

**THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT: EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE FAITH,
HEALTH AND WEALTH MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA**

by

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I declare that ***THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT: EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE FAITH, HEALTH AND WEALTH MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA*** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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DEDICATION

To my wife and children who have provided an incentive to work hard. This work is for you. I also dedicate this work to my mother who was widowed at a very young age. Singlehandedly she raised eight of us. Thank you for pointing me to the future.

SUMMARY

The Faith Movement is a religious mosaic since it is a multi-layered phenomenon which is coloured by several themes. These themes represent several areas of emphasis like: Blessing and Blessings, Power to declare, Prophetic anointing, connecting with the anointing, dominion, success and increase, sowing the seeds, as well as other ideas which are still evolving.

The Word of Faith teachers have a very unique way of reading the Bible. They usually approach the text without consideration of its historical and cultural context. When they approach the biblical text they usually assign to it an independent existence cut off from its natural context. This in turn results in the reinterpretation of all the major doctrines of the Christian faith. Both God and human beings belong to the same class of “divine beings.” God and human beings it is believed operate under the rule of faith. It is argued that whatever God created, God did so by speaking words of faith (see Genesis 1:1-3). It is therefore argued that human beings similarly can create their own reality and destiny by speaking words of faith.

Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement assume a rather narrow outlook. It is believed that Jesus Christ died so that in addition to the

forgiveness of sins He provided for all spiritual and material needs of the people. Therefore, no Christian should be poor or sick. The Holy Spirit on the other hand, is the anointing that enables believers to make it in life.

It must be pointed out that even though the Word of Faith ideas were exported to Africa mainly from the United States of America it has found a home in Africa. The concepts of blessings and curses have a corollary in African Religious Traditional thought. The role that Word of Faith preachers play is similar to the roles played by several religious experts in African Religious Thought. Ultimately, the Faith Movement is not based on sound theological and philosophical ground. It is based on unique reading of the Bible which is more esoteric than theological. More Gnostic than Christian.

Key words

Word of Faith, Faith Movement, Prosperity Gospel, Wealth and Health Movement, Name it and Claim it, Faith Healing, Sowing the Seed, Tithes and Offerings, Curses and Blessings, Deliverance ministry

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 FAITH, HEALTH, AND WEALTH MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA: BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 'Faith, Health, and Wealth Movement' is described variously by different scholars. Some call it the Faith Movement (Horn 1989). Others like to address it by other several terms. Consequently, Coleman (2000:27) supplies a number of terms used to describe this movement. The terms include; "Faith, Faith Formula, Prosperity, Health and Wealth or Word of Faith Movement." It will be too clumsy to continue to refer to this movement as the 'Faith, Health, and Wealth Movement.' For this reason, from now on we shall refer to this movement as the Word of Faith Movement.

The Word of Faith Movement is spreading at a very fast rate in this country. In fact it is not only growing fast in this country alone but this phenomenal growth is being witnessed in other countries as well. Phiri and Maxwell (2007) attest to this fact when they observe that in "Sub-Saharan Africa prosperity-tinged Pentecostalism is growing faster not just than other strands of Christianity, but than all religious groups, including Islam".

This movement is very attractive to a lot of people because, as Coleman (2000: 32) notes, “Faith ideas are said to present comforting messages that emphasise the need for order in society and justify the possession of wealth as a sign of divine grace.” Accordingly, Lioy (n.d) notes:

According to proponents of the theology of success, Christians should decide what they want, believe it is theirs, and confess it is true. Reputedly, they can obtain the longing of their heart by naming and claiming them by faith.

The Word of Faith Movement is an offshoot of the Pentecostal Movement and it remains an integral part of Pentecostalism in Zambia. Its message is mainly an adaptation of the Pentecostal distinctives.¹

In Zambia, mostly due to the influence of Nigerian preachers, as well as the local cultural context, this movement has gone through some slight variation. What is meant by this is that the Word of Faith Movement has gone beyond merely adapting the Pentecostal distinctives. It is now possible to speak of about four broad strands of the Faith Movement in this country.

¹ When one speaks of Pentecostal distinctives reference is usually made to the following tenets of Pentecostalism.

- Jesus Christ the Saviour
- Jesus Christ the Sanctifier
- Jesus Christ the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit
- Jesus Christ the Healer
- Jesus Christ the soon coming King

The four strands are: the word of faith version, sowing of the seed version, deliverance from witchcraft and curses version, as well as dominion version.

To put what is being said here in context a brief description of the strands of the Word of Faith Movement will help. The Word of Faith version teaches that whatever you confess by faith becomes a reality. Hagin (1987: 111) argues, “When you make a positive confession of faith, it creates a reality in your life. And then you walk in the reality of God’s blessing.” Kenyon (1998:42) is even more elaborate:

One of the gravest mistakes that many believers make is to confess their faith in the Word, and at the same time contradict their confession by wrong actions. A woman said to me, “I cannot understand why I did not get my healing. I have prayed and prayed. I know the Bible is true.” I asked her, “Are you still taking medicine?” “Oh yes,” she said. Then I read her this scripture (*James 2:14*) that I have just quoted. Her actions did not correspond with her confession. She said she was trusting the Lord and yet her trust was in medicine and not in His Word.

In the Word of faith strand whatever a believer confesses by faith becomes a reality. If you confess a car by faith believe it is yours.

A comment is in order on the sowing of the seed version. This strand of the Faith Movement is closely linked to the Word of Faith strand. The main idea is that God will only meet the needs of those who give money (this includes tithes and offerings) to God (or the persons of God). The needs for which one needs to sow financial seeds range from sowing a seed for a marriage partner, good health, wealth, promotion at work, finding work abroad (going for greener pastures), establishing successful businesses, and so on and so forth. In this regard Sako (2010: 57) argues that “this principle of the seed is a law of faith. The seed portion of

your seed is a worth portion you set aside purposefully according to your expectation or faith.”

The main difference with the Word of Faith Movement as set in North America is the fact that some African traditional elements have found their way into the Faith Movement in the African situation. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) in this regard notes; “The prosperity message resonates with African religious ideas because of the traditional belief in mystical causality. Tithes, like prayers, are ritual actions that are supposed to make things happen.”

We also need to shed some light on the deliverance from curses and witchcraft version of the Faith Movement. It is generally believed that one of the reasons why people in Sub-Sahara Africa don't seem to be making it in life is because their ancestors were involved in witchcraft and idolatry. As a consequence, God has placed a curse on them. Since in Exodus 20:1-7, God forbids the worship of any other god besides God, it is often taught that those who worship idols have attracted curses from God. For God punishes the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. They believe that this supplies a logical explanation concerning the woes that have ravaged the African continent in general and Zambia in particular.

The way out is that those whose ancestors were involved in witchcraft and Idol worship should ask for prayers of deliverance so that curses may be broken from their lives. It needs to be made clear that the prayers for deliverance may be offered on behalf of an individual as well as the entire community. Only after this has been done will the individual or community

begin to prosper be it in health, material, as well as socially. The Pastors involved in what is being called the deliverance ministry are becoming more and more popular since they hold the keys to people's success. While this way of thinking does not correlate with the North American situation it fits well with the African way of thinking. It is heavily influenced by Traditional African Religious ideas. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) demonstrates well this assertion when he writes:

The prosperity movement also taps deep roots in traditional African religions. The prayer vigils and healing camps are the Christian equivalent of traditional shrines where people go to have their destinies revealed and spiritual problems solved. The prosperity message resonates with African religious ideas because of the traditional belief in mystical causality.

On the other hand, the Dominion version of prosperity is exemplified by Dr Nwaka. In his book *Invading the Babylonian System* Dr Nwaka (2007: vii) writes:

When God created man in the beginning, he conferred upon Him kingdom authority over the earth. Psalm 115:16 says, the highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man. When man fell, he relinquished authority of the earth to satan. It was given over to a satanic system – the world system – operated by the kingdom of darkness with satan as its head (sic).

In this version of dominion, Christians are expected to exercise dominion over every sphere of life. Powell (2012) corroborates Dr Nwaka's Views when he notes:

Mastering life is multi-faceted process. It involves developing proficiency in all areas that directly affect our life-experiences on this earth. One vital area that affects our lives and consumes the majority of our time is money! How can you talk about mastering life and not talk about money?

It becomes apparent, therefore, that prosperity involves dominating the resources of this earth, more especially financial resources.

From our observations above, it is clear the Word of Faith theology has evolved to suit the African traditional cosmology. What is meant by this is that the African worldview on the causes of sickness and other misfortunes are coming into play here. There is a saying in one of Zambia's tribes which says "Lesa tona chakwe" when translated literally the saying means 'God does not destroy that which belongs to God.' We shall expatiate more on this matter in chapter five.

It must be pointed out that faith preachers also play an important function among the poor and those who want to advance in their careers, and businesses. Through their preaching they are instilling a sense of "somebodyness" in their followers. Their sermons help their followers to dream for a better life. Hence the poor can also aspire to break free from their poverty. Miller and Yamamori (2007: 176) in this regard note:

Prosperity Gospel preachers provoke people to think in new ways, and while members may be disappointed if they are expecting a quick fix, they may also start organizing their lives in ways that allow for upward social mobility. Furthermore, some of these Prosperity Gospel Preachers actually offer sound advice regarding lifestyle change, budgeting, family planning, and business investment.

Imakando² (2010: 128) a prominent Prosperity Gospel Preacher in Lusaka, Zambia demonstrates well what is being said when he gives this counsel:

In the entire word of God and also in looking all around us, we see signs of great success achieved by people that worked hard. They paid a price of long hours of work and sacrificing times of pleasure and sleep in order to exert their energies towards achievement of their goal in life.

We have sufficiently provided the background to this study. Let us now state the problem of this study. Faith theology poses a serious theological challenge to the church in Zambia. It exhibits a lot of unorthodox tendencies. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) who likes to discuss this movement under 'The New Pentecostal Churches' for example notes:

The New Pentecostal Churches (NPCS) of Africa emphasize prosperity of all kinds. Wealth, health, success, and ever-soaring profits in business are coveted, cherished, and publicly flaunted as signs of God's favor. In this new type of Christianity, success and wealth are the only genuine marks of faith.

Asamoah-Gyadu's observation sheds more light on what we are dealing with. It is amazing how the whole Christian enterprise can be reduced to success and wealth as marks of genuine faith. Questions about why the righteous suffer do not even arise. When people suffer it does not even occur to the purveyors of such notions that there could be other explanations. Obviously this is a great distortion of the Christian faith. Almost all saints in the Bible had a fair share of suffering.³

² Bishop Joe Imakando is Senior Pastor of Bread of Life Church International in Lusaka. The church boasts of a membership of about 12000. He is also Presiding Bishop of over 87 local and 5 International churches.

