior, or have a deeper revelation, or exercise more faith. We are not more spiritual than our suffering brethren.

(Magliatio 1981:140)

Hunt and McMahon (1986:16ff) suggest that prosperity teaching bears a remarkable resemblance to the 'Think and Grow Rich' syndrome of the American business community. Not only the vocabulary, but also the ideals of prosperity teaching are very similar to the dreams of success of American society. Wilkerson (1985:103) calls prosperity teaching 'a scriptural take-off on Napoleon Hill's book, *Think and Grow Rich*'.

Although the one-sidedness of Marxist theory can be questioned, it is undoubtedly true that the changes in the social position of the Pentecostals had an influence on the rise of the Faith movement and prosperity teaching. The question which must be investigated further is: Did prosperity teaching in fact help the Pentecostals to obtain prosperity or was prosperity teaching only a rationalisation of a new pattern in the movement?

The essence of the question centres around the dynamic relationship between theory and praxis. The deprivation theories are based on the idea that the teachings, ideologies and theologies of groups determine their situation, whereas Marxist theory is based on the idea that ideologies, teachings and theologies are determined by the social activities and social position of the group.

The theory of Max Weber on the spirit of capitalism also falls in the first category. Marshall (1982:19ff) points out that the connection between capitalism and the Protestant ethic was an important theme in Germany long before Weber wrote his famous *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in 1904. He quotes Friedrich Naumann stating that the origins of capitalism and its essence had the same emphasis in German thinking as the great Revolution in French thinking (Marshall 1982:26).

The theory of Weber is based on the uniqueness of capitalism as a historical phenomenon, especially 'the rational capital accumulation or the maximisation of economic return as an end in itself' (Marshall 1982:26).

According to Weber (1971:60ff) both entrepreneur and labourer in traditional pre-capitalist society expressed a preference for increased leisure over increased profit. As long as the traditional value system persisted in economics, modern capitalism did not come into being although all the other factors

necessary for the rise of capitalism existed. For Weber the spirit of capitalism is the accumulation of profits and wealth as an end in itself. His main objective is to explain why this spirit has become the norm of economic conduct.

Weber (1971:47) uses the writings of Benjamin Franklin as a typical example of the spirit of modern capitalism where the accumulation of capital becomes an end in itself and even a duty of the individual, whereas in the pre-capitalistic era it was either rejected as unethical or tolerated without condoning it. In the Protestant ethics of the seventeenth century Weber sees the key to explaining this shift. He finds a similarity in the ethical maxims preached by most of the Protestant movements on which he focuses, namely Western European and North American neo-Calvinism, the pietists of Europe, Anglo-American Methodists and Anabaptist sects. He calls this constituted ethos 'worldly asceticism'. This 'worldly asceticism' is mainly based on three principles: the emphasis that every believer, not only the ordained priesthood, is called of God (which gave a religious sanction to worldly labour); an asceticistic attitude towards material possessions and worldly pleasures; and an emphasis on the systematic use of time (Weber 1971:155ff).

The importance of the doctrine of predestination of John Calvin and especially the later *syllogismus practicus* of Protestant orthodoxy is also stressed by Weber (1971:114ff). He saw the doctrine of predestination as a radical, yet logical, consequence of all the latent forms of predestination in almost every world religion: Man cannot save himself, therefore he is totally dependent upon God who has already destined some to be saved and others to be damned. According to Weber this left human beings with the terrifying conclusion that no one knows whether he or she is saved or damned.

Weber (1971:117f) sees a new work ethic in Calvin's thesis that every believer must consider himself or herself saved and attain self-confidence in a calling, in working in the service of God. 'It was this rationalisation that gave the Reformed faith its peculiar ascetic tendency ...' (Weber 1971:118).

Although the Calvinists confessed over against the Roman Catholics that humans cannot be *saved* by works, salvation is here to be *demonstrated* by works (Weber 1971:225). For Calvinists, this belief that humans ought to show their election by living according to the standards set out by Calvinism, is the link between Protestantism and capitalism and also the reason for their ascetic lives (Weber 1971:197).

Pietists, Baptists and Methodists do not share the same belief concerning predestination. Still each group either has another form of striving for a certain form of perfection or grace that has the function of the *syllogismus practicus* (Weber 1971:128f), or the group proclaims itself as the only true church with its own ascetic lifestyle that proves its position. Members of these groups constantly have to prove to their fellow-members and to God that they are still part of the true church (Weber 1971:145ff).

The necessity of proving one's salvation led Calvinists and other Protestants to believe that salvation is only possible through a lifestyle of good works, by being active in a calling, living an ascetic life and not wasting time.

To the Catholic the absolution of his Church was a compensation for his own imperfection The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system. There was no place for the very human Catholic cycle of sin, repentance, atonement, release followed by renewed sin.

(Weber 1971:117)

This system of thinking led, according to Weber, to the spirit of capitalism. Ascetism prohibited luxuries and unnecessary consumption and did not allow participation in the enjoyment of the things of the world. Simultaneously, in fulfilling their callings in the world, Calvinists' dedicated work led to higher productivity. 'When the limitation of consumption is combined with the release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save' (Weber 1971:172).

Once the accumulation of capital becomes a need in itself, the initial impetus, Protestant ascetism, becomes more and more a side issue. Weber (1971:175) quotes John Wesley saying that religion must necessarily produce industry and frugality, which will produce riches. 'But as riches increase, so will pride, anger and love of the world in all its branches'.

Since ascetism undertook to remodel the world ..., material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history Victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer.

(Weber 1971:181)

Weber's thesis did not go unchallenged. From within Protestantism he was challenged for not understanding the doctrine of predestination, for using a small and insignificant group or groups within Protestantism as a norm for misinterpreting the Calvinist value system of using the accomplished wealth in the correct manner, and for not giving account of 'modern capitalism' within Catholicism, etc.

Like Weber, the Marxists see a clear link between the Reformation and the rise of capitalism. However, Marx and Engels saw the doctrines of the Calvinists simply as a result of the social class struggle in the sphere of production between the Roman Catholic Church as representatives of the old feudal system, and the bourgeoisie (cf Marx 1972:650ff; Engels 1970:383ff, quoted in Marshall 1972:140f, 201).

It falls outside the scope of this study to evaluate the theory of Weber or to make a choice between Weber and Marx. Even if the rise of capitalism is much more complicated than what Weber suggested and even if Weber did not understand the Calvinist doctrines correctly, it seems to be true that Protestant theology did at least play some role in the rise of capitalism.

It is also true that many of the things that Weber said about the Calvinist groups he investigated, is also applicable to the twentieth century Pentecostal movement. Although early Pentecostals rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, they maintained a legalistic and ascetic lifestyle to emphasise their uniqueness. Hollenweger (1977:474ff) rejects the commonly accepted thesis that the Pentecostal movement started as a movement of the lower classes of society and became bourgeois in the second or third generation. According to him the movement started as a predominantly bourgeois movement. However, his study was based on pastors and it is possible, though unlikely, that the pastors of the first generation came from a different group in society than the average members.

From Hollenweger's study, it does become clear that the position of Pentecostals changed dramatically in the third generation. The same dynamics that Weber attributed to early Protestants, seem to have been working in the Pentecostal movement. Their 'disciplined way of life has obtained riches and social prestige' (Hollenweger 1977:484).

In this sense Pentecostal thinking functions as a stimulus for success. Therefore Hollenweger (1977:484) sees no tension between the earlier Pentecostals, who placed a low value on goods and possessions provided by civilisation, and the prosperity gospel. According to him the same dynamics are at work in both cases.

2.3 The deprivation theories

Hollenweger works with the so-called deprivation theory. He sees the deprivation of early Pentecostals as the reason for their rejection of goods and possessions provided by civilisation. The prosperity gospel is not something completely different, but just another reaction to deprivation, yet with the same goal - overcoming it with the gospel.

According to Hollenweger (1977:484) deprived people have only two alternatives; either to develop a system in which the things they are deprived of are seen as of little value or even harmful, or to develop a system that will give them what they lack. The early Pentecostals took the first and, since the fifties, many Pentecostals took the second option.

A mere sociological assessment, however, does not explain why the movement that took the second option drew so many people to their ranks who cannot be identified as deprived people.

Hollenweger (1977:465) tries to overcome this problem by giving a new definition of deprivation: '... it is not economic deprivation alone which is decisive What is decisive is not the deprivation in itself, but the feeling of deprivation. The function of sects, from the sociological point of view, lies in the overcoming of this feeling of deprivation'. With such a wide and vague definition of deprivation, it is possible to accommodate a vast group of people who do not regard themselves or are not regarded by society as deprived people.

Schlemmer and Morran (1984:25) use the deprivation theories as part of their explanation for the growth of the Faith churches. They also use a very broad definition that includes 'any and all of the ways that an individual may be or feel disadvantaged in comparison to other individuals or groups or to an internalised set of standards'. Like the definition of Hollenweger, this definition seems to be too inclusive, thus losing its usefulness. It becomes inadequate to explain both the dynamics of the early Pentecostal movement and the later developments in the Faith movement. Consequently these definitions are also inadequate to explain the reason for the change of direction by a part of the Pentecostal movement, notably the Faith movement.

Anderson (1979:223ff) who also works with the deprivation theory, saw the big economic and cultural changes that took place in America at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, and the devastating effect that they had on lower class workers, as the main reason for the rise of Pentecostalism and the Holiness Movement. When it comes to the modern Charismatic movement, many of its followers being drawn from the affluent classes of society, Anderson falls back on the hypothesis that they 'may suffer from a real or imagined deprivation of respect and prestige'. The typical testimonies of Pentecostals and Charismatics that before their conversion or baptism in the Spirit they 'felt empty and hungry for God', let Anderson (1979:229) conclude that 'they felt deprived'. Like Hollenweger and Morran and Schlemmer, Anderson works with a definition of deprivation that will probably include many people who feel attracted to religion and definitely everybody who had a Christian conversion experience.

Although the theories of Weber and the deprivation theories do not explain all the circumstances surrounding the development of the prosperity teachings, and although they are definitely overemphasised, they do have an element of truth which helps to explain the paradigm switch in the thinking of Pentecostals on goods and possessions provided by civilisation.

3 CONCLUSION

The Marxist idea that theology (in this case prosperity teaching) is only a superstructure of the substructure of the relationships of production seems to have at least some merit. However, one cannot explain the whole movement only in terms of economic relationships. The application of Weber's thesis on the rise of capitalism seems to be relevant to the Pentecostal movement. The lifestyle of early Pentecostals led to the uplifting of the first generation of poor Pentecostals and in the second and third generation the movement changed into a middle class and even upper middle class movement. In this case prosperity teaching is not a superstructure of the capitalistic society, but rather the rationalisation of an accumulated lifestyle.

The deprivation theories used by Anderson, Schlemmer and Morran and Hollenweger are inadequate to explain both the present growth of the Faith movement among the upper classes and the development of the Pentecostal movement into a bourgeois movement. It is true that many deprived people joined the Pentecostal movement at the turn of the century, and even do so today. It is also true that many people managed to improve their deprived position after joining the movement. However, there are also many people who cannot be

described as deprived (unless you widen the word's scope so much that it completely loses its meaning), who are part of the Pentecostal movement, and especially of the Faith movement. These theories leave most of the questions unanswered. In so far as the deprivation theories explain the paradigm switch in Pentecostal theology, they are valuable. The Pentecostals came from the lower classes of society and their positive lifestyle helped these deprived people to rise out of their original underprivileged situation, provided that the society in which they lived had the potential to help them. The second and third generations were no longer deprived people and had to change their original theology of disregard for possessions and wealth. Prosperity teaching is a radical reaction against their old theology.

One cannot, however, evaluate prosperity teaching solely from a social analysis of society and the relation between the Pentecostals and their social structures. There is always a dynamic relationship between experience, theology and the influences of society. It is unlikely that prosperity teaching developed without any influence from religious experience and the basic theological principles of the Pentecostals. This perspective will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

The implications of the theological presuppositions of the Faith movement for some central doctrines

The Faith movement has developed a distinctive theological system. Despite its historical roots in classical Pentecostalism, it is clear that the theology proper of the Faith movement cannot be adequately interpreted as a slight variation from Pentecostal thinking.

In this chapter, I shall look at four main theological doctrines, the doctrine of God, Christology, anthropology and the doctrine of revelation, to determine the influence of Faith theology on the main theological themes.

At the present stage it is not always possible to determine the influence of the presuppositions on the main theological themes, because the Faith teachers have not fully developed their theology yet. What is more, the Faith teachers often uphold two completely contradictory views. This is true of both their doctrine of God and their Christology. It is not possible to determine in advance which course the movement will eventually take.

1 THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

God didn't bless him (the unbeliever) because he was a sinner. He received God's blessing because he honoured God. God has a certain law of prosperity and when you get into contact with that law and those rules, it just works for you - whoever you are.

Kenneth Hagin

1.1 The doctrine of God in the Faith movement

Theology has never been a strong point of the Faith movement. Their emphasis has always been on the practical side, the experience of faith. The books and magazines that are being produced at a tremendous rate, centre around praying to get results (a title of one of Hagin's books), how to use your faith, how to be healed, how to be prosperous, etc.

There is, however, a clear theological basis discernible in the works of the Faith teachers. Although they differ among each other, their particular theological emphasis is the same.

In theory the Faith teachers subscribe to almost all the traditional Christian teachings on God. They are Trinitarians, they believe in the sovereignty of God, they believe in the righteousness of God, His omnipotence, His omnipresence, etc. But their theoretical confessions differ from their concept of God in the application of their faith. It is in the application of their faith that the teachers of the Faith message portray God as they really see and understand Him.