³ Examples of the saints who suffered are plenty. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, the disciples, Paul, etc.; all suffered for their faith in God. These people suffered not necessarily because it was a fault of their own.

Proponents of the faith movement in Zambia tend to be anti-intellectual in their approach to faith issues. As far as they are concerned matters to deal with faith cannot be discussed intelligently. Every good Christian should simply believe what they teach. There is no need to ask questions. For doing so is deemed to be unbelief. If this was the approach that the church had adopted from its inception the history of Christian theology could have been different.

Reason has played a very prominent role in the formation of Christian theology. All one has to do is but look at the creeds and confessions of the church throughout its long history. They are based on sound reason. The Christian faith is a historical faith. Our faith is based on historical facts that Jesus was born, He died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day for the sake of the human race (see 1Cor 15:1-8, 2Cor 5:21).

What is surprising about the faith movement is that historical considerations concerning the development of Christian doctrine are usually neglected. God is speaking afresh to this generation. As a result lessons learnt from the past are neglected. Writing from a systematic theology perspective this indeed poses a serious challenge. When one peruses through the Bible he or she will discover that such ideas are clearly not taught. It becomes difficult to address this matter from a biblical perspective since its claims are not based on sound biblical exegesis and interpretation. At the most, all what is done by the purveyors of the Word of Faith Movement is proof texting. Simply because an idea is mentioned in the Bible it therefore becomes biblical. Such Biblicism leads to serious distortion of the Christian doctrine.

The other important problem that deserves to be mentioned is that the proponents of these strange ideas are guilty of espousing what Bonhoeffer called cheap grace. What is insinuated is that they neglect the role that the cross plays in the Christian life. They do so by rejecting the fact that even good Christians will experience suffering. Bonhoeffer (1937:35) argues that “Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church.” This was true during Bonhoeffer’s time it is still true today. For to cheapen the grace of God like the Faith Movement purveyors do is simply unacceptable if not against the very Christian faith itself. Bonhoeffer (1937:35) further observes that “cheap grace amounts to the denial of the incarnation of the Word of God.” To deny the cross is cheap grace. To take up one’s cross in order to follow Jesus is costly grace. Accordingly, Bonhoeffer (1937: 36) notes:

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for which sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him (sic).

Grace is indeed costly. Grace is the ability to rise against all odds and be able to obey God even at great personal expense. It is to deny your very life. It involves forsaking all for the sake of following Jesus. It is a deliberate step to forsake all the pleasures of the world for the sake of following Christ. It is a resolve to follow Christ no matter how much it may cost an individual. Bonhoeffer (1937:69) further writes:

When he was called by Jesus to accept a life of voluntary poverty, the rich young man knew he was faced with the simple alternative of obedience or disobedience. When Levi was called from the receipt of custom and Peter from his nets, there was no doubt that Jesus meant business. Both of them were to leave everything and follow.

There is no escaping the cross. There cannot be a meaningful Christian life without the cross. The Faith Movement therefore, stands in antithesis to biblical and historical Christianity. The Faith Movement is embarrassed by those who pass through suffering and by the poor. Oyedepo blames Job because of his sufferings. He suggests that Job's sufferings were as a result of his ignorance of the authority that he had in God. Oyedepo (2005:59) in this regard writes:

Job thought it was God and he spent most of his time suffering under ignorance, but we read in our Bible that Satan went forth and smote Job, not God, God didn't smite. If Job knew it, the first day that would have been the end of Satan's attack.

Oyedepo believes that Job could have ended his suffering earlier enough by simply rebuking the devil who was behind his attacks. Job could have rebuked the devil to leave him and his family alone. As the case was; Job was not acting in the "class of God". As a result he ended up suffering the way he did. The context of Job's suffering does not matter. All Oyedepo sees here is Job's lack of Faith to rebuke Satan to leave him alone.

The Faith movement distorts the message of the Christian faith. This is mainly as a result of their faulty interpretation of the Bible. Simply because the Bible makes reference to a matter does not make that matter a biblical doctrine. In the use of the Bible they are highly selective. They want the Bible to back what they are saying.

1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

Historically this movement hails from the United States of America. Coleman (2000:27) says, “This Movement has spread from its bases in the US ministries to become a world-wide phenomenon over the past twenty years.” The major players responsible for the rise of the Faith, Health, and Wealth Movements in the United States of America were figures like Kenneth E. Hagin, Oral Roberts, and Kenneth and Gloria Copeland. Kenneth E. Hagin in particular was very instrumental in exporting the Word of Faith message to Africa. In this regard Synan (2010: 123) writes:

Eventually, Africa became the world epicentre for the mass proclamation of the prosperity message. Much of prosperity-oriented Pentecostalism in Nigeria and other African countries came as the result of teaching missions by teams from Hagin’s Word of Faith Movement in the late 1980s. They influenced two leaders in particular who spread the message to the masses. They were Enoch Adeboye, bishop of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and David Oyedepo, Pastor of the Canaan land Church, both in Lagos Nigeria.

It is generally believed that Kenneth E. Hagin is the founder of this movement. This is the case since Hagin was a very influential figure in this movement and was very instrumental to its growth hence he made it a world phenomenon. However, there is overwhelming evidence to show that the true origins of this movement can be traced to E.W. Kenyon (1867-1948). This fact is attested to by several authors (Hagin 2007: ix; Hartman 2010, Pulei 2009: 86). Hagin (2007: xi) accordingly writes, “In the Name of Jesus seminar I conducted in April 1978, I quoted freely from E.W. Kenyon’s book *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*.”

This movement has been transported to various parts of the world. Coleman (2000:30) in this regard writes:

The Movement on a global level does not have firm boundaries of membership or non-membership, and it is marketed via mass rallies, workshops, conferences and media products that appeal to diverse constituencies of believers.

Even if this movement is originally from the United States of America, it has found a home in African Pentecostalism. As he comments on the origins of the prosperity theology in Africa, Kalu (2008:157) notes:

A number of American evangelists spread it through out Africa through evangelistic crusades and sending many young born-again leaders to Bible schools and summer conferences in the United States. The fire convention in Harare in 1986 becomes crucial as an example of prosperity theology's insertion point into Africa, and Ben Idahosa's flamboyant career certainly made it visibly fashionable. His scholarship awards to African students in his All Nations' Bible Seminary, Benin City, served as a breeding camp for adherents of the prosperity gospel.

As Christians, more especially Pentecostals and Charismatics began to dream for a better life, this gave impetus to this movement in Zambia. Accordingly, this country has a fair share of preachers who are driving this movement forward.

In Zambia, the entry point of the Faith movement can be traced to evangelist Nevers Mumba the founder of Victory Bible Church. He was trained at Gordon Lindsay's Christ for the Nations Bible College in Dallas, Texas. Through his *Zambia shall be Saved Crusades* and *Telecasts* (in the 1980s to mid 1990s) he popularised the idea of faith healing as well as other faith ideas. He usually claimed that since God created everything by the power of His word, it therefore, followed that through the word God can do whatever we believe Him for. All that

one had to do was to believe that God will do whatever we confess. Even as in Genesis 1, God said let there be ... and there was, God is still speaking through faith preachers. Those who obey them will receive miracles which mainly include physical healing and financial provision. Dr Mumba is no longer actively involved in Christian ministry in this country. He is now the president of the former ruling party in Zambia.

However, his space has been filled by people like Bishop Joe Imakando, Bishop Bernard Nwaka, Bishop Sky Z. Banda, Apostle Robert Bwalya, and many others. Through these individuals the prosperity message continues to flourish.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying the Faith Movement in Zambia poses a big challenge. There is very little or no literature written by the proponents of this Movement in this country. Unfortunately, the voice of the critics in this country against this movement is mute. The Faith Preachers hold an integral part in the evangelical movement in Zambia. For instance Dr Imakando is the current Board Chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia. Since there is very little literature written concerning the Faith Movement in Zambia, this study shall be based mainly on the examination of sermons presented by proponents of this movement. However, since the charismatic movement is a global phenomenon we shall freely use literature from other parts of the world to shed more light on the Faith Movement. It is our desire to as much as possible make use of scholarly works written by African scholars to help in clarifying many issues that the Faith Movement raises in this country.

It is just fitting that we start our review of the Faith Movement literature by reviewing the sermons preached by Bishop Dr⁴ Bernard Nwaka⁵ at a conference held at Living Water Global ministries International. At this conference which was held under the theme: *Seeing beyond the Sacrifice*, Dr Nwaka delivered several sermons, two sermons of which had immediate bearing on our study.

During the official opening of the conference Dr Nwaka spoke on the theme: *Seeing beyond the Sacrifice*.⁶ He opened by saying the path to glory is sacrifice. If the church is going to make it in these last days as he put it the church must be willing to pay the price. For his text he read Hebrews 12:3:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (NIV).

Without considering the context of the text he went on to declare that Jesus saw beyond the sacrifice that is why He endured the cross. To buttress what he was saying he cited 2Samuel 24:24 where David said to Araunah that he would not sacrifice to the Lord burnt offering and sacrifices that will cost him nothing. Again there was no reference to the context of this passage. He just used it as proof that God will only call and use people who are ready to sacrifice through prayer and fasting. As far as Dr Nwaka is concerned, God is raising an army

⁴ In the Faith Movement in this country and almost everywhere in Africa Faith preacher are usually being addressed as Dr.

⁵ Bishop Bernard Nwaka together with his wife Bishop Joyce Nwaka are founders of Living Water Global Churches. The Conference was held from 31st August to 4th September 2010.

⁶ This sermon was delivered on 31st September, 2010.

of Prophets and Apostles. These are men and women who are ready to pay the price. It is to these men and women where God was going to reveal new revelation⁷.

He pointed out that God's revelation to the church is progressive. To prove this point he noted that in the past our forefathers never received full revelation. The first revelation they received was the revelation of holiness, then they received the revelation of faith, and later they received a revelation of God's power. God's next revelation will move the nation to the next level. Of course this revelation will happen to people who are willing to pay the price.

It is surprising to see how Dr Nwaka deals with the concept of progressive revelation. What he is talking about has nothing to do with biblical revelation. At the most it needs to be pointed out, Dr Nwaka is no longer occupied with biblical revelation. He has wandered into the world of extra-biblical revelation which is based on personal experience. What Dr Nwaka calls progressive revelation is nothing but a manifestation of restorationism which always anticipates that God is about to do something new but devoid of a strong biblical and theological base.

In another sermon preached during the *Seeing beyond the Sacrifice* Conference Dr Nwaka spoke on the subject *Now or Never*. For his text he used Judges 8:4 where Gideon and 300 men were exhausted, yet they kept up with the pursuit of the Midianites. True to the way Faith Preachers use the scripture, he only used this portion of scripture as a launch pad. He went on to encourage the people that greatness does not come from the outside. It comes

⁷ New Revelation here as we shall establish later in our study refers to what is popularly called the 'rhema word' in the Faith Movement.

from the inside. He encouraged them to simply believe his word since he is a Prophet of God. In this sermon the people were reminded that they were born to fulfil God's assignment for their lives.