1.2 Prosperity and the doctrine of God

The so-called prosperity gospel is probably the most discernible element of the Faith message in comparison with traditional Pentecostal teaching. Prosperity (spiritual as well as material) is seen as a promise to all believers and an integral part of the gospel (K Copeland, 1974:17).

Prosperity, however, is not understood as a gift from God based on grace. Copeland (1974:18) declares that God has laid down certain rules to govern 'every single thing in existence'. Certain natural laws govern our existence in the natural world, e g the law of gravity, the law of lift, etc. According to Copeland (1974:19), the same applies to the so-called 'world of the spirit', and he explains how these laws work with regard to salvation:

There are certain elements which, when combined, will bring forth the result God intends. Salvation is available to every human being on the face of the earth because the Word says that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be

saved The higher spiritual law of life is here in the earth, but every day people die and go to hell. Why? Because the law of salvation hasn't been put to work in their particular lives. It will work only when it is put to work.

(Copeland 1974:19)

Thus, salvation is not a gracious gift of God, but humans putting the law of salvation to work in their lives.

The same applies to prosperity. God has revealed certain laws governing prosperity in his Word and faith causes them to function. 'The success formulas in the word of God produce results when used as directed' (Copeland 1964:20). Copeland sees these laws as God's unchangeable way of governing the world. The Jewish people are still prosperous today because they are using the formulas God taught Abraham about operating financially (Copeland 1964:21). Even an unbeliever can have prosperity if he follows the rules of prosperity (Copeland 1964:32).

Kenneth Hagin states even more clearly that Christian and non-Christian alike can have prosperity provided that he or she honours God by conforming to the laws of prosperity: 'God didn't bless him (the unbeliever - JNH) because he was a sinner. He received God's blessing because he honoured God. God has a certain law of prosperity and when you get into contact with that law and those rules, it just works for you - whoever you are' (Hagin 1974:2f).

Kenneth Copeland describes the relationship between God and Scripture almost in pantheistic terms: 'God and His Word are one. When you are in the presence of the Word, you are in the presence of God Himself' (Copeland 1974:45). He does not see the Logos of the fourth gospel as Jesus Christ, but as Scripture. This Word of God (Scripture) is the manifestation of the power of God (Copeland 1974:46). The 'Word of God' is not the history or testimony of revelation, but the textbook with God's laws and rules for success. Because Copeland believes that the existence of humans is determined by the laws of God written in Scripture, it is not difficult to understand why he identifies God with Scripture. These laws, Scripture, and even God, become principles to use.

This (prosperity -JNH) is available to you and frankly, it would be stupid of you not to partake of it! When a man realises that prosperity belongs to him, takes the Word of God, becomes prosperous, and then gives it away, he is valuable. The Apostle Paul learned the spiritual law of giving and operated it proficiently.

(Copeland 1974:51)

Gloria Copeland (1978:54) explains the law of giving with reference to Mark 10:29:

You give a \$1 for the gospel's sake and \$100 belongs to you; give \$10 and receive \$1 000; give \$1 000 and receive \$100 000.... Give one car and the return would furnish you a lifetime of cars. In short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal.

Kenneth Copeland (1974:63) sees John 10:10 as the 'absolute truth' and interprets every Scripture in the light of it.

Before you begin meditation in the Word, you must commit yourself to the absolute truth of John 10:10, 'The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly'. Whenever I read something that seems contradictory to this, I immediately stop and straighten my thinking.

(Copeland 1976:63)

As explained previously even John 10:10 as hermeneutical key to the interpretation of Scripture, has a specific meaning for Copeland: God is a good God, He does not steal from you, He does not take anything away and He gives you only the best things. This hermeneutical key and theological presupposition leads to new results in interpreting Jesus' confrontation with the rich young ruler. The young ruler was rich because he observed the law from his youth. Satan 'will try to convince you that the rich young ruler couldn't receive eternal life because he had money' (Copeland 1974:63). If the rich man should

have asked Jesus what he meant when He said the ruler lacked one thing, Jesus would have told him that he lacked 'a working revelation of the covenant' (Copeland 1974:64). Jesus actually wanted the young ruler to give his money to the poor so that He could give him hundred times what he had (Copeland 1974:66).

Many questions can be raised against Copeland's exegesis and his hermeneutical key. His concept of God poses even bigger questions. God is a good God who wants his children to have all the best things in life. He has laid down certain rules in Scripture. All people who apply these laws and rules in their lives, believer and unbeliever alike, honour God in doing so and will receive the prosperity God promised.

It is true that the Faith teachers claim to maintain a balanced view on prosperity. Steele blames the immaturity of many Christians for the disasters caused by people for whom prosperity teaching did not work.

Worldly-minded, immature Christians were dazzled by the prospect of earthly wealth. They didn't bother to listen carefully to the rest of the message, or the conditions which the Word of God set out for godly prosperity, which, of course, does not emphasise finances alone, but rather a total approach to spirit, soul and body.

(Steele 1987:55)

In the same manner K Copeland (1974:14) warns against the love for money.

Fee (1979:2f) has nevertheless pointed out that although the prosperity teachers pay lip service to the fact that money may never become a goal in itself, in the end they always promise prosperity. They continually reaffirm one thing: 'God wills the (financial) prosperity of every one of His children and therefore for a Christian to be in poverty is to be outside God's intended will; it is to be living a Satan-defeated life' (Fee 1979:3).

Gosset (1976:75) gives a good example of this line of thinking when he says if God has not been meeting your needs, perhaps you have not been putting Him first. It is clear from all the books of the Faith movement that financial prosperity plays a very prominent role in their theology. It is also clear that prosperity teaching is not an unimportant theological position that can easily be adjusted or even dropped in future. Prosperity teaching is based on a very specific understanding of God and solidly grounded in such a doctrine of God.

The prosperity teachers continuously portray God as financially rich. He is not only the heavenly Father who wills financial prosperity for His children, but He is also rich in human terms. He is the owner of a heavenly storehouse filled with material things. K Copeland quoted God as saying to him he ought to trust God's system of finance instead of the systems of the world.

Make your deposits with me according to the rate of exchange which my Word guarantees and operate under my system of finance instead of the world's system. We can make it work at the current rate of exchange at that time. It won't matter if it takes a billion dollars to buy a loaf of bread - I (God - JNH) can afford it. If God can afford it, so can I. He's my father.

(Copeland 1974:73)

1.3 The doctrine of God and the so-called faith formulas

The so-called faith formulas are closely related to the prosperity gospel. The Faith movement emphasises the power of the spoken word. Hagin (sr) explains the power of a 'negative confession': 'If you talk about your trials, your difficulties, your lack of faith, your lack of money - your faith will shrivel and dry up If you confess sickness, it will develop sickness in your system If you confess lack of finance, it will stop the money from coming in ...' (Hagin 1983a:10).

According to K Copeland (1974:18-19) 'the force of faith is released by words' and 'faith's results are determined by your confession'. The right confession will eventually result in a situation where all your words will come to pass. This faith formula should not be determined by the realities around us. 'Learn and develop this confession of faith. I am not moved by what I see or by what I feel. I am moved only by what I believe. The victory is mine. I have NOW! I can see it through the eyes of my faith' (Copeland 1974:21). Hagin (1980c:14) also teaches his followers not to trust the symptoms when they pray for healing, but to keep on confessing healing even if the symptoms return.

The name of Jesus plays a prominent role in these faith formulas. Hagin compares the name of Jesus with a signed cheque from heaven. 'He gave us individually, a signed check (sic), saying "Fill it in". He gave us a signed check on the resources of heaven If we have a low estimation and a low respect for the Name, we will not expect much, because we do not know what belongs to us' (Hagin 1979j:23).

He continues by saying that the name of Jesus is the possession of the church (Hagin 1979j:55). Although he explicitly states that the name of Jesus is not to be used like a 'magic charm or a rabbit's foot' (Hagin 1979j:59), he does say that the name of Jesus will work for us when we begin to confess what that name will do for us (Hagin 1979t:137). Hagin (1979j:16) testifies that God has answered all the prayers he prayed for himself and his little children in the name of Jesus, and God has always said 'Yes' when he asked him something. However, if you pray for somebody else, he or she can nullify the effects of the prayer and destroy the effects of faith by a negative confession (Hagin 1979j:141).

The faith formulas are so effective that Hagin (1980(3):29) can give his readers a little formula for faith to 'make it work' for them, 'Follow these four steps and you'll always get there because they are four certain or sure steps to deliverance, healing, answered prayers, or what ever it is that you are seeking'.

Fickett (1984:8) correctly identifies a belief in a deistic god as the foundation of the faith formulas. He also refers to the irony of the claims of the Faith teachers that they are presenting an active, living God, while their hidden theology implies something completely different. The faith formulas become a way to manipulate and use the rules and principles laid down by a deistic god.

1.4 The theological presuppositions underlying the doctrine of God proclaimed by the Faith teachers

The Faith teachers continuously underline the fact that God is a living God who is active in the world today. Thus K Hagin (1979:28) can say that the Christian must trust Jesus to be his or her Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, Shepherd, Keeper and Supplier of his or her needs. In the same way, Yonggi Cho (1983:2), a Korean Faith teacher, teaches that Christians should learn to develop a personal relationship with God as a divine person.

With regard to prosperity teaching, however, little is left in the hands of the living God. Then God becomes a deistic God and humans become masters of their own lives. K Copeland (1974:38) proclaims that everything God does is determined by His established covenant on earth; K Hagin (jr) (1979:70) says that 'you can take this possibility faith and make things work for you'.

There is thus clearly a dualism in the thinking of the prosperity teachers. On the one hand God is the active, living God who is interested in His creation. On the other hand, He has determined the destiny of humans by his Word or

by a final covenant with all the saved people. When it comes to prosperity teaching, it is not the image of the active and living God that determines the level of prosperity, but one's confession, one's faith and one's deeds. The same can be said about the teachings on healing. According to the prosperity teachers God has once and for all stated that He wants to heal people and therefore one must simply accept healing.

We have seen that McConnell (1982) links the Faith movement with the metaphysical movements like Christian Science and New Age. He also tries to establish a historical link via Kenyon between these movements and the prosperity teachings. Kenyon studied at a college known for its promotion of the ideas of the metaphysical cults and he remained sympathetic towards these cults throughout his life (McConnell 1982:84ff). McConnell refers to the direct link between Kenyon and Hagin. Kenyon was not a Pentecostal, but he believed in divine healing and a personal relationship between God and the Christian. Farah (1980:4) calls Kenyon's writings a 'treasure trove which all present Faith teachers mine'. McConnell (1982:26ff) compares the books of Kenyon with those of Hagin and concludes that Hagin is not only literally dependent on Kenyon, but he actually plagiarised Kenyon. In the same way Hagin has been plagiarised by the other Faith teachers (McConnell 1982:30).

Kenyon proclaimed a cosmological theology of words: 'Faith-filled words brought the universe into being, and faith-filled words are ruling that universe today' (Kenyon 1940:20). This cosmology has been radicalised by Hagin, who transformed it into a 'deistic system of spiritual laws' (McConnell 1982:36). The faith formulas place the resources of the world and the universe at the disposal of humans. The 'law of faith' is the 'cosmological principle of the universe'.

The positive confession teachings confirm this deistic and cosmological approach to God. The famous slogan of the Faith movement, 'What I confess is what I possess', (which originated with Kenyon and not Hagin (cf McConnell 1982:98)), is just another way to bring the 'cosmological principle of the universe' into operation. The positive or negative confessions are the decisive factors in healing and wealth. According to Kenyon (1942:67) it is a spiritual law that our confessions rule us, while Hagin (1983a:8f) states that your confessions will either imprison you or set you free.

McConnell (19882:100) convincingly argues that several other teachings of Kenyon and the Faith movement link up with the metaphysical cults: their anthropology bears the marks of metaphysical pantheism; and their world view

is based on a dualistic epistemology. The positive confessions of Kenyon and the Faith movement also correlate with the so-called 'Positive Mental Attitude' of New Thought (McConnell 1982:198ff).

It is clear that the Faith theology presupposes a deistic god. This concept of Faith has nothing to do with trust in an acting, living God. It is an attitude that enables Christians to create their own circumstances. K Copeland (1974:19) defines faith as 'a spiritual force, a spiritual energy, a spiritual power. It is this force which makes the laws of the spirit function'. Faith is not defined as trust in God, but as trust in the possibilities of the formulas.

The 'weakness' of God in comparison with the possibilities of Faith becomes evident when one compares the role of prayer with that of confession in the Faith movement. The Faith teachers discourage their followers from using the phrases 'Thy will be done' and 'if it be Thy will' in their prayers. They are contradictions of the faith formulas and therefore negative confessions. The will of God is completely overruled by the faith formulas. The Faith teachers have beforehand decided that health, wealth and happiness are God's will and they are giving to Christians the formula to attain these attributes. Prayer and the will of God lose their relevancy in this theology.

Hunt and McMahon (1985:16ff) also identify the cosmology of metaphysical cults like New Age as the source of prosperity teaching. According to them a book by Napoleon Hill, a non-Christian, *Think and grow rich*, was in many cases the flame that sparked off prosperity thinking. According to them Hill's teachings on the mind are actually based on sorcery. Although Hunt and McMahon do not condemn those Christians who used the books of Napoleon Hill, but accept them as sincere Christians, they believe that Hill actually taught people to make contact with demons.

Hill explains in some detail that he learned the mind-power techniques contained in his books from disembodied spirit entities. Demons masquerading as Ascended Masters used Hill to deceive the millions who have adopted the 'success' techniques they gave him.

(Hunt & McMahon 1985:18)

Hill is also the father of the slogan 'Anything the human mind can believe, the human mind can achieve' (quoted in Hunt & McMahon 1985:19). According to Hunt and McMahon, this principle makes humans gods. In Hill's teaching, humans are dependent on 'Masters who can disembody themselves and travel instantly to any place they choose' (Hunt & McMahon 1985:19).

Hunt and McMahon come to the conclusion that anyone who imagines that because he or she thinks certain thoughts or speaks certain words, God *must* respond in a certain way, has slipped into sorcery, and if not playing God, is at the very least attempting to manipulate God. To prove their point, they quote Yonggi Cho who says that we create our own universe of circumstances by the spoken word (Hunt & McMahon 1985:20).

Magliato (1981:107f) also sees a similarity between the faith formulas and the metaphysical cults. He sees a close relationship between the Faith teachers and Christian Science in their understanding of sickness.

Sarles (1986:340) has correctly stated that 'the proponents of prosperity have gone astray concerning the doctrine of God in at least two particulars: the will of God and the sovereignty of God'. According to Sarles (1986:341) the Faith teacher's notion that God wills prosperity runs contrary to the witness of Scripture. That has consequences for the concept of God, as can be observed in Tilton (1983). According to Tilton the Fall was a failure of God; if humans start believing something, they will inspire God to believe the same things; and God is bound by his own laws, and He cannot but comply with them. (Quoted in Sarles 1986:341f).

1.5 Conclusion

The Faith teachers are indeed working with a contradictory view of God. On the one hand He is the active and living God who is working in the world today. On the other hand Faith teachers are also working with a cosmological deistic view of God. When practical issues like prosperity are at stake, it is not the active and living God who is at work. Rather, it is the cosmological god who has laid down his rules and laws to live by.

The similarity between the faith message and the metaphysical cults is also clear. Even if one does not accept that the Faith movement received its doctrine of God via Kenyon from the metaphysical cults, it is still clear that it is using the same basic images of God. The image of God the Faith movement is portraying, is an image of a deistic god who has revealed himself once and for all in certain words and formulas, and not that of the living God.

It seems, however, that Hunt and McMahon go too far when they link prosperity teachings to the occult and sorcery. The mere fact that the prosperity teachers rely on many of the principles of Napoleon Hill, who might have indulged in the occult, does not make every prosperity teacher a sorcerer.

Prosperity teaching is not just another 'doctrine' about which Pentecostals can have differing opinions and remain brothers and sisters in Christ. Prosperity is not an 'extra' blessing added to all the goodness of God as the Pentecostals experience it. It is based on and firmly grounded in a deistic cosmological doctrine of God. Therefore even the clarion call among many Pentecostals to abandon the 'extreme' and 'fanatical' aspects of the prosperity teachings and to proclaim a balanced doctrine, seems to be inadequate to confront the real problem. One has to agree with Sarles that as long as the movement sticks to a doctrine that pre-decides the will of God and ignores the sovereignty of God, balanced teaching is impossible.

2 CHRISTOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

They crucified me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim that I was God, I just claimed that I walked with Him and that He was in Me.

Kenneth Copeland, 'quoting' Jesus Christ

Although the healing practices, the positive confessions and the prosperity message have received a great deal of attention in the evaluations of the movement, its Christology and anthropology have been largely neglected. It is, however, possible that the path of the Faith movement will eventually part with traditional Protestantism, and especially with historical Pentecostalism on these very issues.

The Christological emphasis of the Faith movement has not acquired the same revelational value as many other doctrines in the movement itself. Christology is not nearly as developed in the movement as the other theological loci referred to. Some of the logical consequences of what Kenneth Copeland and Hagin have been saying about Jesus Christ for a long time are only becoming clearer now.

The same applies to the anthropology of the Faith movement. Most of the teachings of the Faith movement have a very specific view of humans as a basis. It is only recently that some leaders of the movement, especially Kenneth Copeland, are explicitly developing their underlying view of humanity.

2.1 The humanity and deity of Christ

Since the Council of Chalcedon in the fourth century the so-called two natures of Christ, like the Trinity, have been accepted by mainstream Christianity which includes Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and since the Reformation, Protestantism. The early Pentecostal movement did not change this emphasis. In the early days a major split occurred in the movement over the Trinity (Hollenweger 1977:311). A ‘unitarian’ movement focusing on the Son broke away from the Trinitarian Assemblies of God in America. Hollenweger (1977:310ff) sees this ‘modalist doctrine of the Trinity’ which states that there is only one God whose name is Jesus and who reveals Himself in three different forms, as more in accordance with Pentecostalism than the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

According to Hollenweger (1977:311) Pentecostals do not understand the doctrine of the two natures, but all the Pentecostal confessions repeat it without comment. It may also be that, although often unconsciously, the doctrine of the two natures plays an important role in the Pentecostal movement (cf Horn [1989]:11ff).

Hollenweger’s critique certainly does apply to the Faith movement. Although most of the Faith teachers subscribe to the traditional doctrine of the two natures, it plays almost no role in their teaching. On the contrary, there is a strong development in the movement away from the traditional confession of Jesus as God towards a unitarian movement of the First Person.

The neglect of the deity of Christ is never explicit. It is always part of a simultaneous upgrading of human beings. The new trend in the Faith movement can clearly be seen in at least two popular doctrines, the so-called spiritual death of Jesus and his rebirth and the ‘incarnation’ of humans.

2.2 The spiritual death of Jesus on the cross

The doctrine of the spiritual death of Jesus and His rebirth is not acknowledged by everybody in the Faith movement. Hobart Freeman, before his death probably one of the most radical proclaimers of the Faith message, wrote a book against this teaching (Freeman [s a]). The two most influential Faith teachers, Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin, both do subscribe to this teaching, which, like many other doctrines of the Faith movement, originated with E W Kenyon (1969).

According to this doctrine Jesus left His divine nature in heaven when He became a human. Thus Capps (1982:91f) interprets Jesus' reference to Himself as the Son of Man as evidence that the Second Adam (a popular way of referring to Jesus in the Faith movement) 'did not take the nature of angels nor the nature of God ...'.

With this understanding of Jesus' earthly life, the Faith movement parted from the traditional doctrine of the two natures. As an attempt to clarify the old doctrine of the two natures of Jesus - which is not really accessible to lay Christians of the twentieth century - this would have been an understandable venture. However, behind this teaching lies a dangerous misunderstanding of who Jesus really was and a definite attempt to upgrade humans to super beings. The Second Adam with his human nature was not a revelation of God to humans, but a restoration of the first Adam. When K Copeland (1979:90) speaks about the shining hair of Jesus at His appearance to John on the isle of Patmos, he adds 'Adam had that light shining out of him. He was clothed with that light. Remember, he was the very image of God'.

It is clear that the titles Son of Man and Second Adam are more than technical terms in the Faith movement. It seems as if Jesus is stripped for a while of His deity in order that humans may be adorned with it.

The incarnation, life and death of Christ do not give enough evidence of how the 'human Jesus' changed humans into gods. Because of this the death of Christ on the cross is not seen by the Faith teachers as being God's final work; it was not even the most important act in the atonement. The cross and the death of Christ actually constituted a defeat. On the cross, when Jesus became sin, He received the nature of Satan and it was only after three days in hell that the victory was finally won.

Hagin (1979:8f) states that Jesus was the first Person to be born again. According to his interpretation Psalm 2:7, 'Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee', refers neither to the conception of Jesus Christ nor to His birth (as this Scripture is often interpreted in evangelical circles), but to His resurrection. In his speech in Acts 13:28-33: 'Paul plainly shows that when God said "This day I have begotten thee", it referred to when God raised him from the dead. Jesus was the first person to be born again' (Hagin 1979:9). But the phrase 'born again' also has a very specific meaning. Being born again means to receive the nature of God (Hagin 1979:7).

The question that needs to be answered is why it was necessary for Jesus to be born again and receive the nature of God since according to traditional Christianity He was God the Son from the foundation of the earth.

The teaching that Jesus actually left the nature of God in heaven makes it easy for the movement to take a second step. Hagin (1979l:7) concludes that Jesus did not only bear our sins;

He bore our sin, or man's sin nature. After all it would not do me any good for Him to bear just my sins. I would still be the same kind of creature I had always been. But when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He did something about the nature that caused me to sin.

(Hagin 1979l:7)

This teaching, like so many of the Faith doctrines, originated with Kenyon's book, *What happened from the cross to the Throne* (1969). According to him Jesus became obedient to Satan. Satan is the author of death. Therefore by dying, Jesus became obedient to Satan and actually received a satanic spirit.

Although Hagin is not as radical in his approach, the result is the same. At the cross Jesus was stripped of his good human nature (not his divine nature, because He left that in heaven) and received either a satanic or a sinful human nature.

Gloria Copeland (1972:5) concludes that Jesus, because of this 'sin nature', experienced the same spiritual death that Adam experienced in the Garden of Eden. She uses the theory of Kenyon that Jesus not only died physically on the cross, but that he died a second spiritual death.

Hagin (1979l:10) continues to say that because of this change in His nature, Jesus went to hell where He suffered for three days. Then God shouted from heaven: 'That satisfied the Supreme Court of heaven. He is justified'. Whereupon God raised Him from the dead and He became the first person to be born again.

Freeman ([s a]:9f), an able theologian who taught at Grace Theological Seminary, points to several deviations from traditional Protestant theology by his fellow Faith teachers (Hagin and Kenneth Copeland) who subscribe to the teachings of Jesus' spiritual death. He points out that in the Old Testament the sin-offering was always considered holy. In the New Testament the death

of Jesus is seen as a ‘sacrificial death as a holy, sinless substitute for sinners’. Therefore the idea of Hagin and K Copeland that Jesus physically became sin, has no scriptural basis in the New Testament identification of Jesus with the sin-offering in the Old Testament (Freeman [s a]:13).

The death of Jesus on the cross is not portrayed in the New Testament as his identification with sinners on all points, but as substitution. The logical consequence of the spiritual death teaching is that Jesus was not the sinless substitute for sinners, but a substitute sinner. And if Jesus actually received the nature of Satan on the cross as Kenyon (1969:41f) thought, and if John 3:14 should mean that Jesus died spiritually when he received this nature, then Satan actually had a part in the atonement, because only by Jesus’ identification with him could His spiritual death and eventual born-again experience have been possible (Freeman [s a]:18f).

Matta (1987:57) refers to another danger in this misconception of substitution and identification: ‘It concludes with the happy ending that every believer is the hero and heroine. The believer is told the sooner he forgets Jesus and lives at the centre of the redemption story, the faster that prosperity and health will come his way’.

The conclusion of Matta is not the overstatement of a bitter critic. She quotes K Copeland saying ‘Unless you’ve let Jesus die you’ll never let yourself live’ (quoted in Matta 1987:57). The logical result of this identification of Jesus with sinful humans is that they are upgraded to the level of God, while Jesus is simultaneously downgraded.

The overemphasis of Jesus’ identification with humans opens the door for a unitarian movement of the Father. After all, if Jesus was identified with humans in all aspects and eventually took them with Him to the throne, He is not only stripped of His deity, but He also loses His equality with the Father.

The teachings of the Faith movement are often not logical and even contradictory. Therefore it is not sure that the movement (or a part of the movement) will eventually become a unitarian movement. They might teach the doctrine of Jesus’ identification with humans and their sin, without ever drawing the logical conclusions. However, there are alarming signs that at least K Copeland is busy bringing his theology in line with this ‘new revelation’. In his newsletter K Copeland (1987:9) printed a prophecy that quotes Jesus as saying: ‘They crucified me for claiming that I was God. But I didn’t claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me’.

The spiritual death teachers proclaim that God abandoned Jesus on the cross and thus deviate from the truth that God was in Christ on Calvary. This teaching once again creates a problem with the traditional doctrine of the Trinity: 'A study of Church History will disclose that those who taught error concerning the Godhead, including any attempt to divide or separate the Godhead as the JDS (Jesus dies spiritually - JNH) teachers do, were considered to be heretics' (Freeman [s a]:36f). If Jesus was actually sinful during His three days in the pit, the only logical way for the teachers of His spiritual death to prevent making God part of Jesus' sinful nature, is to separate the Father and the Son. 'The Church has always held, as the Scripture teaches, that the Godhead cannot be divided They (the JDS teachers) divided up the Godhead for three days by sending the Son of God to Hell, totally abandoned by the Father and the Holy Spirit' (Freeman [s a]:37).

According to Freeman ([s a]:43) the teaching that Jesus died twice was derived from the fact that Isaiah 53:9 used the word death in the plural in the Hebrew text. He argues that similar occurrences of words in the plural where one would expect a singular noun, are common in the Old Testament. 'Such plurals quite often do not signify *numerical plurality* at all' (Freeman [s a]:44). This is not the only exegetical problem with the spiritual death of Jesus. Freeman ([s a]:49) stresses the fact that although many Scriptures explicitly state that Jesus died and suffered in the flesh or in his body, 'Not once do the Scriptures state that Jesus died IN HIS SPIRIT'.

The idea of death in the spirit needs some clarification. Although the Faith teachers, like most Pentecostals, have a dualistic (or more accurately, a threefold - body, soul and spirit) concept of human nature, this concept is not at issue in the discussion of Jesus' spiritual death. 'Dying or death in the spirit' is a technical term in Pentecostal circles referring either to original sin or the state of unconverted sinners (cf Lindsay 1952:92-93; 1981:37; Wigglesworth 1972:92). When the Faith teachers say that Jesus died in the spirit, they do not say that His spirit died, but rather that Jesus became like a sinful human (cf also Hагin 1983b:26f and p 70ff below).

In the same way Freeman is not working with a division between the body and the spirit of Christ in this particular case. He is merely pointing out that there is no Scriptural evidence for the idea that Jesus died spiritually (became a sinner) on the cross.