In this sermon Dr Nwaka was motivating people to aspire for greatness. The people were encouraged to believe that the God who is in heaven was able to lift them from their humble backgrounds and make them very rich. The amazing aspect is the fact that the people's personal destiny has nothing to do with fulfilling God's mission in the world. What matters is personal success.

The most eloquent spokesperson of the Faith Movement in Zambia is Bishop Dr Joe Imakando. In a sermon titled: *The Power of Fruitfulness*⁸ he articulated well the essence of the Faith Movement. In this sermon Bishop Imakando used Genesis 26:1-13. According to him the significance of this passage is that God was able to bless his people just as he blessed Isaac if they plant the seed. By alluding to the 'seed' Dr Imakando was in fact talking about giving money to the work of the ministry. Isaac planted crops (Gen 26:12) the result was he became very rich (v.13). He observed that what prayer and fasting could not achieve the seed accomplished.

As far as Imakando is concerned, Isaac discovered the principle of seed sowing and became rich. The seed⁹ attracts a blessing from God. And he (Imakando) defines the blessing as the

⁸ This sermon was preached on the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) on 11th September, 2010.

⁹ The seed is money given to God usually to induce Him to respond to a believer's need.

ability to succeed. If you have any need the answer is to sow the seed for your need. And he proceeded to provide guidelines concerning where and when to sow the seed:

1. He encouraged the people to sow their seeds in an atmosphere where the presence of God is present. This is what he calls sowing into the anointing. This means that you sow a seed when the preacher is still preaching. By giving your seed during this time an individual is actually claiming the promises for himself or herself. This is sometimes referred to as connecting with the anointing. This notion is a concept that has being coined within the Faith Movement. It emphasises the fact that God will only perform miracles at specific times. It is during such times that the preacher encourages the believers to reach out in faith and receive their miracle by sowing a seed.
2. The believers were encouraged to sow their seed to further the work of the ministry.
3. They were encouraged to sow the seed into the life of the man or woman of God.
4. They were encouraged to sow the seed to the poor.

Bishop Imakando gave a testimony of how God told him to close his bank account and give all the money to God. He pointed out that before he gave he struggled a bit. But once he had given that money to the church that was the beginning of his financial breakthrough. According to him he no longer struggles with finances. As influential as Bishop Imakando is his biblical exegetical skills are very rudimentary.

Thus far the works that have been surveyed make very little theological contribution. At the most they are just declarations void of any biblical and theological basis. It is therefore,

necessary for me to examine some scholarly works on this matter. Pulei (2009:6) a Kenyan national based in the United States of America is helpful. In his Doctor of Philosophy dissertation he sets out to consider Word-Faith theology as it relates to African traditions primarily through Maasai culture and customs. He (Pulei 2009:78) argues that “the pragmatic nature of Maasai traditional religion explains the success of Word-Faith theology among the Maasai. Pulei (2009: 79) further writes:

Word-Faith teachings have appealed to many Maasai because often they appear to be similar to Maasai traditional beliefs i.e. a prosperity understanding of God’s blessings and a “health and wealth”

For the simple fact that Word-Faith religiosity is similar to Maasai traditional religions in particular and African traditional religions in general is the main reason why the Faith Movement is growing in Kenya. In this regard Pulei (2009:154) notes:

One of the reasons why mainline churches in Kenya, are not growing as fast as Word-Faith churches is because mainline churches have turned a deaf ear to traditional African religions. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglicans see traditions as backward and uncivilized practices, which the church must avoid. They do not accept the premise that in order to Africanize Christianity, Leaders need to use elements of African religions, a concept advocated by John Mbiti.

Pulei has effectively demonstrated that the Faith Movement is succeeding in attracting a lot of followers because it has exploited the Africa traditional way of life. By so doing he demonstrates that the Faith Movement has become an African Movement.

Pulei however, does not effectively isolate all the reasons why the Faith Movement is growing in Africa. He does not point out why the movement is attracting more young people as compared to the adults. He does not say anything concerning the aspirations of African

people to break free from the throes of poverty. This truth is demonstrated by the proliferation of several motivational speakers who are motivating people to believe that it is possible to make it in life.

Pulei also fails to note that the Faith Movement is not only an African Phenomenon. It is a global movement. It has adherents from all the continents. While there may be some truth in what Pulei asserts it does not account for the growth of the Faith Movement into a global Movement. Scholars should move beyond merely comparing it to the African way of life.

Theologically, Pulei is not very helpful. He only points out that the Faith Movement is being criticised because of the way the doctrines of Christology, Atonement, and the Sovereignty of God have been handled. He however, fails to point the major theological challenges that the Faith Movement faces which to a large extent are responsible for the pitfalls inherent in shortcomings of the exegetical skills employed in interpreting the Bible by Faith Movement preachers.

It is important to also point out the fact that the Faith Movement has sympathisers as well. One such sympathiser is Derek E. Vreeland. He details his defence of the Faith Movement in a paper presented at the 30th Annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal studies. In defending the Faith Movement Vreeland argues:

A thorough reconstruction of the Word of Faith theology has not been attempted. A reconstruction of the Word of faith theology requires redeeming the Word of faith movement from the “heresy junk pile that it has been heaped on by answering the question, “Do the theological weaknesses within Word of faith doctrines constitute an

anathematic condemnation or is there sufficient orthodox in Word of faith theology to apply correction?

Vreeland believes the Faith Movement deserves correction rather condemnation. He maintains the word of faith movement is not heresy to be obliterated, but it is a theologically premature movement that needs significant reconstruction. He believes that correction and theological reconstruction of the faith movement are preferable to condemnation. As far as Vreeland is concerned this is the best option because the faith movement is anchored on orthodox historical roots. The other reason why the faith movement should not be condemned is because it exalts the authority Scripture.

Vreeland insists that the most efficient way of analysing and reconstructing the Word of faith theology is to focus on Kenneth Hagin.¹⁰ He strongly feels that the most distinct and crucial tenets of Word of faith theology in need of reconstruction are the nature of faith, positive confession, healing and prosperity. His method of analysis and theological reconstruction of Word of faith theology is to first analyse Hagin's theology at each doctrinal point within Hagin's epistemological context. Once this is done it is necessary to engage in a process of theological refinement that sets itself with the task to remove those elements of Word of faith theology that lack substantial exegetical/historical foundations. Thereafter Vreeland believes each point of theology in the Faith Movement must be built upon a solid biblical foundation within the Word of faith framework. Vreeland maintains that this process will result in a Word of faith theology that retains its distinctiveness as a theological system without extra-biblical excesses.

¹⁰ Vreeland focuses on Kenneth Hagin as he seeks to defend the Faith Movement because he denies that Kenyon was the true founder of the Faith Movement. He believes that Hagin was influenced by several factors and not only Kenyon.

It is important to note that Vreeland is aware that the Faith Movement is fraught with many theological dangers. He feels the best way to deal with the Faith Movement is not to discard it totally but to rehabilitate it theologically. And to think that the best way to do this is to focus on Hagin and neglect other Faith Preachers is to miss the point. This movement has attracted a lot of followers. If one believes that this movements need reconstruction he or she should focus on the whole movement other than focusing only on one individual. How do you reconstruct a movement that is premised on a faulty theological foundation? The best approach would be to tear down the whole edifice and in its place elect a new theological system that is accountable to reason as well as sound biblical exegesis.

It is clear that the doctrines that have been affected or to a large degree misinterpreted by this movement are numerous. I feel it is not possible for us to only focus on the nature of faith, positive confession, healing, and prosperity while other important Christian doctrines are left unattended.

To anchor this study in the African context an article by the Lausanne Theology Working Group entitled *A Statement of the Prosperity Teaching* is appropriate here. In this statement prosperity gospel is defined as “the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the sowing of seeds through the faithful payment of tithes and offerings. The statement further reads:

We recognize that prosperity teaching is a phenomenon that cuts across denominational barriers. Prosperity teaching can be found in varying degrees in mainstream Protestant, Pentecostal as well as Charismatic churches.

The Theological working group notes that they are aware of some positives the Prosperity Gospel has. Accordingly, they observe; “We do not wish to be exclusively negative, and we recognize the appalling social conditions within which this teaching flourishes and the measure of hope it holds out to desperate people.” They do not allow these positives to blind them to the fact that the Prosperity Gospel is a distortion of the Christian message. Therefore, they note:

However, while acknowledging such positive features, it is our overall view that the teachings of those who most vigorously promote the ‘prosperity gospel’ are false and gravely distorting of the Bible, that their practice is often unethical and unChristlike, and that the impact on many churches is pastorally damaging, spiritually unhealthy, and not only offers no lasting hope, but may even deflect people from the message and means of eternal salvation. In such dimensions, it can be soberly described as a false gospel.

The Lausanne Theology Working Group further laments the destruction that the Prosperity Teaching has effected on African communities. They point out that Prosperity Teaching emphasises individual success and prosperity at the expense of community accountability.

In all the works that we have examined so far it is apparently clear that the Faith Movement is premised on faulty theology. The bible justification of the Faith Movement is usually based of selected passages from the Bible which are more often than not used out of context.

1.4 METHOD OF STUDY

Erickson (1998: 63) notes:

The doing of theology, like all other human endeavours, takes place within a given context. Each theologian and each student of theology lives at a specific period of time rather than in some timeless vacuum, and theology must be done within that situation.

This implies that all theological assumptions whether they are valid or not are made within a particular context. In the Faith Movement it is usually claimed that their views are a direct revelation from God. As pious as such claims may sound, that is not necessarily true. It is for this reason that Van Niekerk (1988: 1) should be taken seriously when he writes:

In many areas of human life and activity one finds that certain assumptions eventually cease to be questioned. People often say, “that’s the way it is” or “it is a fact ...” as if this were sufficient proof that no other interpretation is possible. The question of why it is so, or why something is a fact, is simply not asked anymore.

This is usually the case in the Faith Movement. Any contrary view is usually attributed to the devil. It is common to hear statements; “like don’t let the devil cheat you of your blessing.” The truth of the matter is that all claims are motivated by a particular context.

Allen (1985: 2) posits that “every claim has some basis or ground.” Wolfe (1982: 15) additionally inquires; “How can we provide warrant for the assertions we make.” It is “only when our beliefs have provided warrant for our beliefs can we avoid changing our minds irrationally or believing irresponsibly” Wolfe (1982: 15) further argues.

In this thesis we would like to find out whether the claims made by the players in the faith movement have any justification. For example, is there any justification why an individual should claim that, “Faith confessions create reality” (Hagin 1987: 29)? Oyedepo similarly, claims that, “Faith is worth the infusion of the divine nature that makes you operate in the class of God ...” In other ways human beings are creators. They can create whatever they choose by their confession. This is because “man is in God’s class of being” (Kenyon1998:7) [sic].