Freeman ([s a]:51f) refers to the fact that the teaching of the two deaths, and especially the teaching of Jesus' spiritual death, make the atonement unimportant. According to Freeman one Faith teacher even states that Jesus bled just a few drops. In the end the physical death of Jesus is almost an embarrassment to these teachers.

The Faith teachers who teach the born-again experience of Jesus Christ, a concept foreign to Pentecostal thinking, use terms like 'the first born from the dead' (Col 1:18) and 'first begotten' (Heb 1:6) to prove their point. Freeman ([s a]:54ff) clearly proves that there is no exegetical justification for translating the Greek word, which is identical for both translated terms, with 'born again'.

Matta (1987:54f) asks why the Faith teachers would go to such great lengths as quoting Greek and Hebrew words to prove their point. This is indeed strange for people who often scoff at theology and scientific research while claiming revelational knowledge for their doctrines. She concludes that the underlying motive is to draw humans into a position where they are equal with God. 'If Jesus is a born-again man and is now exalted at the right hand of God, then you and I who are also born-again are equal with this God' (Matta 1987:55).

It is clear that the teachings of some of the Faith teachers open the door for a new Christological emphasis. Although it cannot be stated for certain that the Faith movement (or a part of it) will eventually deny the deity of Christ, there are alarming signs that the movement is moving away from one of the oldest confessions of the Church - Jesus as truly God and truly man.

2.3 The deification of humans

McConnell (1982:33), like Matta (1987:57) argues that the main function of the identification theory in Faith teaching is to enable the human being -

To take his 'place' in Christ, to 'exercise' the rights Christ has given him, in short, to find his 'identity' in Christ. When Christ was recreated in Hell and the satanic nature was expelled, the church was recreated as new creatures in Christ, Spiritual death (i e sin, sickness and human want) was eradicated in the new birth. Where these things exist in the Church it is because believers have failed to realise their identification with Christ.

(McConnell 1982:34)

Although Christ is still confessed as the centre of all things, it is clear that in practice humans become almost part of God himself. Thus Hagin (1977c:5) can assert that identification 'means our complete union with Him', and that we are as much an incarnation of God as Jesus Christ and K Copeland (1987:9) eventually states that all Christians are gods!

According to this teaching the devastating effects of original sin were completely neutralised in the atonement, and humans were reinstated in their original Adamic state.

It has already been pointed out that the term 'second Adam' used to describe Jesus Christ plays an important role in the Faith teachings. Faith teachers see it as proof that the first Adam was perfect and therefore a god. Thus Capps (quoted in Hunt 1985:84) states that humans were created to be gods over the earth and Adam was god of the earth.

Hunt (1985:84) quotes several Faith teachers to show that this doctrine occurs frequently in the Faith movement. K Copeland says Christians do not have a God living in them, they are gods; Tilton refers to Christians as 'a God kind of creature'; and Fred Price believes that God made humans 'gods under God'.

The importance of this 'god theology' should not be overemphasised. It is clear that the Faith teachers do not place humans on a par with God. They do not write 'god' with a capital 'G' and they always stress the fact that humans are not 'creator God'. Humans are only 'gods under God' or 'god over the earth'. The distance between God and humans is narrowed, but it is still there.

Although classical Pentecostals rejected the doctrine of the total corruption to a great extent, the idea that humans can become gods, was never accepted in the movement. There is evidence that some early Pentecostals subscribed to this doctrine (cf Van der Spuy 1985:81f; Hunt & McMahon 1985:219). However, this was not accepted by the majority of Pentecostals. On the one hand Pentecostals expect great things from the born-again Christian. They believe that the Spirit of God dwells in him or her bodily, and they believe that these new creatures in Christ can really do His will.

The 'Ye are gods' doctrine is nevertheless not in line with the strong Arminian influence found in the Pentecostal movement. Against the doctrine of the total corruption of humanity, Pentecostals believe that Christians can choose to do good. Yet over against the doctrine of eternal security, many Pentecostals do not believe in the perseverance of the saints. Nobody can call himself or herself perfect or 'god' in this world. If the doctrine is used to deify humans in any

way, it is not in line with Pentecostal thinking. If it is merely used as a technical term to describe the intimate relationship between God and his children, even the Pentecostals will be able to accept it to some extent.

Laine (1986:24ff) criticises Hunt and McMahon for their harsh attitude towards the Faith teachers. Although he sees all the dangers in this theological trend (people will think that they have creating powers, and power to 'confess' money from others, etc), he refers to the important Scriptures in Psalm 82:6 and John 10:34. In Psalm 82:6 the psalmist calls humans 'god' and in John 10:34 Jesus quotes this Scripture. He thus concludes that although this teaching could undoubtedly lead to New Age thinking and could be misused, it has a basis in Scripture and those who teach it can not be summarily rebuked.

If this teaching is only used to emphasise the close link between humans and God and the important role of humans in creation, it is not as heretical as it seems at first sight. Unfortunately, there are alarming signs in the Faith movement that at least some Faith teachers would want to take it a step further and eventually make humans 'Creator God' (cf Laine 1986:24).

Hunt and McMahon (1985:86) correctly argue that Psalm 82 does not say 'Ye shall become gods', but 'Ye are gods'. It is therefore hardly possible to conclude that humans become gods when they are born again or that the psalmist prophesied so. It is more probable that God's reference to them as 'gods' must be seen in the same light as the term 'sons of the Most High' in the same verse, as honourable names (cf Ridderbos 1958:328). In this sense it merely reflects the covenant relationship between God and his people. Only time will tell if the Faith movement will eventually move towards a theology of gods similar to that of the Mormons and the New Age movement, or if they will merely use it as a technical term to describe the important position of humans in the eyes of God.

3 THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

I would not believe any vision, even if I did see You, if You could not prove what You said by the Bible.

Kenneth Hagin addressing God

3.1 Revelational knowledge

Pentecostals never doubted the possibility that God can still speak to Christians in a very direct way. God does not only speak through Scripture, but also through prophecy or even personally to an individual. He also sends Christian brothers and sisters with 'a word from the Lord' to fellow believers.

It is not clear what amount of authority such prophetic utterances have. In some Pentecostal churches the prophecies are written down and used as prophetic words afterwards. Others explicitly reject the writing down of prophecies. While churches in the first category see prophecy as a direct word of God, those in the latter category see prophecy as a confirmation of the revelation of God.

Very few Pentecostal movements acknowledge the office of a prophet, and even those who do have prophets accept the discernment of prophecy as of vital importance. The congregation's elders or even the individual Christians can and must judge prophecies or other revelations. The Scripture plays an important role in this judging. Despite the emphasis that direct revelation receives in the Pentecostal movement, most Pentecostals simultaneously have a fundamentalist approach to the Bible (Hollenweger 1977:291ff). It plays an important role in their lives. It speaks to them when they read it, and it also serves as the authority when prophecies and other spiritual gifts or direct words from God are judged.

Hagin and the other Faith teachers accept this basic Pentecostal doctrine of revelation in theory. They believe in a direct 'word of the Lord', but also accept the Bible as the last and final authority. The Faith teachers are often called 'Word teachers' because of their strong emphasis on the Bible (Steele 1986:120).

This does not mean that the doctrine of revelation in the Faith movement is a mere repetition of the traditional Pentecostal teachings on the subject. On the contrary, there are vast differences. The Faith teachers do not only emphasise the direct words of God more strongly than the traditional Pentecostals, their presuppositions also play a more important role in their exegesis of Scripture and they use Scripture more mechanically than Pentecostals.

The Faith teachers have developed a theological structure for their understanding of the direct words of God. They call it 'revelation knowledge'. The content of this revelational knowledge is not always clear. Sometimes it is seen as

a supernatural understanding of Scripture (G Copeland 1987:47). Sometimes it is also used for direct revelations that individuals received from God. Thus Hagin (1979j:9) declares words of Kenyon to be revelation knowledge, 'the Word of God'.

The mere fact that Faith teachers refer to their own interpretations of Scripture or even to their prophecies as revelation knowledge or even their prophecies as the Word of God, should not be seen as a contradiction of Pentecostal thinking per se. Although foreign to other Protestant traditions, the concept of revelation or revelational knowledge is not contrary to Pentecostal thinking. Sarles (1986:337f), who criticises the Faith movement from a evangelical fundamentalist position, sees a canonical problem in the doctrine of revelation knowledge:

If indeed these are newly revealed truths from God, then they ought to be added to the canon of Scripture and disseminated as widely as possible, since they would constitute divinely given moral imperatives on a par with Scripture. However, if these revelations are no more than wishful thinking of the overly zealous, then people heeding them are being led into serious error.

(Sarles 1986:337)

This criticism is similar to that of mainline Protestants concerning the Pentecostal doctrines on the interpretation of tongues and prophecy. However, the notion of giving authoritative value to utterances or writings outside the Biblical canon is not a distinctive characteristic of Pentecostals.

In the Reformed tradition the confessional writings play an authoritative role. Thus Loader (1983) says that although the confessions of the church are in theory subject to the Bible, they function as the boundaries of the interpretation of Scripture. The only difference between the authority of the confessions and the canon lies in the fact that the content of the Bible cannot be changed, while it is theoretically possible to change, reject or add to the confessional writings. In the Lutheran tradition the sermon is sometimes seen as a Word of God (Nürnberger 1975:31f), and Karl Barth (1944:87) discusses the Word of God as having three modes - the proclaimed Word of God, the written Word of God, and the revealed Word of God.

It is clear that most Protestant traditions acknowledge either the confessions or the proclamation of the church as authoritative. As long as the Faith teachers accept the final authority of the Bible, their doctrine of revelational knowledge should not brand them as heretics who deny the authority of Scripture.

Sarles (1986:337) sees only two possible ways to deal with revelational knowledge: it is either a new revelation directly from God and therefore on a par with the Biblical writings, or it is 'wishful thinking'. The third possibility, known in both the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, is to accept a sermon, for instance, as a relevant Word of God for a specific situation without placing it on a par with the Bible. This would be in line with Pentecostal tradition. Pentecostals accept the gifts of the Spirit (especially interpretation of tongues and prophecy) as a direct relevant Word from the Lord if it is in harmony with the Bible and after it has been tested either by the congregation, an individual or the elders.

The Faith teachers accept the supreme authority of the Bible - at least in theory. Hagin tells of a conversation he had with the Lord. God revealed a truth to him and he answered:

You're going to have to give me some Scripture to prove it. Your Word says, 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established' (Matt 18:16). So give me more Scripture having these same few principles in it and I will believe it. *I would not see You, if You could not prove what You said by the Bible* (italics mine).

(Hagin 1983a:20f, [italics mine])

Although the doctrine of revelational knowledge is not necessarily out of step with traditional Pentecostal thinking, and even with the mainline Protestant tradition, the emphasis it receives in the Faith movement is alarming. There is hardly any book of the Faith teachers which does not have several 'the Lord said to me's' in it.

The content of the revelations often seems almost too good to be true. Although Pentecostals accept that God can speak directly to His children, the experiences of the Faith teachers are not common in Pentecostal circles. Hagin (1983a:2ff) writes about one of his visions. The Lord told him several things about his ministry, his finances and the government of the United States. When He started to walk away, Hagin called Him back. "Dear Lord Jesus, before you go, may I please ask you a question?" He retraced His steps, stood

close to where I was kneeling, and said, "You may". Hagin (1983a:4) then recounts how the Lord gave him a sermon outline and told him to get a pencil to write it down. The fact that Hagin (1983a:21) later relativises this and all other visions, does not take away the dangerous presupposition in his account of the vision. If God speaks so directly to an individual, and if visions can be so clear, the door is wide open for the acceptance of a mechanical inspiration of the sermons and writings of Hagin. In another book Hagin (1974b:19) explicitly states that the Lord said to him that He will remove 'the candlestick' of those churches who reject his ministry. 'If a church won't accept this ministry, then they don't accept His Word and He can't help them'.

The doctrine of revelational knowledge, if correctly interpreted, is not a heresy. On the contrary, it is in line with both traditional Pentecostal and Protestant thinking provided that it does not place the revelations to individuals on a par with the Biblical writings. However, there are alarming signs that some Faith teachers are claiming authority for their own ministries and revelations that will bring the authority of the Bible in jeopardy. Although all the Faith teachers accept the authority of Scriptures in theory, the trend to reject the human side of revelations and to equate it with a direct infallible Word of God might in the end create a second canon.

The real danger of the doctrine of revelational knowledge lies in the fact that it is often seen as a 'higher knowledge which carries its adherents beyond ordinary Christians into a new realm of faith thinking which releases to them health, wealth, and prosperity' (Farah 1980b:15). Farah (1980b:15ff) sees a clear resemblance between the revelational knowledge and the higher knowledge of Gnosticism. He quotes Fred Price speaking at Oral Roberts University in a typical gnostic way, stating jokingly that he is smarter than the people present because he has higher knowledge (1980b:16).

Eventually this revelational knowledge becomes a new hermeneutical principle which makes contextual, scientific exegesis irrelevant (Farah 1980b:16). Some Faith teachers even see the receiving of revelational knowledge as the final part of the pattern of salvation in the lives of Christians following conversion, baptism in the Spirit, and a crisis experience of unusual dedication. This revelational knowledge then furnishes them with a direct pipeline to truth (Farah 1980b:18).

The dangers of a gnostic understanding of revelational knowledge is evident. Farah (1980b:10) recounts his attempt to challenge adherents of this teaching in a Charismatic magazine. None of them would answer his arguments. They simply stated that he has no revelational knowledge or that they have made a

'quality decision' to live a life of faith as outlined by the Faith teachers. One of the Faith teachers even told a student of Oral Roberts University that he does not read his Bible devotionally any more because he gets his knowledge directly (Farah 1980b:18).