How can one make such claims? Is there any basis for such claims? These claims do not seem to take into account the fact that God is different from His creatures. God created everything that exists. Of course this excludes God. Our existence as created beings is different from the existence of God as creator. Oliphant (2006: 85) points out that “if everything is created except God, then God must be of an entirely different order than everything else.”

Theology should not be couched solely in philosophical language. “Ultimately, the purpose of theology is to serve the church by assisting in the process of coherently articulating the content and implications of the Christian faith” (Grenz & Franke 2001:17). This therefore, implies that theology must be studied as a contextual discipline that relates well Scripture, the long tradition of the church, and the cultural context of the community of faith. Consequently, Grenz & Franke (2001:17-18) note:

The task of theology involves both critical and constructive reflection on the faith, life and practice of the Christian community. Its goal in this process is to articulate biblically normed, historically informed, and culturally relevant models of the Christian belief-mosaic.

As we proceed with this study we shall analyse the Faith Movement firstly, as it relates to the Scriptures, secondly, we shall try to show whether it is in conformity with historical Christianity, and lastly, we shall examine its relevancy within the African cultural context.

We have accordingly, designed chapter two to serve a two-fold function. The first part of chapter two will act as explorations of the prevalence of the Word of Faith ideas in Zambia. Since almost all the followers of the Faith Movement in this country are in one way or other related to the Pentecostal Movement, we shall focus this survey mainly on Pentecostals. In the first part of chapter two, we shall try to comment on the views of specific Faith preachers who are moving this movement forward. We also shall also try as much as possible to isolate some important factors that are making this movement attractive to so many people.

In the second part of chapter two, we shall seek to analyse the theological framework of the Faith Movement. We shall focus our discussion on the hermeneutics of the Faith Movement. It is our assumption that Faith Preachers interpret the Bible like hunters who stalk specific game in the forest. It is for this reason that Kalu (2008: 257) argues that the content of the theology of the Faith Movement is “based on a certain way of reading the Bible ...” This unique way of reading the Bible supplies to a large extent the theology of the Faith Movement. They stalk for passages which deal with themes associated with healing, wealth, success, and faith. Simply because mention is made regarding any of these themes becomes proof that that is what God says. This approach to biblical hermeneutics usually leads to totally or partially disregarding of the context of the Bible.

In chapter three of this study we have decided to consider the doctrines of God and that of human beings together. We have been compelled to take this approach mainly because in the Faith Movement, there is minimal distinction between God and human beings. This is the case since God and human beings are believed to belong to the same class of 'divine beings.' As we explore the doctrine of God as it stands in the Faith Movement, we shall try as much as is logically possible to unpack the claim that God is a faith being as well as to show that this claim is based on faulty theological ground. We shall also analyse the theological basis for the notion that human beings are created in the class of God.

Our task in chapter four is to demonstrate the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement. We shall try to show as much as possible how these great doctrines of the Christian faith play out in the Faith Movement.

In chapter five we have given ourselves the task of demonstrating how the conception of prosperity and success from an African perspective fuels the Faith Movement. In the African context, prosperity and success is said to be a favor from the ancestors. In the Faith Movement more especially in Africa, the place of ancestors has been taken by God and the persons of God. In this chapter we shall also comment on the role that curses and blessings play in hindering or furthering one's ability to prosper and succeed in life.

Curses and Blessings are very important themes in the Faith Movement in Zambia. Curses are described as invisible evil forces that hinder Christians from experiencing the full measure of blessings in the Lord. When it comes to blessings a distinction is made between

the *Blessing* and blessings. The *Blessing* is the ability (or anointing) that makes one rich. Blessings (riches or even success in one's life) result from obtaining the *Blessing*. In order for one to obtain the *Blessing* it is important to be delivered from curses. Deliverance from curses usually takes place in two important ways. The first way is by giving money (sowings the seed) for one's deliverance. It is believed that the seed enables God to break the power of the curse on the believer's life. The other way for obtaining deliverance is by going to the man of God (usually a prophet) for prayers of deliverance. The last part of this study shall provide us with a summary and some concluding remarks.

1.5 MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS STUDY

The first assumption in this work is that the Faith Movement is a departure from historical Christianity. This is the case since its proponents have reinterpreted the major doctrines of the Christian faith that have been preserved by the church throughout its long history. Horn (1989: 86) corroborates with this assertion:

In theory the faith teachers subscribe to almost all the traditional Christian teachings on God. They are Trinitarian, 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.

Since Faith preachers insist that you can get whatever you need by the confession of your faith, they unconsciously make God redundant in believers' lives. Who would need God if they have the power through their confession to change circumstances? They have the power to answer their own prayers. Horn (1989: 92) agrees by saying, "When it comes to prosperity

teaching, it is not the image of the active living God that determines the level of prosperity, but one's confession, one's faith and one's deeds." Clearly this is a denial of the sovereignty of God. This goes for other major doctrines of the Christian faith they have been modified in one way or other.

The other assumption of this study is that the faith movement employs an esoteric interpretation of the Bible. Because of their insistence that one needs 'special revelation' in order to properly interpret the Bible, this anchors their claims on some 'special and secret knowledge'.¹¹ Only those that have properly trained their spirits can reach this level of spiritual consciousness. What is being said is demonstrated well by Kenyon the true father of the Faith Movement. Below is a reproduction of how this type of biblical interpretation works. This is how Kenyon (1998: 30) interprets Romans 8:1-3:

Third verse, "for what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (senses), God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (senses), condemned sin in the flesh" (or senses). What sin is condemned in our flesh? It is not sin of conduct as we understand, it is sickness. Sin, here, is a broken law of the senses. Disease is condemned in the body.

One just wonders where such interpretation of the Scriptures even comes from. Of course this type of interpretation according to Kenyon is based on revelation. These ideas are clearly more Gnostic than Christian.

¹¹ It is for this reason that sometimes the Faith Movement is branded as Gnostic.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE AND BENEFIT OF THIS STUDY

I have already broached that the Faith Movement is growing at a phenomenal rate. It is my considered view that the Faith Preachers in Zambia have no deliberate intentions to deceive their followers. The leaders of this movement are respected individuals. Their commitment to Jesus Christ cannot be questioned.

They are very passionate about fighting poverty. They strongly believe that chronic poverty should be eliminated. Instead of engaging government to do something about the plight of the poor, or designing social programs that will respond to the needs of the poor, they believe that the poor can become masters of their own destiny. Imakando (2010: 102) exemplifies what is being said by encouraging people to “always and in every situation think success and victory. Let your confession be, all things are possible, I will excel in my education, I will make it, I will succeed.” They strongly believe that it is the will of God for poor Christians to break free from the shackles of poverty. Their appeals are mainly based on positive confession rather than strong theological grounds.

Mainline Pentecostal theology because of its rejection of this world tends to neglect social economic situation of the people. This was because their theology was dualistic at the most.

As he comments on Pentecostal dualism, Chalwe (2008: 124) writes:

With reference to Pentecostal missions, what is being termed as dualism is the attitude that tends to disassociate Christian spirituality from issues of human existence. The disassociation of spirituality from human existence fails to perceive God as an active participant in the world of human affairs. Therefore, removing God from creation or

denying the incarnation of Christ, as this is its implication, results in a Christian mission enterprise that lacks context and meaning.

Since Pentecostals failed to hammer out a theology that was relevant to the Zambian Context another way of communicating the message had to be found. Prosperity Gospel Preachers through their motivational messages of hope seem to be reaching out to the poor meaningfully. The only problem is that they have embraced the prosperity message without reflecting critically on its theological implications. As a result they are propagating a distorted gospel.

CHAPTER 2

THE PREVALENCE AND THEOLOGY OF THE WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Faith Movement is a major component of the religious landscape in Zambia. As already noted in the introductory chapter, this movement manifests itself in several modes. In fact this movement may even be described as a religious mosaic since it is a multi-layered phenomenon which is coloured by several themes. These themes represent several areas of emphasis.

This chapter is designed to serve a two-fold function. First, this chapter shall serve as an exploration of the prevalence of the faith movement in Zambia. While the majority of the adherents of the Faith Movement are Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, it is our considered view that those who subscribe to such faith ideas can be found even in the mainline churches. This simply shows that this movement has become very prevalent in Zambia. In the first part of this chapter we shall discuss several dominant Word of Faith ideas characteristic of this movement in Zambia. We shall also demonstrate that this movement is more widespread than most people think. As we develop the first part of this chapter, we shall also comment on the role that the media and conferences play in advancing the cause of the faith movement.

The second part of this chapter will examine the theological basis of the Faith Movement. It is therefore, fitting that as we discuss the theological basis of the Faith Movement, we take time to review how the bible is interpreted in this movement. Alongside this, we shall try also to point out how the bible is applied and consequently how it shapes the daily conduct and beliefs of the Word of Faith adherents

2.2 SOME DOMINANT FAITH IDEAS

The Faith Movement is evolving its own religious gobbledygook. There are many terms that are employed to represent the pervasiveness of faith ideas. In what follows I wish to shed some light on some of these terms.

2.2.1 Blessing and Blessings

As pointed out in the introductory chapter, Faith preachers in this country and many other countries in Africa differentiate between the ‘blessing’ and blessings. The ‘blessing’ is defined as the power to succeed¹². Sometimes the blessing is conceived as the anointing that empowers one to prosper financially¹³. The blessings (riches or even success in one’s life) on the other hand, result from obtaining the blessing (see Chanda 2008:155). Therefore, believers are encouraged to seek after the blessing and not the blessings. This becomes the case since if one gets the ‘blessing’ all other blessings will naturally fall in place. The blessing is the source. The blessings are the offshoots of obtaining the ‘blessing.’

¹² This definition is supplied by Dr Imakando above.

¹³ This idea is taken from a sermon preached by Bishop Sky Banda cited in Chanda (2008: 155)

2.2.2 Power to declare

There is a strong belief among faith preachers that whatever they decree and declare shall come to pass. This belief is usually buttressed by appealing to Proverbs 18:21: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (KJV). It is believed that the tongue can either bring you blessings or curses. If you want to prosper use it to confess prosperity.

Consequently, every Christian by his or her confession can bring into reality whatsoever he or she desires. In other words the words of every Christian are creative. “By your words you can either bind yourself or set yourself free.” Accordingly, Oyedepo (2005: 163) notes:

The words you speak are seeds awaiting harvest. When you speak miracle words it never fails. When you speak victory words, drawing straight from scriptures, you have victory harvest. When you speak success words you have success harvest.

To put Oyedepo’s thoughts in context, it is important we critically examine his ideas. What he is saying is that whatever a Christian declares by faith shall become reality. This dictates the way faith Preachers make use of the scriptures. It is not always necessary to interpret the scriptures properly. What one needs to do is to properly declare what the Bible says and it will be so.