Farah (1980b:20) refers to the fact that K Copeland explicitly stated in a sermon that only a few dedicated Christians have revelational knowledge. This, together with the distinction Faith teachers make between the Greek words for knowledge, are clear signs of gnostic elements in the doctrine of revelational knowledge. According to Faith teachers *epignosis* means revelational knowledge. Authoritative Greek scholars like Arndt and Gingrich define *epignosis* merely as knowledge usually limited to religious and moral things (Farah 1980b:20).

One may rightly ask what the hidden agenda behind the teaching of revelational knowledge is. Why do Faith teachers want to acknowledge a superior knowledge possessed only by a chosen few? Is Farah (1980b:18) correct that its function is to justify 'new bizarre doctrinal ventures'? Is it an authoritarian way to prevent its followers from finding out the other side of the story or questioning the teachings of the Faith teachers? It is clear that all these misuses are not only possible, but even probable if revelational knowledge is seen as a work of grace or an initiation into an elite group. While these elements are in opposition to the more frequent use of the term merely to refer to an insight into Scripture, it remains to be seen what role revelational knowledge will eventually play in the Faith movement.

The link between the radical realised eschatology of the Faith movement and revelational knowledge is evident. The underlying presupposition of this doctrine is the belief that God can speak directly to his children without any possible hindrance from those to whom he speaks. The tension between the present world where we know only partially (1 Cor 13:12) and the coming world where our knowledge shall be complete is completely absent in the doctrine of revelational knowledge.

The danger of radical realised eschatology for the doctrine of revelation is that it completely loses contact with reality. Christians are not allowed to have doubts, they cannot rethink certain Scriptures or even evaluate different interpretations. Once revelational knowledge has been given on a certain text, the case is settled.

3.2 The influence of some leaders

Some of the leaders in the Faith movement, especially Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, almost play the role of modern apostles. McConnell (1982:9) quotes prominent leaders in the Faith movement like Capps, Price and Osteen stating that they received the Faith teaching from Hagin. He sees several examples of an 'almost apostolic succession' in the Faith movement. 'Hagin prophetically sanctioned and "anointed" Copeland, who, in turn, "raised up" Jerry Savelle' (McConnell 1982).

According to Barron (1987:121) many questions in the Faith movement are settled merely by stating what Kenneth Copeland says. He also points out that students of the Rhema correspondence course are taught that 'Jesus told Charles Capps' that Christians can have what they say (Barron 1987:120).

It is at least clear that the books and sermons of Hagin, K Copeland and some other prominent Faith leaders carry much weight in the movement. The question that needs to be answered is whether the strong leadership and the authority claimed by the leaders and accepted by their followers are the beginning of a cult movement. Is Hagin a modern day Joseph Smith (founder of the Mormon movement) or is he a spiritual leader on a par with the Reformers?

Steele (1986:120) sees a difference between the South African faith teacher Ray McCauley and cult figures like Jim Jones, who led more than 600 of his followers into committing suicide, in that McCauley is humbly obedient to the Word of God and not his own interpretation of it.

Steele clearly misses the point. He supposes that the Word of God can be preached without interpretation. While he tries to prove that McCauley is not a cult leader, he is actually doing exactly the opposite by placing McCauley's theology (interpretation) on a par with the Bible itself. This blind faith of the movement in its leaders and their interpretation of Scripture can easily develop into a canonising of their writings and may at its worst even result in the deification of its leaders.

The Pentecostal movement and, more specifically, the Healing and Deliverance movement, have an example of a leader becoming an apostle and finally almost a god. During his life William Marion Branham became so popular that his followers believed that he was the angel of Revelation. His writings were seen as part of the inspired writings of the church and after his death some of his closest followers believed that he was Jesus Christ incarnate.

However, we cannot conclude that the Faith movement is a cult or will eventually become a cult around Hagin, Copeland or other Faith leaders. It is possible that the leaders will remain authoritative within the broad movement without becoming cult leaders. The fact that most of the leaders subscribe to the authority of the Bible themselves will probably prevent them from becoming a totalitarian religious, authority both to themselves and to their followers.

The fact that members of Faith churches rely strongly on the teachings of two prominent Faith teachers, Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin is a sign of an unhealthy development, especially since Pentecostals have always claimed that neither did they get their doctrines from single individuals nor was the movement started by an individual. But even this does not place the movement outside mainline Protestantism. The teachings of Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, Ellen White and others play equally important roles in the lives of Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists and Adventists.

The role that some leaders of the Faith movement play in the life of young ministers and members of Faith churches must be corrected by the traditional Pentecostal statement that refuses to accept the leadership of one or two strong leaders.

3.3 Hermeneutics

Faith teachers are also called 'Word teachers' because, according to their followers, they rely solely on the Word of God for their teachings and not on theology. Thus Steele (1986:120) asserts that Ray McCauley 'puts the Bible above any theologian's ideas or concepts of God'.

A study of the faith material shows that, like any other theology, the faith theology has its own hermeneutical key - a radical realised eschatology. All Faith teachers work with the presupposition that God always wants health, wealth and happiness for Christians. Consequently, all their interpretations 'prove' this 'truth'. The influence of this hermeneutical key on the interpretation of Scripture can hardly be overemphasised. A few examples will illustrate this point.

Hagin (1983b:12ff) tries to explain the meaning of the words 'The Lord shall smite thee' in Deuteronomy 28. The Authorised or King James version seems to say that God puts sickness and affliction upon people. However, without looking at the Hebrew text or any modern translation, Hagin (1983b:12) concludes that the verb should be translated in the permissive rather than the

causative sense. The same applies to Isaiah 45:7 which states that God formed the light and created evil. ‘Does God create evil? No. That would make God a devil. God may permit evil, but he does not create it’, is Hagin’s response.

While 1 Samuel 16:14 states that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him, Hagin (1983b:13) changes the text to read that ‘God permitted the evil spirit *from the devil* to trouble him’ [italics mine].

Hagin has no exegetical basis to change these passages from the causative to the permissive sense. His only justification for doing so, is the fact that the theology in these texts does not agree with his own theology. It needs to be said that Hagin’s uneasiness with Isaiah 45:7 and I Samuel 16:14 is understandable. These are generally acknowledged to be difficult texts.

However by simply ignoring the problem and bending the Scriptures to fit into our moulds, the problem is not solved. While Isaiah 45:7 may still be ‘saved’ by an alternative translation (see the Modern Language, ‘I make peace and create calamity’), the problem with 1 Samuel 16:14 is much more difficult. No matter how many problems we may have with it theologically (and most Christians have), the spirit is called ‘the evil spirit of the Lord’ in the pericope.

The point that Hagin is making (that God does not create evil and that God does not have evil spirits), is a valid point and also in line with traditional Pentecostal thinking. However, it is certainly not in line with the hermeneutical key that Hagin and other Faith teachers pretend to use. In this case it is not the clear meaning of the text that determines the interpretation, but the theological framework with which Hagin is working.

A better approach to the problem would have been to compare 1 Samuel 16 with other books in the Bible. It is clear that the author or editor of Samuel had no problem in seeing evil spirits as servants of God. This particular theological position is not the only one to be found in the Bible. Von Rad (1975:318) referring to 2 Samuel 24, points out that the Chronicler could no longer bear the theological tension of the text and changed the words ‘Yahweh led David astray’, to ‘Satan led David astray’. The theological presupposition that God is responsible for everything that happens on earth, was not sustained by the Chronicler. It is therefore not surprising that the story of 1 Samuel 16:14ff is not repeated in Chronicles.

However, it is not the purpose of this study to determine the value and meaning of 1 Samuel 16:14ff. It is enough to point out that despite their strong

emphasis on the Word as the sole source of inspiration, the Faith teachers also work with theological presupposition, especially when they must explain difficult texts.

As pointed out previously K Copeland (1974:63) openly avers that he always interprets the Bible in the light of the 'absolute truth' of John 10:10. For him this 'absolute truth' functions not only as a guideline, but as an absolute hermeneutical principle.

G Copeland (1972:58) uses another 'faith principle', the power of the name of Jesus, to explain the meaning of the words of the Lord to Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for thee' (2 Cor 12:9). 'He did not say that the messenger would not depart. He was saying to Paul, "My favour is enough. For when you do not have the ability to humanly overcome, you use My name to stop Satan's attacks and cast out the devil".' This interpretation of 2 Corinthians 12:9 cannot be found in the text itself. The text speaks of God comforting Paul despite the thorn in the flesh. G Copeland interprets it as though God gave Paul a key (the name of Jesus) to cast out the devil. Once again it is not the text, but rather G Copeland's embarrassment with the text that paves the way for her strange interpretation.

Similar interpretations in the writings of the Faith teachers are not uncommon (cf Fickett 1984:29f). The Bible functions only to give credibility to the philosophical presuppositions of a good God and a bad devil. Although the Faith teachers pretend to be a 'Word movement', they are also using a specific hermeneutical framework. And this hermeneutical principle is not a legitimate exegetical principle based on modern scientific exegesis. On the contrary, it is a theological construction that makes scientific exegesis impossible. Even the traditional Pentecostal (and mainline Protestant) belief that the Holy Spirit is the final interpreter of Scripture can hardly function within the framework of the presuppositions of the Faith movement.

The claim that the Faith movement puts the Bible above any theologian's idea is without foundation. Their interpretation of Scripture, like that of any other theology, functions within a strong hermeneutical framework. The fact that the Faith teachers and their followers are often unaware of the influence of their presuppositions on their interpretation of the Bible makes their theology authoritarian and self-righteous. If their presupposition - an unrealistic radical eschatology - is tested, the weakness of their approach to the Bible becomes clear. *The Bible can only speak within the framework of the preconception that God wants to give His children heaven on earth here and now.*

CHAPTER 4

Final conclusions: The Pentecostal attitude towards the Faith movement

Much of the faith message is potentially valuable, but not when isolated from the rest of sound Christian doctrine.

Bruce Barron

Theology is certainly not the strength of the Faith movement. The worship service as an experiential encounter with God plays a very important role in Faith circles, even more than in the traditional Pentecostal movement. Because of the focus on experience, Faith churches are often unpredictable. They are also able to adhere to two contradictory viewpoints simultaneously, without making a choice between them.

These aspects make it very difficult to evaluate the Faith movement. On the one hand many people who attend Faith churches do not necessarily approve of their doctrine on prosperity and faith, but because they enjoy the worship and warmth of the meetings, they will join the church. A prominent member of the Rhema Bible Church who had a strong Reformed upbringing told me that he joined the church despite prosperity teaching and not because of it. He was attracted to the movement by its love and evangelistic zeal. Others see prosperity teaching and the emphasis on faith as the growth pains of a young movement and expect them to fade away in the future. An academic told me, for instance, that he believes that the pastoral experience with people who do not receive healing and who do not get rich, will eventually force the movement to change its theology. He was so confident of this outcome that he could leave his traditional Pentecostal denomination to join the Rhema Bible

Church. Still others, while agreeing that prosperity teaching and a wrong emphasis on faith may exist in the Faith movement, would insist that these excesses are not characteristic of the movement *per se*. They would argue that these teachings are kept 'in balance' in their churches. Steele (1986:119ff) and Anderson (1987:8f) fall in this category. Both believe that there is a balanced prosperity teaching based on Biblical truths, while they admit that greed may result in people misusing the teachings.

There are also those adherents of the Faith movement who would point out that although the American leaders wrote many books on faith and prosperity and although they played an important role in the South African movement when it started, these teachings are no longer central in the churches. A businessman of Krugersdorp who travels 140 km every Sunday to attend the meetings at the Rhema Bible Church told me that Ray McCauley used to preach many sermons on faith and prosperity. However, in the last two years the emphasis has changed to salvation and holiness.

1 THE PROPRIUM OF FAITH THEOLOGY

Lederle suggests that the proprium (the typical, unique, distinctive or characteristic elements) of a theology can be understood in at least three ways:

- (a) that which it is known for in the form of *caricature*,
- (b) that which describes its *essence*, the core of its faith, or
- (c) that element or those elements which specifically distinguish it from other related and similar but not identical theologies.

(Lederle 1987:4f)

By applying this tool new light can be shed on the content of 'Faith theology'.

- (a) The *caricature* of the theology of the leaders of the Faith movement will possibly be the often expressed view that they are using the gospel for financial gain, that they are misleading sincere but ignorant people, that the poor people who are attending the meetings and who are joining the churches are deprived people who are trying to use the gospel to better their positions, etc. In South Africa the secular press has often used this caricature to describe the Faith movement.

If one works with this caricature of the Faith movement, it will lead to either excluding it from the Christian community or at least seeing its followers as objects for evangelisation by the 'true church'. Matta (1984), who sees the Faith movement as a modern day recurrence of Gnosticism, takes the first option. She takes Irenaeus and his relationship to second century Christian Gnosticism as her example (Matta 1984:12ff).

Morran and Schlemmer (1984) also work with caricatures that do not always fit the rich diversity in the movement. They selected three sample groups for their investigation. Ministers of five mainline congregations provided the names of fifty persons of which thirty considered themselves as being born again. The Durban Christian Centre provided thirty names to make up the third group. Morran and Schlemmer divided the sample groups into 'New church charismatics' (Durban Christian Centre), 'Established church charismatics' (the born-again Christians of the established churches) and 'Mainline church traditionalists'.

A Pentecostal church, the Full Gospel Church, was one of the mainline churches that was asked for names. If one bears in mind that Faith teaching has had a tremendous effect on the Pentecostal movement, this fact must have had an effect on the findings.

Although Morran and Schlemmer define Charismatics as people who consider the infilling and gifts of the Spirit to be fundamental to their belief, in the sample group they included all the people who had a born-again experience (Morran & Schlemmer 1984:48). Therefore the sample that they refer to should have been called 'Established church evangelicals' rather than 'Established church charismatics'.

The sample groups have another weakness which makes the study suspect. The core group of the mainline churches is made up of names given by ministers of five congregations whereas the 'New church charismatics' come from one congregation. It is only logical to assume that the mainline churches provided the names of their best and most stable members. If they were asked to give more names, it is likely that the stability of the group would have been affected negatively, and vice versa, if the Durban Christian Centre were asked to give fewer names the stability of the group may have been positively affected.

Morran and Schlemmer (1984:187) correctly conclude that some of the teachings of the Faith movement are not only heretical, but also dangerous in the South African situation, because they will give white Christians false hope for

the future and even condone the unjust structures of society. However, they completely overstate their case and change their critique of the movement into a caricature.

They come to the conclusion that the teaching of the Faith movement on suffering, prosperity and poverty encourages contempt for the poor and abandonment of responsibility towards them (Morran & Schlemmer 1984:172). The short history of the movement seems to point in the opposite direction. During the floods in Natal, the Rhema Bible Church took up an offering of more than R20 000 in one service. In co-operation with other members of the IFCC they donated more than R100 000 shortly after the floods (Ron Steele on Good Morning South Africa, 15 October 1987). The Rhema Bible Church is also involved in several ministries to the poor.

Although there are many problems with the prosperity teaching and many of these questionable doctrines pose a threat to both the theology of the church and the lifestyle of its members, critics need to find out whether these teachings do in fact play the prominent role in the movement assumed by outsiders.

(b) When one speaks of the *proprium* of any movement as the *essence* or core of its faith, Lederle suggests that one should look for an aspect of the particular theology that the adherents see as the heart of their faith. He suggests, for example, that the so-called four-square gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, Healer and the soon coming King should be seen as the *proprium* of Pentecostal theology (Lederle 1987:10).

In discussions with adherents of the Faith movement it seems as if at least the confession of Jesus as the Saviour, Spirit-baptiser and Healer stands out as the heart of Faith teaching as well. In this sense the Faith movement, despite its differences with the rest of the Pentecostal movement, is still an integral part of the larger Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.

In my conversations with at least two prominent leaders of the Rhema Bible Church - Ron Steele, the public relations officer of the church and Ray McCauley's biographer, and pastor Mark Hodgetts, one of the assistant-pastors - it became clear that these Pentecostal truths get a great deal of attention in the lives of the adherents of the movement and are gaining importance in the teaching and doctrines of the movement. Although the emphasis on Jesus as the soon coming King gets some attention in the Faith movement, it is so overshadowed by their realised eschatology that it cannot function as a *proprium* of this theology.

The confession of Jesus as Saviour, Healer and Spirit-baptiser will undoubtedly get a different emphasis in the Faith movement than in the traditional Pentecostal movement. But the common ground between the two groups seems to be substantial enough to make the exclusion of the one by the other impossible. Lederle (1987:10) suggests that this proprium is 'the heart of what Pentecostals believe', yet 'surprisingly "ecumenical"'.

In the light of the real proprium of the Faith movement it seems unjustifiable, especially for Pentecostals, to exclude the movement from Christian fellowship, or even from a Pentecostal fellowship. This does not mean that one has to ignore the bad theology of the movement or to condone the dangerous and destructive elements in it. However, by concentrating on the positive elements in the movement and by retaining fellowship with it, the one-sidedness of Morran and Schlemmer and other critics of the movement can be evaded. Because Morran and Schlemmer see the Faith movement as apostasy (although they do not use the word), and those who join the movement as people who flee from reality, they fail to take the possibility into account that those people who left the mainline churches for the Faith movement did in fact have an experience with Jesus Christ as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser and Healer.

The possibility that K Copeland will eventually move towards a rejection of the Trinity or the deity of Christ is not excluded. It is also possible that the metaphysical elements of the movement's doctrine of God will eventually become the most prominent way of thinking about God. Should this be the outcome, the Faith movement will place itself outside both the Pentecostal movement and the broader Christian Church. It is, however, also possible that the image of God as the sovereign, living God will eventually expose the heresy of the metaphysical god of the faith formulas and prosperity teaching. The same applies to the Christological question. The strong Pentecostal background of most of the leaders in the Faith movement, as well as an ongoing interaction between the Faith movement and Pentecostals might just swing the scale in favour of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ.

(c) The problem in the relationship between Pentecostals and the Faith movement arises when we look at the Faith movement's proprium, defined as those elements which specifically *distinguish* the movement from other related and similar theologies, in this case Pentecostal theology. Defined in this way, the proprium of the Faith movement may be described as a specific emphasis on faith as a mechanism at the disposal of the believer to make him or her vic-

torious; the belief that positive confession creates faith, and, linked with faith, changes circumstances; the belief that everyone who has faith can receive either healing from sickness or eternal health; and the belief that financial prosperity is, like healing, provided for in the atonement.

We have already seen that these distinctive characteristics of the Faith movement are not small deviations from some unimportant Pentecostal beliefs. The faith formulas and the doctrine of positive confession affect the sovereignty of God and the healing and prosperity doctrines are closely related to anthropology and Christology and, in their extreme form, can even lead to a denial of the deity of Christ.

The influence of Faith theology on the traditional doctrine of God is especially interesting in the light of the strong emphasis traditional Pentecostals are presently placing on the sovereignty of God. In a recent survey conducted by J Theron (1989), it was found that, in general, Pentecostal ministers thought that an emphasis on the sovereignty of God should be an even more important hallmark of Pentecostalism than the speaking in tongues. Any movement that does not take the sovereignty of God seriously will possibly find itself more and more alienated from the Pentecostal movement.

Similarly, the strong emphasis that Pentecostals have laid on Jesus Christ will make any deviation from the doctrine of the deity of Christ an immediate reason for a permanent rift. After all, the traditional Pentecostals broke with the 'Jesus-only' Pentecostals in 1913 (Jesus-only Pentecostals are 'unitarians' of the second Person). A unitarian movement of the Father will possibly be rejected even more strongly.

The disturbing elements within the Faith movement need to be monitored constantly. There is a big possibility that at least some leaders of the Faith movement will eventually cut their ties with traditional Pentecostalism in order to pursue their own direction.

It must be noted that many of the metaphysical elements of the doctrine of God were also evident in the early years of the Pentecostal movement. Time has often been a good remedy for many false doctrines. If the economic and social situations in South Africa deteriorate - which is likely in the light of the present social and political situation - prosperity teaching will be unable to survive.

The transitions in the thinking of John G Lake on healing are a good example of the positive influence of time on extreme enthusiasm (see pp 31-34 above). A doctrine that insists on healing in all situations for everyone who believes is only tenable while the leaders remain healthy. There are already signs of an adaptation in the Faith movement. During a service in the Rhema Bible Church, Benny Hinn explicitly stated that God does not make anyone sick (Hinn 1987). He also stated that death as a result of sickness is not the will of God. Referring to Kathryn Kuhlman, a prominent healing evangelist who died of heart failure, Hinn suggested that her statements that anyone, even she, can die of cancer or a heart attack, might have been the reason for her untimely death.

However, Hinn added that there are certain sacred relationships between people and God that other Christians cannot understand, and that these should be left alone. He then referred to the great ecumenical Pentecostal, David du Plessis, who died shortly before, and to himself. According to Hinn, he once asked God to prevent him from leaving his congregation, regardless of the cost. However, in 1986 he decided to leave the congregation and go back to evangelistic work. He became sick although he was still filled with the Spirit and walking with God. The doctors discovered that he had serious heart problems. When he asked the Lord for an explanation, he was reminded of his own request.

Hinn tries to hold two opposites together with his 'sacred relationships'. He has, nevertheless, already taken the first step towards a more realistic (and possibly a more Biblical) view of healing. Once Hinn's shift becomes an explicit statement in the Faith movement (even if only some adherents accept it) one of the biggest differences between the movement and traditional Pentecostals will be solved.

The mere acknowledgement by K Copeland and Steele (1986:125) that the prosperity gospel is not working equally well in affluent and poor societies, is the first step towards a realisation that prosperity is not a Biblical promise.

The future relationship between the Faith movement and other Christians (especially Pentecostals) will have to be decided upon in the light of the development of the distinctive proprium. In the meantime Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal believers must decide about their present relationship with the movement, especially in the light of the fact that many Pentecostals are attracted to the doctrines and the practices of the movement.

2 THE FUTURE RELATION BETWEEN THE FAITH MOVEMENT AND PENTECOSTALS: A FEW POSSIBILITIES

From Pentecostal literature on, and the practical attitude of Pentecostals towards, the Faith movement, it seems that several possibilities are open for the future relation between the two groups. Some Pentecostals, like Jack Hayward, are actively involved in the conferences and other activities of the Faith movement. Others feel that Pentecostals cannot have fellowship with the Faith movement at all (Hunt and McMahon), while yet others are involved without accepting the teachings of the movement (Bob Mumford, Justus du Plessis). A sympathetic, yet critical observation of the movement is also propagated by some.

2.1 Total rejection

Those who reject the movement, do so because they do not see the Faith movement as Christian, or because they see a heresy in the distinctive hallmarks of the Faith movement.

The view of Matta (1987) is a good example. Many traditional Pentecostals will have sympathy with her position, although she is an evangelical. As has been indicated, she sees a revival of early Gnosticism in the teachings of the Faith movement (Matta 1987:7ff). She takes her example from the church father Irenaeus, who branded the gnostics as heretics and then refused to have fellowship with them (Matta 1987:XV). 'The apostles, particularly John and Paul, and early leaders of the church had no problem responding negatively to the gnostic claim that they were "Christian"' (Matta 1987:8).

She condemns the Faith movement as gnostic and heretical on the ground of its doctrine of revelation, especially its emphasis on revelation knowledge (Matta 1987:9ff), its concept of the world (Matta 1987:13ff), its concept of God (Matta 1987:14ff) and its anthropology and Christology (Matta 1987:15ff). Referring to the latter, she concludes that 'anyone who does not teach the full divinity of Jesus Christ is not Christian, nor can we welcome such teachers into our assemblies or homes (even through the media) without compromising our faith in Jesus Christ' (Matta 1987:45).

Hunt and McMahon (1986) also explicitly condemn the message of the Faith movement together with several other doctrines and practices in the church. They see the Faith message as part of the devil's seduction of Christianity and the adherents of the message (even the leaders) as *victims* of this seduction

(Hunt & McMahon 1986:9). They see it as the responsibility of every Christian 'to judge teachings and fruit and to accept and follow only that which is clearly according to the Word of God' (Hunt & McMahon 1985:9). The Faith movement does not pass this test.

Morran & Schlemmer (1984:187) argue that the 'doctrinal foundation of the new churches can be shown to be incorrect if not heretical'. They therefore suggest that the clergy of the established churches have an obligation to identify the dangerous teachings of the Faith movement, albeit without exaggeration and sensationalism.

2.2 Involvement without acceptance of the Faith teachings

Bob Mumford (1987), is a leading figure in the independent Charismatic movement, with historical roots in both the healing revival and the classical Pentecostal movement. To explain his involvement in the Faith movement (he often speaks at their conferences and shares platforms with the leaders of the movement), Mumford uses a simple slogan: 'I don't buy and I don't sell'.

Mumford sees the Faith movement as the most vibrant carrier of the Charismatic and Pentecostal tradition. During his visit to South Africa in 1987, he expressed the opinion that 'the touch of spiritual leadership in this country' was in the hands of the Faith movement.

He admits that there are doctrines that get a wrong emphasis in the Faith movement. But he refuses to be a critic, referring to the fact that the churches did a lot of harm to revivals in the past. The churches were against many of the revival movements of the past, including the healing revival of Alexander Dowie, the Pentecostal revival at the turn of the century, the healing revival of the fifties, the Charismatic revival and now also the revival in the Faith movement. According to Mumford this opposition did not accomplish anything positive. He compares revival with an oncoming train and the critic with a barking dog next to the train. The only accomplishment of the critic is his own alienation from the revival. Mumford feels that involvement in the movement can accomplish much more. He does not want to win the movement over to his position, but by being involved, his personal theological position is heard.

There is at least some merit in Mumford's position. He was one of the main speakers at the Rhema Faith Convention in 1987 and also preached at the first meeting of the IFCC. In 1988 he was invited back by the Rhema Bible Church for their convention. Although Mumford was a popular speaker at the conven-

tion, he did not preach on the themes of the Faith movement. His sermons were mainly based on classical Pentecostal theology, including a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God.

Mumford is possibly correct that he will accomplish more in the movement than a critic would. This approach has nevertheless two disadvantages. It gives theological and religious credibility to the Faith movement, and it is possible that those who involve themselves may eventually be absorbed in the Faith movement.

An example of the first danger can be found in the relation between the Apostolic Faith Mission, a large classical Pentecostal church in South Africa, and the Rhema Bible Church in South Africa. In 1982 the AFM made its conference facilities available to the Rhema Bible Church for their faith convention. Although no council of the AFM discussed the church's relationship to the Faith movement, Ron Steele (1986:57) interprets the friendly gesture as 'tacit recognition' of Rhema and other preachers who followed the teachings of what has loosely become known as the 'Faith' or 'Word' churches.

The problem of absorption is clearly demonstrated in the case of the Hatfield Baptist Church and its relationship to the Faith movement. The Hatfield Baptist Church grew out of a small Baptist congregation. Its minister, Ed Roebert, led the church into the denominational Charismatic movement in the seventies. Initially the congregation remained in fellowship with the Baptist Union, while it also had strong ties with Charismatic groups in the so-called discipleship fold. After the Hatfield Baptist Church or the Christian Community Centre broke away from the Baptist Union, it became a founding member of the International Fellowship of Christian Churches. Since then the emphasis in the church has moved away from discipleship and towards the Faith theology.