2.2.3 Prophetic anointing

Another important concept in the Faith Movement is the idea of the Prophetic anointing. Most of the leaders in the faith movement see themselves as God’s apostles and prophets who

have the power or anointing to speak success in the lives of their followers. But in order for this to become a reality the followers need to connect with the words spoken by these apostles and prophets of God. In order to connect with the prophetic anointing, so that what the man of God declares should become a reality, it is incumbent that the followers 'plant a seed' usually in monetary form to the man of God. This is taken as proof that one believes the words of God. It is believed that the seed will unlock success on the part of the giver. In some extreme cases the seed is said to be more potent than prayer and fasting.¹⁴

2.2.4 Power to dominate

Dominion ideas are fairly prevalent in the faith movement. The feeling is that believers are the head and not the tail. The general idea is that God enables believers to prosper so that they dominate every sphere of existence. Bishop Bernard J. Nwaka describes the believers' quest to dominate as 'Invading the Babylonian System.' These ideas are found in his book which goes by the same title. Nwaka (2007: 19) in this case writes:

The church especially in Africa is expected by society to be poor. Whenever a church or a pastor has wealth of any sort, it is always scrutinized by society very critically. If a church turns out to be wealthy, people are uncomfortable with this idea. When a pastor or a Christian obtains massive wealth majority of people will question it. It is normal for a pop musician to own two or three jet liners but if a pastor or a Christian brother owns a modern, expensive vehicle, it does not sit well with society.

The quest to dominate translates into dominating all sectors of society by the believers. Consequently, Bishop Nwaka further (2007: 19) observes that:

¹⁴ See Imakando above

The situation has arisen because this mindset has been ingrained into us by the Babylonian system. The Babylonian system works to make the righteous poor and present them in terms of neediness and poverty.

Bishop Nwaka proceeds to cite some examples from the Old Testament to demonstrate how the Babylonian Empire dominated the people of God and how this applies to the church in our nations today. He takes his examples from 2Kings 24: 13¹⁵ and Daniel 1:1-2.¹⁶ Using these passages of scripture, Nwaka (2007: 20) makes the following observations concerning the actions of Nebuchadnezzar:

He took all the wealthy from the temple of Jehovah God to Babylon. This was not all – he took it to the temple of his god and he put them in the treasure-house of the temple of his god. The temple in Babylon had the idols of Baal, the supreme divinity of the Babylonians. He takes the most precious articles of the house of God Almighty, not to his palace – he did not consider them his plunder. He took them into the temple of his demon-god for its honour because Nebuchadnezzar thought he got victory by the help of his god.

According to Bishop Nwaka the same fate that befell the Nation of Israel has fallen on the church. Nwaka (2007: 21) therefore further argues:

Today, we see that the Babylonian System has plundered the church of material wealth, and human resources. These then are turned to build and develop the kingdom of darkness and propagate ideologies of the Babylonian system. Unfortunately the church has over time, swallowed the lies that have been perpetuated by the Babylonian system, and the church believes that Godliness is equivalent to poverty and lack.

¹⁵ “And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said” (NKJV)

¹⁶ “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god” (NKJV)

Hence this proves that Christians are called to dominate over the Babylonian system that makes believers poor. Dominion ideas are presented in different forms and shapes but the ultimate goal is the same: 'to dominate this world'.

2.2.5 Success and increase

Success and increase are said to be hallmarks of God's blessing. Usually success is measured in terms of how much material things a believer in Christ accumulates. This is said to be the sign of the favour of God upon his or her life. The favourite scripture which gives impetus to this notion of success and increase is Deuteronomy 28:13: "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom" (NIV). Believers are therefore, expected to daily confess passages of scripture like this one so that they may have success and increase in their lives.

2.2.6 Sowing seeds

The concept of seed sowing is said to be a spiritual law which always works. It is often said that whatever an individual sows the same he shall reap in a manifold manner. The concept of sowing of the seed is often stretched to cover many areas. For example if a woman wants to get married she simply has to sow a seed for her husband. If one needs a job or even promotion at a place of work what one needs to do is to sow a seed for their need. The seed is said to be a very potent force in the sight of God. As we have already noted above, when you have prayed over a matter and no answer seems to be coming forth, just sow a seed. God is said to be one who cannot resist the seed. A seed sown in faith always moves God to respond.

The seed can either be in monetary form or any valuable item that an individual can give to the church, ministry, or the man of God. It must be pointed out that almost all churches in one way or other encourage supporting the work of the ministry through the generous donations of members. In the Faith Movement, such gifts are taken to represent a seed. It is believed that whenever a seed is planted, harvest should be expected. This harvest is usually taken to indicate financial prosperity. Harrison (2005: 101) corroborates when he writes:

None of the ways in which financial gifts have been given to the Pastor and his family is unique... to the Word of Faith Movement. But in this context they demonstrate some of the ways in which giving is redefined in terms of the Faith Message and its doctrine of sowing seeds of financial prosperity, expecting great financial return.

2.2.7 Connecting with the anointing

This notion of connecting with the anointing is a new concept in the faith movement in Zambia. This is how it works. When the man of God declares that certain things will happen in one's life, the recipient of such a declaration is encouraged to believe that what the man of God says will come true. To show their faith in the word spoken by the man of God, they are usually encouraged to connect with the anointing of the man of God by sowing a seed. This is said to speed up the process so that God brings to pass quickly what the man of God decreed.

Now that dominant concepts of the faith movement have been recalled it is necessary to devote attention on the role that the media plays in the spread of the faith movement. This is necessary because without the media the Faith Movement would not be as dominant as it is today.

2.3 The expansion of the word of faith movement

The Faith Movement is now a global phenomenon which is usually propagated through the mass media. This movement in this country mainly extend itself through Television and what Gifford (1998: 233) calls the convention or conference phenomenon. As this section unfolds we shall focus our attention on these important factors responsible for the expansion of the Faith movement in Zambia.

2.3.1. The Convention or Conference Phenomenon

Conventions or conferences are a very important instrument in spreading the Faith Movement. I interviewed several pastors to sample their attitudes concerning conference phenomenon. Six ideas were predominantly stated as the major drivers behind the conference phenomenon. These were: (1) to internationalise the faith movement, (2) to advertise the movement, (3) to recruit new followers, (4) to raise money, (5) to provide an opportunity for people to receive prayers for blessings and deliverance, and (6) to provide a platform for motivating the people. Let me at this time devote some time to study each of these ideas in detail.

➤ Internationalising the Faith Movement

Faith preachers forge very sophisticated networks with other faith preachers from different countries both within Africa as well as other parts of the world, more especially the United States of America. The high profile faith preachers, more especially those coming from Nigeria are the major drivers of the Faith Movement in this country. One pastor I interviewed told me that conferences were important

because they exposed Christians to high profile preachers especially those with international connections. International connections seem to reinforce the credentials of the faith preachers. When these international speakers are invited to speak at conferences organised by Zambian preachers, the international faith preachers usually reciprocate by inviting the Zambian preachers to speak at their conferences. This reciprocity among the faith preachers gives the movement an international flavour and character.

➤ **Advertising the Faith Movement**

Conferences serve as an important vehicle for advertising the Faith Movement. Some church leaders spoken to on this matter indicated that faith preachers use conferences as a publicity strategy as well as to prop up the image of the faith preachers and their ministries. This is cardinal since faith preachers are increasingly attaining a celebrity status. The more famous a preacher gets the better for the image of his ministry. And because these preachers present themselves as a symbol of success a lot of people attend their meetings hoping that they will become successful too. One pastor from Botswana in this regard actually observed that “conferences helped to put the Church on the map of the community, city, and the nation as a whole, if there is great manifestation of the anointing.”

➤ **Recruitment of new Members**

In this country churches that are influenced by word of faith ideas are growing at a fast rate. This was affirmed by what one pastor observed. According to him

“churches that regularly held conferences grew faster than those churches that were not doing so.” Others, however, argued that there is no evidence that these churches are growing because of first time conversions. Most of these people actually defect from older Pentecostal churches like the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church in Zambia, and the Apostolic Faith Mission. This exodus from older Pentecostal churches is mainly due to the fact that faith churches promise prosperity and success to them.

➤ **Fundraising Strategy**

Quite a sizeable number of the church leaders I interviewed observed that conferences were a very effective tool for raising funds. During these conferences huge sums of money are raised. People are usually persuaded that if they were to experience a breakthrough in all areas of their lives they need to sow a seed of a certain amount of money. They are usually assured that once this is done God will definitely come through for them and meet them at their point of need. As a result several millions of Kwacha are raised. Some of this money is actually given to the faith preachers. This may explain partly why some of the faith preachers have become very rich.

➤ **Prayers for blessing and deliverance**

It is usually felt that conferences provide an atmosphere where people receive prayers for blessings and deliverance. People with various needs in their lives come to these conferences to receive prayer. Some of these prayers are offered so that they

may receive the blessing. That is the ability to attract blessings. Others come for prayer to be delivered from demonic forces that hinder success in their lives. Here one may even argue that instead of believers going to Traditional Doctors they now have a Christian alternative.

➤ **To motivate people**

Conferences also serve as moments to motivate people. The believers are encouraged to understand that they have what it takes to achieve whatever they conceive. The listeners are usually encouraged to confess positively. For whatever one confesses by faith shall become a reality. They are motivated to dream big. During his *Three Days of Power Conference*¹⁷ in Kabwe¹⁸ bishop Imakando noted that people needed to do the following things to access their blessing:

- Believe in the prophetic word in your life
- Attempt big things, move out of your comfort zones and try out new things
- Expect the unexpected
- Stretch your faith, go an extra mile in your faith, aim high
- Live a lifestyle of giving
- Sow seeds, tithe and give offerings
- Declare unprecedented blessing on your life.

¹⁷ Conference took place from 11 – 13th March, 2011

¹⁸ Kabwe is the provincial Head quarters of the Central Province of Zambia

During these conferences believers are motivated to start up businesses, to go back to school, to be the best at their places of work. This is meant to encourage the believers to know that they are head and not the tail.

Conferences have since become very popular among those churches that have been influenced by word of faith ideas. In fact even older Pentecostals are trying to catch up with this phenomenon. Interestingly the preachers who are usually invited to speak at these conferences tend to lean towards word of faith ideas. Now that we have dealt with the conference phenomenon let us devote some space to the role the electronic media plays in advancing the Faith Movement.

2.3.2. The electronic media and the Faith Movement

The Faith Movement has exploited the electronic media to good effect. Coleman (2000: 167) notes that their “message does not merely express the ideal of universal applicability and diffusion, it is literally diffused by the use of modern media of communication: radio, cassettes, videos, satellite television programmes and the internet.” Most Faith churches in this country are just catching up on the use of the Internet as a media via which they can advertise themselves as well as to share their message. Kalu (2008:114) who lumps all streams of Pentecostalism in Africa together, rightly points out that “the level of Internet penetration in the African continent is still very low because of the high cost of bandwidth, computers, and Internet infrastructure” (sic).