Morran and Schlemmer (1984:187) see a big difference between the attitude of the traditional churches towards the Faith movement and that of the Faith movement towards the former. They quote the late Trevor Verryn, stating that many ministers of the established churches are impressed by the growth and success of the Faith churches. They do not criticise the new churches, mainly because they feel insecure in the light of the fact that they themselves are not as successful and they consider it un-Christian to criticise other Christians. The new churches, however, often ridicule or patronise the churches 'which they consider are not moving with God' (Morran & Schlemmer 1984:187). It is possible that neither of these perspectives give the complete picture.

Mumford's position is in any case preferable to criticism of the Faith movement that is so harsh that it could lead to a repetition of the negative attitude that many traditional churches maintained towards the classical Pentecostal movement long after the movement had corrected some of its early doctrines. A typical example of this negative attitude can be found in the relationship between the *Gnadauer Verband* representatives of the evangelical movement in Germany, and the German Pentecostal church. In 1909 the *Gnadauer Verband* issued the Berlin Declaration, stating that an infernal spirit is at work in the Pentecostal movement. Although the Pentecostal movement in Germany, especially the Mülheim Association, is probably closer to traditional Protestantism than any other Pentecostal church in the world, the Berlin Declaration still prevents a meaningful relationship between the evangelicals and the Pentecostal movement. In 1989 (cf *Oekumenische Rundschau* 38, 223-224) an ecumenical breakthrough was experienced when the *Association of Evangelical Free Churches* in Germany declared that the condemnations of the Berlin Declaration do not apply to the present-day German Pentecostals of the Mülheim Association.

2.3 The sympathetic yet critical attitude

Bruce Barron (1987) tries to take a balanced stand in the face of the Faith movement.

If you have opened this book looking for either an overwhelming affirmation or damning denunciation of the faith ministries, you have come to the wrong place. I am certainly disturbed by these people who, ignoring the biblical teaching to 'test everything' (I Thes 5:21), swallow every word that proceeds from the mouth of their favourite teacher. But I am equally disturbed by those who, unable to deal calmly with fellow Christians with whom they disagree, unleash vicious diatribes that, even when doctrinally accurate, do more harm than good. Instead, I propose to give a detailed description of the Faith movement I will then give a cautious, measured evaluation that - if both sides are willing - will lay the groundwork for meaningful dialogue and for resolution of conflict.

(Barron 1987:12)

In his 'cautious measured evaluation' Barron sometimes criticises the Faith movement severely. After discussing the ministry of Hobart Freeman, Barron (1987:34) calls him a false teacher and he says that several other respectable evangelists like Kenneth Hagin and the Copelands are preaching falsehoods as potentially fatal as Freeman's. He severely criticises the Faith teachers for undermining the faith of those who remain sick, and for simultaneously producing guilt (Barron 1987:87). On the other hand he also criticises Joni Eareckson Tada for having a theological tolerance of sickness that is not in harmony with the attitude of Jesus (Barron 1987:80). Although he criticises the prosperity teachings (Barron 1987:91ff), he points out that giving also plays an important role in the practices and doctrines of the Faith movement (Barron 1987:93ff). He acknowledges the efforts of many of the noted Faith teachers to balance the overemphasised prosperity message (Barron 1987:95ff). To conclude he says that 'much of the faith message is potentially valuable, but not when isolated from the rest of sound Christian doctrine' (Barron 1987:141).

The attempt of Barron to 'lay the groundwork for meaningful dialogue and for resolution of conflict' was not very successful. Walter Martin (1987), president of the evangelical Christian Research Institute wrote a letter to the publisher of Barron's book, Intervarsity Press, blaming Barron for being obviously sympathetic to the health-wealth teaching, and for failing 'to grasp the significance of word-faith teaching, especially where heresy is concerned'. He also says the signs of improvement referred to by Barron 'have nothing to do with their doctrinal error' (Martin 1987).

A close associate of Norval Hayes (a popular faith teacher), Madora Brewster (1987b), was also unimpressed by Barron's writings: 'The author of this book may be your friend, but he needs prayer and we are praying for him.' In another letter (1987a) Brewster expresses her attitude towards any criticism of the Faith movement: 'I am not in need of any unraveling of misteaching. Many have misheard and misappropriated teaching that is straight from the heavenly Father. Many more have heard it correctly and are living it correctly. We are praying that you will not be deceived into opposing the Spirit of God'.

Nevertheless Barron remains positive that the Faith movement is moving toward the mainstream. In an article in *Christianity Today* (Barron 1987b:50, 52) he refers to Kenneth Hagin admitting in an interview that 'there's always an element of mystery' in the area of healing. Recalling one instance when he wondered why a relative had to die, Hagin said the Lord directed him to Deuteronomy 29:29 (The secret things belongs unto the Lord our God) and told him, 'If I'd wanted you to know why, I would have told you' (quoted in Barron 1987b:50). Hagin also stated that the Faith teachers did not want to

put a guilt trip on anyone. Barron (1987b:50) quotes Farah who is also optimistic because '(t)he movement is buying into Oral's (Roberts) contention that prayer and medicine must go together'. Vincent Synan (quoted in Barron 1987b:52), a classical Pentecostal and director of a Pentecostal-Charismatic conference held in New Orleans in 1987, sees a positive sign in K Copeland's vigorous support of world missions. Barron (1987b:52), in spite of all the positive signs, still remains concerned about the Christology and anthropology of the Faith movement.

3 CONCLUSION

From a Pentecostal perspective, the approach of Barron seems to be the preferable one. It can be problematic for Pentecostals to take an uncompromising stand against the Faith movement. The Faith movement seems to be firmly grounded in the Pentecostal tradition. There are even developments in the movement that could make the differences between the classical Pentecostals and the Faith movement less important.

The uncompromising approach of Matta, Hunt and McMahon, and Morran and Schlemmer is certainly based on legitimate grounds. But when one keeps the unhappy history of the relationship between orthodox evangelicals and the early Pentecostals in mind, Pentecostals ought to be careful not to cut their ties with the Faith movement too early.

On the other hand, Pentecostals should be careful not to become absorbed into the Faith movement. Faith teaching with its claims of representing the classical Pentecostal movement and its authoritarian claims that it comes directly from God, cannot be left unchallenged in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Morran and Schlemmer (1984:187) are correct when they assert that the false theology of the Faith movement has to be answered intellectually and theologically.

The trends and developments of the theology of the Faith movement need to be monitored carefully. At least some of the leaders of the movement (especially Kenneth Copeland) are playing a dangerous game in the Christological and anthropological sphere. It is possible that the teaching of the spiritual death of Jesus will alienate the movement from the classical Pentecostal movement and might even lead the movement (or part of it) out of mainstream Christian thinking and into a cultic ideology. The doctrine of God is also at stake in the Faith movement and it can easily happen that the Faith movement will eventually develop an understanding of God completely unacceptable to the Christian tradition.

If the Faith movement should move into a theological direction where it denies the deity of Christ or the sovereignty of God, the Pentecostal movement will be forced to take a strong stand against the Faith teachings. Under such circumstances the approach of Matta, Morran and Schlemmer and Hunt, and McMahon will be appropriate.

One can only hope (and pray) that the positive signs of change in the movement will prevail while the heretical tendencies will not be drawn to their logical and unacceptable conclusions.

The Faith movement with its enthusiasm has done much for the promotion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It helped many earnest seekers to find new life in Jesus Christ and its worship practices have played a positive role in the classical Pentecostal churches. If it can rid itself of the unbalanced realised eschatology, its downgrading of Jesus Christ and its upgrading of humans, and the manipulative way of thinking about God, it can become a force in the Pentecostal-Charismatic community of the future.

CHAPTER 5

Experiencing a Faith meeting

Nicky van der Westhuizen was called by God to plant the seed of revival in the hearts of people. He says: 'This is not the work of humans, but the work of the Holy Spirit of God!' The anointing of the Holy Spirit on this man 'breaks the yoke' and brings salvation and healing to many people.

Confession of Faith,
Nicky van der Westhuizen-bedieninge

The attending of a meeting at any Faith church is an interesting experience. Observations in this chapter are based on the attendance of the Rhema Faith Convention in Randburg in February 1987, and several attendances of the Tent Tabernacle of evangelist Nicky van der Westhuizen in Krugersdorp (April 1985, April 1987 and November 1987). Pentecostals, more often than not, find it very pleasant. Often they do not see a radical difference between the faith and practices of traditional Pentecostals and those of the Faith movement.

1 WORSHIP

The atmosphere, especially before the start of the meeting, is much more relaxed than that of the mainline churches and even classical Pentecostal meetings. Sometimes musicians play choruses while the people are entering the church, or the attendants just chat among themselves while they wait for the service to commence. In the Rhema Bible Church, with an average attendance of more than three thousand people, the laughing and chatting will continue

until the songleaders, four to six people who lead the congregation in worship, appear on the platform. When the songleaders start singing a chorus (hymn books are completely absent in the Faith churches and are replaced by choruses projected on a screen in front of the church) the chatting and laughing will stop almost immediately.

The worship in song at the Rhema Bible Church and the Tent Tabernacle lasts for about thirty minutes. Clapping and lifting of hands, characteristic of the classical Pentecostals, accompany the singing, while there are sometimes also people jumping up and down in the pews, dancing in the aisles or even dancing in a circle in front of the pews.

For Pentecostals who believe that God should be worshipped when Christians come together, and who believe that the presence of the Lord can be experienced, this seems to be the real thing. All the people in the congregation are involved, they enjoy the singing and they seem to direct their worship to God and are not merely singing for the joy of singing.

The Faith movement has received a lot of criticism from both the historical churches and the classical Pentecostal movement for its style of worship. Thus Van Rensburg (1986:56f), who made a study for the Dutch Reformed Church, discerns a lack of dignity and respect in the noisiness of the meetings. However, Van Rensburg also criticises the clapping of hands, joint praying sessions, and the loud speaking in tongues, liturgical practices that are common among Pentecostals. Van Rensburg absolutises the liturgical practices of his own tradition. ('Hoe dankbaar behoort ons nie vir daardie stille wyding in ons erediens te wees nie' - How grateful ought we not to be for that quiet reverence in our worship service.) Without contemplating whether 'noisy' (luidrugtige) worship could perhaps be a legitimate form of worship, he rejects it simply because it does not conform to that of his own church.

The criticism of Van Rensburg is not merely criticism of the Faith movement, but criticism of *all* Pentecostal liturgical practices.

The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, the largest Pentecostal movement in South Africa, has addressed this issue on several occasions. In 1985 the Committee for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgics (hereafter the DEL) investigated the practising of dancing of the Faith movement (Van der Spuy 1985:197f). Nicky van der Westhuizen, a prominent leader in the Faith movement, was asked by the DEL not to encourage members of the AFM to dance in meetings addressed by him. Van der Westhuizen agreed to abide by the request, although he believes that there is a place for dancing in Pentecostal

liturgy (Van der Spuy 1985:197f). The DEL then decided that dancing in a service can be a miracle of God under exceptional circumstances. However, if people are encouraged to dance, to jump or to swing their hips, so as to create an atmosphere of liveliness, then these are in fact 'merely rituals and the revelation of a spirit of fanaticism' (quoted in Van der Spuy 1985:198).

The report of the DEL does not say why organised dancing in church is fanaticism or a mere ritual *per se*. If Pentecostals accept the clapping of hands as a demonstration of joy, there is no reason why the same principle could not be applied to dancing as well.

Clark (1983:19), a classical Pentecostal, raised the same reservations about the liturgical practices, and especially the worship of the Faith services. He blames the services of using emotions as goals in themselves and the 'pop' beat of the music, combined with haranguings from the pulpit, as manipulation of the emotions of the congregation, often in order to get people to give money to the church or to submit to the leader of the church.

Although Clark may be right that emotions are sometimes exploited in meetings of the Faith movement, this is not always the case. A true spirit of unity and a real desire to worship God were present in all the meetings I attended. I did not find the services more emotional than ordinary Pentecostal meetings and the music was not so different from that at Pentecostal meetings.

Very few of these practices seem to be as dangerous and unscriptural as the critics make them out to be. Although the danger of mechanical worship does exist, this is not only a problem in the lively Faith gatherings, but also in the more stable liturgy of the classical Pentecostals and perhaps even more in the formal liturgical practices of the historical Protestant churches and the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

It falls outside the scope of this study to go into the biblical foundation of dance in the church. However, from a Pentecostal point of view, it is difficult to condemn it in principle. Dancing as a form of worship has been practised by Pentecostal churches from the beginning of the movement, and although it has become less frequent in some of the larger Pentecostal movements since the fifties, it has never really been abandoned. It is still common practice in many black classical Pentecostal assemblies in both America and South Africa. It is doubtful that the DEL committee of the AFM would have come to the same conclusions had there been representatives of black congregations serving on it.

Although the style of worship of the Faith churches will not be acceptable to everybody, many Pentecostal believers experience it as real worship. It is interesting that the choruses sung in the Faith churches, (new ones being produced at a tremendous rate) have taken the place of both the hymn books and traditional choruses in many Pentecostal congregations. The executive council of the AFM has in the past few years often tried to re-establish the use of hymn books in the church, mostly with little success.

2 THE OFFERING

A much more disturbing element of the worship in the Faith churches, is the taking of the offering. Unlike the situation in most churches where this is an almost incidental practice, the offering takes a major place in a meeting of a Faith group.