The most famous media has been the use of television. The use of television by faith preachers in this country can be traced as far back as 1989 when Dr Nevers Mumba launched his nationwide television program dubbed *ZAMBIA SHALL BE SAVED* on Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). The use of television by faith preachers gained impetus during the late 1990s when the American based Trinity Broadcasting Network opened three stations in Zambia. The use of Television to propagate the Word of Faith ideas indicates the affluence that the Faith Movement has acquired. Kalu (2008: 115) argues that “there is a linkage between television culture and the prosperity gospel that promoted the concept of the big man and the big God whose will is to prosper His people materially, physically, and spiritually because the blood of Christ’s atonement and many promises in the Scriptures assures these” (sic).

2.4. The pervasiveness of the Faith Movement in Zambia

Writing from a Ghanaian context Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:1) notes:

In Sub-Sahara African countries like Ghana ... the expression “Charismatic” is used more in reference to the new wave of independent Pentecostal movement. Despite their indigenous roots, they are greatly inspired by North American, neo-Pentecostal, televangelistic movements with their mega-church philosophies, world-dominating agenda for Christianity and religious entrepreneurial ambitions that motivate people to translate their salvation into practical everyday achievements in business, education, economics and family life.

The Zambian context is not different from the Ghanaian situation. Almost all Charismatic churches in this country subscribe to Word of Faith ideologies. Word of Faith ideas can also be traced even in older Pentecostal churches. To prove this assertion, several members of

Pentecostal churches from five cities on the Copperbelt province of Zambia were requested to answer certain basic questions to test their attitudes towards the word of faith phenomenon. It is therefore, incumbent that these findings are analysed in detail.

2.4.1. What role does the pastor play in bringing blessings and prosperity in believers' lives?

To lead the discussion here we need to look at the words found in 2Chronicles 20:20. The second part reads; "... believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets and you shall prosper" (NKJV). Preachers in the Faith Movement see themselves as God's anointed prophets who play a mediatorial function of accessing blessing from God on behalf of their followers.

This assertion was confirmed by several people who were surveyed. Through their responses, some of them were almost insinuating that God cannot do anything for them except through the men and women of God. One respondent in this respected noted:

My pastor encourages me to praise my God from who all blessings and prosperity flows. There is a saying which goes, "it is good to follow the footsteps of a pastor who follows in the footprints of the master." Psalm 37:23 states that our steps are made firm by the Lord, when He delights in our way. Our pastor also tells us that instead of counting your troubles, try to add up your blessings.

It is easy to see that the life of this respondent revolves around the pastor. What really matters is what the pastor tells him or her to do. Another respondent speaking about the role the pastor plays in mediating blessing to her life said, "The way he (her pastor) preaches the

word really ushers my life to many blessings and pushes my life to the higher levels of prosperity.” The pastor again is the link between this individual and God.

In the Faith Movement the ‘anointed man or woman of God’ plays a critical role in enabling the followers to prosper. Accordingly, another respondent noted: “The pastor teaches us the principles from the word of God that show us how to access the blessings of God. Helping us to understand how we can provoke God’s blessings through our giving.” The idea behind the notion of ‘provoking God’s blessings’ demands that a believer needs to do something before God can bless her or him. This is usually by giving, more especially, of money to God either through the church or the man of God.

Thus far, it is becoming clear that this movement is sustained by the leaders. Ordinary people flock to these leaders to obtain their blessings. Without these ‘anointed men and women of God’ one just wonders how this movement can even propagate itself. These men and women of God are crucial because they represent God on earth. One may even argue that God cannot do anything on earth except through these anointed men and women of God. This is a departure from the Pentecostal conception of the Priesthood of all believers. Miller and Yamamouri (2007:178) in reference to the priesthood of all believers in Pentecostal circles point out that “Pentecostal churches potentially function as miniature schools of democracy, especially if they stay true to the idea of the priesthood of all believers and the equality of all persons before God.” On the other hand, Jean-Daniel Plüss (2011: 296) writes:

...the call by Reformers for the Priesthood of all believers meant that every Christian is entitled to read the Bible and interpret it to the best of his or her ability. This

premise has been instrumental in the spread of Pentecostal churches. Like their Methodist forerunners, this meant that the Bible could be shared in small groups, and church meetings could be held even if the ordained clergy were absent. The focus is on the Bible as a personal means for receiving clarity and direction in the life of faith.

We need to ask ourselves, whether the focus on persons of God as mediators of God's blessings and material prosperity to God's people in the Faith Movement is in keeping with historical Christianity.

2.4.2. Does tithing bring blessings and prosperity to believers lives

It is interesting to note that almost all the people I spoke to over the subject agreed that tithing brings blessings to the believer's life. One respondent in support of tithing said, "Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down and running over ..." It is clear that this statement was made in reference to Luke 6:38. Another respondent who affirmed that tithing brings blessings and prosperity to believers argued that "the Bible says the more you give the more you receive. So the more you tithe the more God is going to bless you." Ironically, this respondent had even indicated that he was not a regular tither. One can't help but wonder about this apparent contradiction.

Another correspondent insisted that tithing opens doors to employment and success in business ventures. Another one said, "God protects the property of those who tithe. One may even wonder whether treating tithing in this manner is not turning it into yet another make rich scheme or even an insurance policy. When appraised from the African Religious perspective, the tithe becomes equivalent to a charm that is intended to bring good fortune to

the tither. You almost get the impression that if you tithe regularly you will soon become a millionaire. And if you fail to tithe you will soon become impoverished.

These notions are shared by a lot of Faith Preachers. Hurston (2003: 140) for instance advances six reasons why believers need to tithe. In his last two reasons he notes:

Tithing brings Spiritual Protection – when I tithe, God responds by “rebuking the devourer” for my sake (Malachi 3:10-11)

Tithing brings blessing – God also responds by pouring out blessings when I tithe (Malachi 3:8-10), and tithing can even bring prosperity to a nation (2Chronicles 31:4-8; 32: 27-29).

It is interesting to note that even prosperity of nations can be achieved through tithing. The only challenge this poses is that it is not clear where nations should pay their tithes and how this can become possible.

2.4.3. Favourite preachers

It is important we know the preachers which Pentecostal members watched on Television or were listening to. This is importance if we are to understand fully how pervasive Word of Faith ideas have become within the Pentecostal Movement. Most of the respondents indicated that locally their most favourite preacher was Bishop Joe Imakando. This just confirms our earlier assertion that Bishop Imakando is probably the most famous faith preacher in this country. He is well loved and respected. He is the main voice for this movement in this country. His television programmes as well as his power conferences have

made him the household name in Zambia. Other faith preachers in this country who are popular are Bishop Bernard 'Jehu' Nwaka, as well as Bishop Sky Banda,

Many respondents' famous international preachers included Bishop T.D. Jakes, the controversial Nigerian, Prophet T.B Joshua, and Pastor David Oyedepo. These are famous mainly due to their television ministries. These preachers are influencing the Faith Movement in various ways. T.D Jakes for example, is popular because of his motivational sermons. Many people watch T.B Joshua because of the miracles that he allegedly performs on live Television. Pastor David Oyedepo, on the other hands, is loved because of his messages of Faith. Others who are quite popular in this country are preachers like John Hagee, Creflo Dollar, Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, as well as Chris Oyakilome.

2.4.4. Causes of poverty

The respondents were also called upon to address themselves to the causes of poverty. This is crucial since the faith preachers are on a crusade to deal radically with poverty in the lives of their members. Several responses were recorded. We shall only focus on those responses which have a direct relevance to this work.

One cause of poverty which received support from several respondents was the notion that poverty is caused by spiritual setbacks in one's life. These spiritual setbacks are usually linked to the background of an individual. It is for this reason that sometimes these spiritual setbacks are referred to as Generational Curses. These are curses which can be traced from one's ancestors and have consequences on present generations. For example, if someone

comes from a background where all the ancestors were poor, chances are that he or she will also be poor. Such a condition is usually attributed to spiritual forces. These spiritual setbacks may include things such as failed marriages, barrenness, failure to complete one's education, failure to get married, miscarriages, as well as several other misfortunes in one's life.

These spiritual setbacks are blamed on the sins committed by the ancestors. Such sins include; sexual immorality, witchcraft, as well as idolatry. While it is the ancestors that committed such sins, it is the children who suffer the consequences. The children are paying the price because God is said to punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (see Exodus 20:1-5). Such sins which were committed by the ancestors for which their future generations receive punishment from God are usually referred to as iniquities in the Faith Movement.

The other important cause of poverty that was cited was lack of faith in God. It is believed that if one had enough faith in God they would consequently become rich. All things are possible to those who believe. Another cause of poverty is lack of knowledge of the principles¹⁹ of God concerning how one may prosper.

This is a very simplistic way of discussing such a complex matter like poverty. Poverty cannot be reduced to something merely 'demonic' or simply to one's lack of faith in God. There are several dynamics to poverty. There are many factors that conspire to produce the condition of poverty. Causes of poverty in Zambia are very complex. Mukuka (1999: 118)

¹⁹ Principles for Prosperity include: tithing, deliverance from demons and curses, as well as faith.

for instance points out that “causes of Zambian poverty lie in the post-independence inappropriate macro-economic policies which later became worsened by several external shocks of falling world copper prices, oil prices, and the military incursions in and around Zambia’s borders.” Mukuka (1999: 118) further notes:

In addition to the post-independence macro-inappropriate policies and external shocks, there have also been other, probably even more formidable causes of Zambia’s poverty, that lie inside and outside of Zambia... Poverty in Zambia is typically ‘structural poverty’ ... it is caused by structural biases and distortions that are inherent in the country’s (a) political; (b) economic; (c) educational; (d) relationship with rich countries; and (e) cultural institutions, in that order. It is these biases and distortions which mainly cause poverty and suppress national development in the country.

Christian theology, must necessarily speak to the condition of human poverty. Settimba (2009:2) appropriately argues that:

For more than two centuries, the church has asserted that if the Word of God is to continue to be proclaimed in our own time, the Scriptures must be interpreted in ways that address the social life of our hearers and which appropriate the teaching of the Bible, not setting one text against another but reading its parts in the light of the Scriptures as a whole.

To a great extent as we shall show in chapter seven the Faith Movement preachers approach the Scriptures selectively to validate their truncated theological notions.

2.4.5. Principles for breaking free from poverty

In the Faith Movement the quest to break free from the life of poverty provides a powerful motive for trusting in God. Several respondents were invited to make submission on how one

can break free from the life of poverty. In what follows let us examine some of their responses:

➤ **Hard work**

A number of respondents maintained that it was possible to break free from poverty through hard work. They noted that if people worked hard they were going to break free from poverty.

➤ **Faith in God**

Others observed that what one needed to break free from a life of poverty was to have faith in God. Faith in God has the capacity to enable believers to confess positively that they were not poor but rich. Some of them even argued that what you confess by faith becomes a reality. Believers are taught that faith confesses positively. Imakando (201:29-30) demonstrates the importance of faith in this manner:

Everything about God begins with faith. Creation is a production of faith. God works through faith, without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is the master key to progress. Faith is the foundation for the fulfilment of every vision. It is your faith that will determine where you will end, what you will possess and your position in life.

Every believer is encouraged to believe and confess that he or she is not poor. This is said to be cardinal to breaking free from a life of poverty. People are taught that by their positive confession they can break free from poverty.

➤ **Giving**

There was almost a general consensus among the respondents that God has established the spiritual law of giving²⁰. When you give you must expect to receive from God. If you give more expect to receive more. Some respondents even insisted that giving has the power to break the spirit of poverty.

➤ **Deliverance**

Deliverance is a very important concept in determining how salvation is conceived in the faith movement in this country. The feeling is that the enemy (the Devil) has one mission: to steal, kill and destroy. But Jesus came to give abundant life (see John 10:10). Jesus Christ reverses the work of the Devil. It is usually maintained that the reason Jesus Christ was manifested was to destroy the works of the Devil (see 1John 3:8). Poverty is therefore conceived as the work of the Devil. Since poverty is a work of the Devil Jesus must necessarily overcome it. This demonstrates why deliverance is very important. Some people are said to be in need of deliverance from the spirit of poverty. This effectively makes poverty a demonic condition. Not in the sense that poverty dehumanises people, but rather because its victims cannot be free to prosper until after they have received prayers of deliverance.

Deliverance breaks generational curses on people's lives. If one comes from a line which has been dominated by poverty deliverance through the power of the Holy

²⁰ That spiritual law of giving simply says; “give and it shall be given unto you.”

Spirit is capable of reversing the trend of poverty and usher one into the life of prosperity.

Reading through the reports that were set before me, I came to the conclusion that word of faith ideas are very prevalent in several Pentecostal churches. It was discovered that even in those Pentecostal churches where faith ideas are not officially taught, several members were actually holding on to such ideas.

The ideas which are dominant in the Word of Faith Movement do not arise in a vacuum. They are a result of a certain way of reading the Bible more especially by Word of Faith preachers and teachers. It is for this reason that we feel duty bound that as we turn to the second part of this chapter, we are obligated to say something concerning how the Bible is interpreted in the Word of Faith Movement.

2.5 Biblical Interpretation and the Word of Faith Movement

Richards and Bredfeldt (1998: 21) point out that “the Bible, or more accurately, our attitude toward, the Bible, is a watershed issue in Christian teaching.” The view that one takes on the Bible will determine the conclusions that one reaches as he or she approaches any particular subject in the Bible. Richards and Bredfeldt (1998:21) further argue that “the Bible teacher’s view of Scripture will serve to determine the direction and purpose of his teaching ministry” (sic).

Our task in the second part of this chapter is to demonstrate how the bible is interpreted and applied in the word of Faith movement as well as to show that the way the Bible is read in the Faith Movement provides a theological justification for Word of Faith notion. It is important we do so since the Bible is usually applied with surprising immediacy. As we noted in chapter one, this generally leads to a selective application of Bible verses to prove their assertions (see also Muers 2005: 599). It is important that before we examine in detail how the Bible is viewed, interpreted, and applied in the Word of Faith Movement that we first of all examine two important aspects concerning the Bible: revelation and the inspiration of the scriptures.

2.5.1 The Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible

Revelation and inspiration are related yet they are very different in purpose. Berkhof (1996: 144) notes that “the recognition of the Bible as the special revelation of God depends on the conviction that its authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Citing Hodge, berkhof (1996: 144), however, sets out the difference between the two concepts as follows:

The object or design of revelation is the communication of knowledge. The object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching ... The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser. The effect of inspiration was to preserve him from error in teaching (sic).

As we proceed with this discourse there is need to first of all deal with these two concepts in detail. It is therefore incumbent on us to first of all deal with the doctrine of revelation. When we have adequately done so, we shall then be better placed to focus our attention on the doctrine of inspiration.

2.5.1.1 The doctrine of revelation

When we speak about revelation, we are referring to God's self-revelation. Webster (2003: 14) in this regards points out that "revelation is divine self-presentation; its content is identical with God. To speak of revelation is simply to point to the self-utterance: I am who I am." In this case then, revelation is solely God's initiative. It is God who takes the first step to make God known to us. Here we have in mind the fact that revelation is the work of the triune God (see Berkhof 1996: 85, Webster 2003: 13).

Webster (2003: 14) further argues that:

Revelation, therefore, is identical with God's triune being in its active self-presence. As Father, God is the personal will or origin of this self-presence; as Son, God actualises his self-presence, upholding it and establishing it against all opposition; as Holy Spirit, God perfects that self-presence by making it real and effective to and in history of humankind. To speak of 'revelation' is to say that God is one whose being is directed towards his creatures, and the goal of whose free self-movement is his presence with us (sic).

God's revelation is usually conceived in two broad categories: General (or natural) revelation and special (supernatural) revelation. General revelation deals with God's revelation to all humankind through the created order (see Stott 1999: 45). Biblical basis for such a belief is usually grounded on these two passages of scripture: Psalm 19 and Romans 1: 18-20.

On the other hand, special revelation deals with God's self-disclosure through the Lord Jesus Christ (incarnation) and the Holy Scriptures. However, the scope of this study does not permit us to deal with general revelation beyond what we have already broached. We shall therefore, concentrate our effort on the Holy Scriptures as God's revelation. As we do so, we shall be making reference to special revelation through Christ. Our considered opinion is that

the Holy Scriptures testify about Christ (John 5:39). Migliore (2004:52) accordingly, notes that “the Bible is a witness, and at its center it attests to the sovereign, liberating grace of God in Christ.”

As we proceed with our study we need to ask ourselves concerning the necessity of special revelation. In response, to this inquiry, Erickson (2001:52) points out that, “the answer lies in the fact that humans had lost the relationship of favour which they had with God prior to the fall. It was necessary for them to come to know God in a fuller way if the conditions of fellowship were once to be met.” As we have already noted above, special revelation encompasses two main aspects: the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the Bible. It is through Christ and the Bible that human beings can enter into a redemptive relationship with God as we shall demonstrate in chapter four. On the incarnation of Jesus Christ as special revelation, Rylie (1999: 72) argues that:

Undebatably the incarnation of Jesus Christ was a major avenue of special revelation. He exegeted the Father (John 1:14), revealing the nature of God (14:9), the power of God (3:2), the wisdom of God (7:46), the glory of God (1:14), the life of God (1 John 1:1-3), and the love of God (Romans 5:8). Our Lord did all this by both His acts (John 2:11) and His words (Matt 16:17) (sic).

In our view, the events surrounding the incarnation of Jesus Christ as special revelation needed to be preserved in a permanent form for them to have far reaching consequences. This is where the Bible comes in. Berkhof (1933:11) in agreement points out that “in general it may be said that God’s special revelation assumed a permanent form in scripture, and was thus preserved for posterity.” In this case, the Bible is both revelation as well as a record of God’s revelation (see Erickson 1998: 210). In this regard Free and Vos (1992:14) argue that:

Bible history is not primarily a record of humanity's seeking after God. It is rather a record of God's revelation to us, telling how from the beginning in Eden God spoke to Adam and Eve and how he later directed Noah, called Abraham from Ur, spoke through the prophets, and finally gave the supreme revelation in his son Jesus Christ (sic).

Biblical revelation is therefore, an attempt on the part of God to reach out to lost humanity. Lost humanity could not, without the help of God reach out and find God. God took the initiative to reveal God to human beings. Lightner (1998: 77) insists that "the message of the Bible is about God reaching out to the lost."

From what we have said so far, it is apparent that the Bible is God's revelation. It is important, however, to deal with one more vital issue concerning the Bible before we begin examining how the Bible is interpreted in the Word of Faith Movement.

2.5.1.2 The Inspiration of the Bible

Stott (1999: 56) notes that "if the word 'revelation' indicates that God has taken the initiative to make himself known, the word 'inspiration' indicates how he has done so, at least in special revelation, namely by speaking to and through the human authors" (sic). The doctrine of inspiration has to do with the authority and reliability of the bible. Berkhof (1933: 11) argues that "the whole of Scripture is given by inspiration of God. This makes it the infallible rule for faith and practice for mankind" (sic).

The doctrine of inspiration, therefore, points to the source and authority of the Bible. The Bible is authoritative because it has its source in God. Here we see the relationship between

‘revelation’ and ‘inspiration’. Revelation deals with God’s self-disclosure to human beings. On the other hand, inspiration has to do with how human beings convey that revelation to other human beings. Corroborating with us, Lockyer (1964:4) writes:

Revelation is the subject matter of the message, that is, what God imparts to man; inspiration is the power or method by which man communicates his God-given message to others. We may therefore, regard inspiration as a special gift of the Holy Spirit, by which prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and their companions in the New Testament transmitted the revelation of God as they received it.

The key passages of scripture in the New Testament which point to the fact of inspiration at least as far as the Old Testament is concerned are 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2Peter 1:20-21. These passages clearly indicate the fact that the message of the Bible was not invented by its authors. By making such an assertion we do not in any way reject the human agency in the writing of the scriptures. We need to avoid falling into the trap set by some fundamentalists who tended to regard human authors of the Bible as being entirely passive to the extent that their human faculties were suspended by divine inspiration (see Stott 1999:56).

To avoid this trap we need to agree with Stott (1999:56) who maintains that scripture has double authorship: divine and human authorship. The French Theologian Gaussen (1841:26) demonstrated well the possibility of the double authorship of scripture. Explicating on the corroboration between the divine and the human authors of scripture he noted:

... It is always God who speaks, who relates, ordains, or reveals by their instrumentality (human authors), and who, for this purpose, employs, in various degrees, their personality. For it is written, “the Spirit of the Lord has been upon them, and his word is in their mouth.” And if the words are always those of men, because they are written by men, they are, also, always those of God, because it is God who oversees, employs, and guides them.

In the writing of the scriptures there is this apparent partnership between God and the human authors. The scriptures are therefore; both the words of God as well as words of men (see Stott 1999:56). In other words, God is the source of the scriptures while human authors were the means through which the scriptures were written down. God revealed; human beings wrote (see Beals 1995:27). Just there we have the relationship between revelation and inspiration. Now that we have dealt briefly with the doctrines of revelation and inspiration it is important we now attempt to examine how the Bible is interpreted in the Word of Faith Movement.