It is during the offering that many of the prosperity teachings are given to the congregation. Benny Hinn, a prominent faith teacher in America, officiating at the offering during his appearance at the Rhema Faith Convention in Randburg in February 1987, read from Malachi 3:10 and took almost forty-five minutes to explain the text. He put tremendous pressure on those present to give abundantly. In the presentation of the Scripture he read, Hinn (1987) took no notice of the historical background of the text. The fact that the prophet directed his words at members of the people of Israel who failed to give their share to the building of the temple, was not taken into account in his presentation. For him it simply meant that in order to receive spiritual blessings, Christians must give 'for the Lord'.

This kind of pressurising into giving is not foreign to the Faith movement. In a meeting at the Christian Centre of Theo Wolmarans in November 1984, the pressurising was even worse. Wolmarans preached a long sermon on giving when people suffer from the lack of money. At the end of the service he said he knew that there were many people present who were suffering because they did not have sufficient means to enable them to give in order to receive the blessing of the Lord. He then invited those to stand up, who could not give, but were in need of the blessing of the Lord. He assured them of his compassion for them and that they should not miss the blessing of the Lord. He then told those who remained seated to each accompany one of the needy to the front and to make two offerings to the Lord, one for him or herself and one for the person who did not have to give. He then assured them that the Lord would return the offering hundredfold to them. After a while the ushers came back with the good news that the Lord had met the needs of the congregation with the offering.

Much can be said of the psychological dangers of such methods. Something also needs to be said about the inconsistent theology behind these and similar methods. When it comes to the church the message is clear. God provides for its needs through the contribution of the members. Steele (1986:126) gives many examples of the miraculous ways in which God provided for the Rhema Bible Church. However, when it comes to the provision of the Lord for the individual members, they must always rely on a supernatural intervention.

Anderson (1977:11f), a critical supporter of the Faith movement, sees the fact that the Faith movement regards the individual not only as a soul, but as a human being with spiritual, physical and material needs as one of its positive aspects. He points out that the message of the movement with its emphasis on the tendency to pressurise audiences for money is not uncommon in the international Faith movement.

Early in 1987 Oral Roberts, someone with close ties with the Faith movement, both past and present, announced that the Lord revealed to him that He will take him away if he does not raise the money needed to enable him to send missionary doctors to the mission field (Letter to Prayer Partners, 1987a). The announcement was followed later by a letter from his son, Richard Roberts, pleading with the prayer partners not to let his father suffer an untimely death (Letter to Prayer Partners, 1987b).

Barron (1987:139) tells of a television transmission of Bob Tilton in which his appeal for money lasted longer than the sermon. Barron quotes Tilton who gave ten cheques of \$1 000 each to Copeland and said:

Each of these \$1 000 checks I am now giving to you will return one hundredfold to me, according to God's Word. One for my church, one for my school, one for my wife and myself personally. Folks, these checks will return a total of \$100 000 each! Can you say 'Praise the Lord'? What are you waiting for? Get on your feet and get in on this! Let's take the biggest offering ever! I want it now! Who will do what I did? Who will sow in famine and reap hundredfold? Well come on, come running you sower!

(Quoted in Barron 1987:140)

Barron (1987:139) states correctly that the fund-raising practices of the Faith movement 'caused some observers to wonder if these preachers really believe what they teach about trusting in God for prosperity'.

Anderson (1977:11f) sees in the teaching on healing, prosperity and a positive attitude an attempt to provide for the whole person and not only for the soul. He denies the accusation that members of the Faith movement are selfish people who neglect the poor. According to his experience, they are often generous. He concludes that the real emphasis of the Faith movement is not on giving in order to get rich, but rather on giving in order to get more that can be given to the needy (Anderson 1977:10).

It is true that many Faith churches have moved into caring ministries - contrary to the expectation of observers like Morran and Schlemmer (1984:182). And it is also true that the movement succeeded in broadening the field of care for the individual. Whereas many evangelicals and Pentecostals overemphasise the spiritual side of the gospel, the Faith movement also addresses other human needs. But until the movement recognises the fact that God wants to meet the needs of His people in the same way as He provides for ministries - through His people and not necessarily in some supernatural way - the fund-raising methods of the movement will remain suspect. The caring ministries of the Rhema Bible Church and other Faith churches are positive signs that the movement might move towards a more rational approach to the material needs of its members. The development could prevent the Faith message from being bad news to the poor who must 'sow in famine' without any guarantee that their personal needs will be met, the sales pitches 'only setting the stage for massive heartbreak and disillusionment' (Barron 1987:140).

3 HEALING PRACTICES

The healing practices in the meetings of the movement create another area of concern. In the service of Benny Hinn at the Rhema Bible Church he announced that he was going to pray for sick children. In the course of the service he often stated that the Lord was going to heal all the sick children present that night. He even approached a woman with a little girl who was in a coma and assured her (and the audience) that the girl would be healed that night. However, when he prayed for her, nothing happened, neither were any of the other children present healed. Another woman then came to the microphone and told the audience that her little daughter had also been in a coma. At the previous Faith Convention, Hinn had prayed for the girl. She was not healed immediately, but after a while the child became better and was now perfectly healed. Hinn then assured the first woman that her daughter would also be healed within six months.

After attending several meetings of the Faith movement, I came to the conclusion that the occurrences of healing at the meetings are much less frequent than the enormous claims made by the movement. The excitement generated at the meetings often precludes all critical questions. The day after the service of Benny Hinn, I spoke to several members and ministers of the church, but nobody seemed to be either worried or puzzled by the unfulfilled promises of the previous night. Some admitted that they had expected more, but they still adhered to the healing doctrines of the Faith movement, stating that one cannot build one's faith on personal experience.

The possibility that their healing practices and teachings might cause tremendous spiritual problems for those who do not receive healing, seems to be ignored by many Faith teachers. Farah (1980:2) claims that at least seventeen members of the church of Hobart Freeman died over a period of three years as a result of the refusal to take medicine. 'What is most distressing about the story is the response of Freeman's associate to a query concerning the deaths, "That's his (Freeman's - JNH) interpretation of the Bible"'. Barron (1987:23) is also concerned: 'By the end of 1984 the number of documented, unnecessary deaths had risen to ninety'.

Several Faith teachers believe that not everybody will receive healing. The distressing aspect of their meetings is that, because they do not want to sound negative, they preach something quite different in their sermons. I have already referred to Nicky van der Westhuizen, who admitted to me in personal conversation that there is a mystery in the healing of the sick. In his sermons this insight is completely absent.

Another alarming practice of the Faith movement is to proclaim people to be healed after they have been prayed for, only for the sick to 'discover' that they have not been healed. An embarrassing occurrence of this practice was screened by the South African Broadcasting Corporation Television services in 1985. A healing service at the church of pastor Theo Wolmarans (Christian City) featured in a documentary on the Faith churches. Wolmarans prayed for a woman with one short leg. The short leg 'grew' in full view of the TV cameras, the lady confessed her healing and the pastor proclaimed her healed. When SABC-TV phoned her a month later, she admitted that she had not been healed, but was still waiting for the Lord to heal her.

It is true that many people, like the woman referred to, do not lose their faith in spite of disappointments and are somehow able to stay in the movement. It is also true that many other sick people receive no comfort but only condemnation from the healing message of the Faith teachers (Magliato 1981:135). Those who eventually die, may be convinced that God has forsaken them.

According to Farah (1980b:158f) 'death is the unforgivable contradiction for anyone expecting perfect health'. He condemns the Faith teachers for 'heaping unjust condemnation on those who haven't "exercised faith" during the terminal stages' (Farah 1983:160).

One would expect a more realistic theology and practice from the Faith teachers in the face of the reality of death. Barron (1987:64) maintains that the Faith teachers deal with death in such a way that it does not pose a problem to their theology. According to them God guarantees at least seventy years and then death can come without sickness and pain as in the case of FF Bosworth and E W Kenyon.

The reality of sickness and death could eventually have an influence on the healing practices and the preaching during Faith meetings. In his sermon at the Rhema Bible Church, Benny Hinn, echoed all the views of the Faith movement on death and sickness. As mentioned previously he referred to Kathryn Kuhlman, a well-known healing evangelist and associate of Hinn, who died because she had often confessed wrongly that sickness and healing were mysteries and that even she could die of a heart attack. Christians should experience divine health, those who are sick should be healed, old people should die without pain or sickness and God does not bring sickness, neither does He want us to be sick. Hinn added that there are nevertheless cases between God and the individual that are sacred and cannot be explained. He told the congregation that the death of David du Plessis, a prominent Pentecostal minister, was one such case. David du Plessis was a man of high esteem in both Pentecostal and Charismatic circles worldwide. Nobody could accuse him of a lack of faith. Yet he died after a long sickbed. Hinn said his death was one of those sacred occurrences between God and humans.

Hinn then recounted his own experience a year previously. He got serious heart problems. When he spoke to the Lord about it, the Lord reminded him of a covenant he had made with the Lord. He had promised the Lord that he would remain in his congregation and not become an evangelist again. He had

asked the Lord to prevent him from leaving his congregation, even at the cost of his life. Before he got the heart problems, he had decided to go into the evangelistic field again. The Lord had made him ill to remind him of their covenant. He then decided to stay in his congregation, and was healed instantly.

Although Hinn contradicted himself, and although his stories of the 'sacred relationships' are actually evidence against his belief that God wants everybody to be healthy, his honesty certainly constitutes some progress in Faith thinking. It is far from a balanced theological view on healing, but it is already a more acceptable position than that of radical Faith teachers like Hobart Freeman who refused to accept any exceptions to the rule that God wants to heal everybody, and even that of Nicky van der Westhuizen who confesses to a more balanced view in private without referring to it in his sermons.

4 AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP

It is not uncommon to hear ministers stating that they are only preaching the Word of God. Reformed ministers call their sermons the Word of God because they followed all the exegetical rules and found the real meaning of the original text. Contextual preachers believe they preach the Word of God because they contextualise the Biblical text to bring a relevant Word for the situation. Pentecostal ministers believe they received their messages directly from God, etc.

The authority of Scripture can in all traditions easily be abused to establish the authority of a specific person. This temptation constitutes a real problem for the teacher of the Faith movement.

The leaders of Faith churches furthermore often claim that they have had a supernatural calling from God. Nicky van der Westhuizen is a good example of an authoritarian leader with a special calling. In 1976, while he was still a minister in the Pentecostal Protestant Church, the Lord called him with an audible voice to a revival ministry for the whole of South Africa, which will eventually affect the whole world (Nicky van der Westhuizen-bedieninge 1986:8). Two years later the Lord called him to an independent ministry.

In his independent church Nicky van der Westhuizen is recognised as an apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor (Nicky van der Westhuizen-bedieninge 1986:10). His prophetic ministry is recognised by the fact that he is called to bring the clear Word to the nation and that he can say 'Thus sayeth the Lord' with authority when he speaks about the future. His name appears in the Confession of Faith of his ministry under the heading: 'The Man':

Nicky van der Westhuizen was called by God to plant the seed of revival in the hearts of people. He says: 'This is not the work of humans, but God'. The anointing of the Holy Spirit on this man 'breaks the yoke' and brings salvation and healing to many people.

(Nicky van der Westhuizen-bedieninge 1986:10)
[Own translation]

In practice Nicky van der Westhuizen takes full advantage of this authority vested in him. In a personal conversation (Van der Westhuizen 1986), Pastor Van der Westhuizen said to me he does not believe in a church board or a Presbyterian church government, because he cannot see how it is possible for elders or a board to stop someone with a five-fold ministry.

In his sermons he often says 'The Lord told me', 'I heard from the Lord', etc. In one of his sermons (Nicky van der Westhuizen 1980), he said someone asked him if it was the Lord's will to hold an Easter convention. He told this man that he does not do anything that is not the will of God.

Hagin makes the same authoritarian claims with reference to his prophetic ministry:

When the Lord was dealing with me concerning the prophet's ministry, He said that if a church doesn't accept my ministry, then I should go away, shake the dust off my feet against them so to speak; but He would remove their candlestick. He would take away from them what power they had left He said that judgment must begin in the house of God, and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear. If a church won't accept this ministry, then they don't accept His Word and He can't help them.

(Hagin 1974:19)

The consequences of this statement are clear: Hagin is speaking directly from God and anyone who is not obeying Hagin, is actually disobeying God.

This attitude is often manifested in the services of the Faith movement. The preacher will tell the audience that he had a vision from God and that only those who refuse to listen to God anew will reject this clear and anointed message.

Those who attend the Faith churches are taught not to question the leaders of the movement. In an introduction to the material of the Rhema Correspondence School, students are taught not to have a rebellious spirit and question the teachings, but to be submissive.

The result of the authoritarian leadership is that little room is left in either the meetings or the daily church life for fruitful interaction between leaders and members. It also leaves almost no room for the correction of an erring leader.

There is little chance that the authoritarian style of the leadership in the Faith movement will be changed if the movement develops into a denomination. In South Africa, where a new denomination, the International Fellowship of Christian Churches, has already been formed (although the leaders will not admit that it is a denomination), authoritarian tendencies are unmistakably present. Unlike any other denominational constitution, the names of the four leaders are written into the constitution of the IFCC (Amended Constitution 1986:2).

5 CONCLUSION

Worship and enthusiasm are the most attractive marks of the Faith movement. The warm atmosphere and the dedicated worship are especially attractive to Pentecostal worshippers.

The fund-raising methods, healing practices and authoritarian leadership are negative aspects of the movement that are disturbing for those outside the movement.

It is possible that the healing practices of the movement will eventually become more balanced. This cannot yet be said of the style of leadership and the fund-raising methods adopted by the Faith teachers.

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