2.5.2 Biblical Hermeneutics and the Word of Faith Movement.

It is difficult to establish a fully developed hermeneutics in the Word of Faith Movement. The problem is compounded by the fact that in the Word of Faith Movement emphasis is placed on the ‘rhema’²¹ (a direct revelation from God) and not so much on the written word. Harrison (2005: 7) as he refers to ‘rhema’ as it relates to biblical hermeneutics notes that “this direct revelation of God’s will and mind through his word and prayer is seen as a purer form of knowledge and source of scriptural meaning than that which can be attained or accomplished through the intellect in formal training and study in biblical exegesis and hermeneutics.” This attitude may be seen through Oyedepo (2005:95) who maintains that “revelation comes from the Bible. The Bible is packaged in letters. But behind the letters is

²¹ A detailed analysis of the ‘rhema’ shall be provided in chapter four of this study. At this point, we do not wish to reproduce the arguments which we shall advance in chapter four. In this chapter we seek to pin down in a scholarly manner how the Word of Faith preachers interpret the Bible and how that interpretation is influenced by the concept of the rhema (spoken word).

the very breath of the Almighty (Is. 34:16).” How could one possibly interpret what is veiled behind the biblical text?

This view of the Bible is highly subjective to such an extent that the discipline of hermeneutics is effectively rendered redundant. In this vein Sharrock (2007:184) writes:

A fundamental attitude to the scriptures that shows the hermeneutical principles that the Word of Faith Movement operates under, is their concept of the Greek words *rhema* and *logos*. Simply put they define *logos* to be the written word of God, and *rhema* is the living word or ‘now’ word of God. The major premise of *rhema* doctrine is that whatever is spoken by faith becomes immediately inspired and therefore dynamic in the particular situation or event to which it is addressed.

The hermeneutical task in such an environment becomes a big challenge. However, that should not discourage us from examining how the Bible is interpreted in this movement. We can effectively deal with the question of how hermeneutics is carried out in the Word of Faith Movement by anchoring our discussion on current debates on contemporary approaches to hermeneutics.

2.5.2.1 Current African Approaches to Biblical Hermeneutics

To set in motion our study on the current African approaches to biblical hermeneutics, the words of Nürnberger (2002: 39) are fitting:

The unearthing of meaning of ancient documents in terms of contemporary patterns of thought is called hermeneutics. The ultimate goal of biblical hermeneutics is to reach an authoritative and relevant proclamation of the Word of God for our times. “Authoritative” means that only God’s Word can create, sustain and empower faith. “Relevant” means that the divine Word responds redemptively to contemporary human needs, or it is not the Word of God.”

This quote provides us with an insight into the new reality as far as contemporary trends in the field of biblical hermeneutics are concerned. Oèming (2006) isolates at least three major approaches to biblical interpretation. *Vis-à-vis*; approaches focused on the authors and their worlds, approaches focused on texts and their worlds, and approaches focused on the reality behind the text. Ukpong (2000:11) as he describes African approaches to Biblical hermeneutics says, “To be sure, there are two currents of academic readings of the Bible in Africa, one follows the Western pattern, while the other follows the African pattern of linking the text with the African context.”

The first approach which Ukpong calls the academic approach is usually represented by what has come to be identified as the historical-critical method of interpretation. Oèming (2006: 31) points out that “the historical-critical method is the standard which every student of the Bible in an academic setting must learn. Oèming (2006: 31) further notes that “academic interpretation of the Bible is almost synonymous with historical-critical interpretation.” The key assumption behind the historical-critical method for interpreting the Bible is that the biblical interpreters must detach themselves from the text as much as possible. It is hoped that by so doing an objective interpretation of the text may be the outcome. Oeming (2006:31) describes the task of the historical-critical method as follows:

The interpreter must distance himself from any personal judgment, must humbly draw close to the strange world of the author. The interpreter must become an advocate of the author and defend his ‘otherness’, his difference and non-identity with the present. Before entering the deep wells of the past, readers must rid themselves of all things that define their contemporary existence; dogmatic or moral attitudes only discolour and prevent the comprehension of historical truth (sic).

To reiterate the importance of the historical-critical method to contemporary biblical scholarship, Ferguson (1986: 51-2) observes that “After nearly two centuries of historical study of scripture, it has become clear to the present generation of biblical scholarship, whether liberal or conservative, that the Bible cannot be understood outside some historical context.”

The historical-critical method is attractive to many biblical scholars because it tends to give them an assurance that it will enable them to approach the biblical text in an objective manner. This approach to interpreting the Bible has a lot of merits. It recognises the fact that the Bible was not written in a vacuum. Since the Bible was written at a time and in a culture different from our own it is important that we investigate the context in which the message was set. This may help in clarifying the intentions of the authors.

As commendable as the historical-critical method is, questions still lurk in our minds. More especially since the Bible is viewed as the word of God by Christians of all ages. The Bible has been applied to Christians in every culture. Christians of today also live in a culture. Therefore, they need to listen to the word of God afresh within their context. It therefore, becomes incumbent to realise that the interpreter’s culture plays a pivotal role in the process of interpretation. Sanchez (2002: 377) agrees with this assertion when he writes:

One of the limitations of the historical-critical method, however, is that by virtue of the fact that it is concerned with historicity of the biblical text, it risks failing to deal effectively with the modern context. While it strives to help the modern reader to understand the original historical context of the biblical text, it is not within its purpose or scope to attempt to understand the modern context.

Having examined briefly, the historical-critical method, we need to now focus on approaches that take the African context seriously in the process of biblical interpretation. The goal of this approach according to Ukpong (2000: 11) is to "... create an encounter between the biblical text and the African context." Ukpong (2000:11) further points out that "this involves a variety of ways that link the biblical text to the African context such that the main focus of interpretation is on the communities that receive the text rather than on those that produce it or the text itself, as is the case with the Western methods." The African context must inform the interpretation of the Bible. Adamo (2001: 8) in this regard writes:

Faced with some peculiar problems as African Christians, we search the Bible consistently with our own eyes in order to discover whether there could be anything in the Bible that can solve our problems. In the process of reading the Bible in our own eyes, we discovered in the scripture great affinities with our own world view and culture.

The similarities between the Scriptures and the African world view and culture therefore, provide great impetus to African Christians to interpret the Bible in such a way that it will address some of the challenges they face as Africans. In other words the Bible must touch pertinent needs of African people. Adamo (2001:9-10) subsequently lists five conditions for one to effectively interpret the Bible in an African context:

1. The Interpreter must be an insider. This entails that the interpreter must be African or must be one that has experienced African life in Africa.
2. He or she must be immersed in the contents of the Bible. This implies that the interpreter must believe the stories and the events of the Bible. In other words the interpreter must believe in the power of God's word.
3. The interpreter must be familiar with African indigenous culture. This is important as one proceeds with the task of interpreting the Bible in Africa.

4. Faith in God who is all powerful is an important condition for the interpreter of the Bible in Africa. The interpreter of the Bible needs to believe that God has absolute power to perform miracles as well as to believe that God is in control of all things in heaven and on earth. As such he or she must be persuaded that God is able to heal, protect, and grant success.
5. Another condition advanced by Adamo is that the interpreter must have the ability to read or memorize the words of the Bible.

We should not hastily conclude basing on what Adamo is saying that this approach of scripture is pre-critical. According to Nürnberger it was the traditional approaches to authority which were pre-critical. It is for the same reason Nürnberger (2002:20) argues:

Traditional approaches to authority were pre-critical, not in the sense that they did not apply critique, but in the sense that the critique was aimed at shoring up bulwarks of orthodoxy against heretical aberrations. They wanted to secure divine truth, which was declared to be derived from “revelation”, or “verbal inspiration”, or a “deposit of faith” entrusted to ecclesial authorities, against external threats and internal misinterpretations.

When African Christians read the Bible to find solutions to challenges that they face in their daily existence they are just re-enacting their faith in God.

2.5.2.2 Interpreting the Bible in the Word of Faith Movement

The Word of Faith teachers have a very unique way of reading the Bible. In our discussion above we have noted that many African scholars either focus on the historical-critical method or on the African cultural context as the locus for interpreting the Bible. The Word of Faith

teachers do not usually employ the two methodologies of biblical interpretation mentioned above. They usually approach the text without consideration of its historical and cultural context. When they approach the biblical text they usually assign to it an independent existence of its own as we shall see from the examples provided below. In what follows, we would like to show how the scriptures are handled. We wish to do so by examining two sermons that demonstrate how the Word of Faith teachers interpret and apply the biblical text.

We would like to proceed by first of all examining how Dr Imakando reads 2 Kings 2:1-15. Our analysis will be based on a sermon Dr Imakando delivered at Living Water Global Ministries in October 2010. The title of the sermon was: *The next Level Anointing*. In his reading of the passage he begins by pointing out that life is not static. It is about progressing in ranks. He uses the analogy of a human being. He argues that human beings start off in life as babies and they develop all the way to adulthood. He applies this to life in the kingdom of God. He observes that there are different levels in the kingdom of God. These levels spell out differences in anointing, ministry achievement, as well one's economic and social status. Having made the introductory remarks he progressed to show how Elisha moved to the next level anointing: by inheriting a double portion of the anointing that was on the life of Elijah. Consequently he proceeded to give three steps concerning how someone may get to the next level :

1. Opposition. Dr Imakando encouraged the audience that before one can move to the next level there will be opposition. He observed that Elisha received opposition even from his own master Elijah. He read this from those incidences in the narrative where Elijah sought to dissuade Elisha from following him (see 2Kings 2: 2, 4, 6). In these

three verses Elijah repeatedly encouraged Elisha to remain behind because the Lord had sent him to the Jordan. This he construed as opposition. He therefore, argued that if you are to go to the next level in your life you need to learn how to overcome opposition.

2. Desire. Dr Imakando pointed out that Elisha desired to move to the next level. Elisha showed his desire to move to the next level by asking for a double portion of the anointing from Elijah. He made reference to verses 9-10 where Elijah asked Elisha to tell him what he wanted done to him before he (Elijah) was taken. Elisha's response was "Let me inherit a double portion of your anointing." Dr Imakando interprets Elisha's response as great desire. Dr Imakando argued that it was because Elisha desired the anointing which was on Elijah that he persistently followed Elijah.

3. Promotion. According to Dr Imakando this was the heart of his sermon. He observed that Elisha moved to the next level because he recognised his spiritual father: Elijah. He got this idea from the following words in the Text: "As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, 'My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!' And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart" (vv 11-12). Dr Imakando consequently, pointed out that, "you will never receive, until you recognise the man of God (sic) as your father." Elisha's destiny was tied to Elijah. He had to see Elijah go before he could receive his anointing for the next level.

Recognition of the man of God (sic) as your father implies honouring your him (sic) by giving them money and other special gifts. At that point Dr Imakando proceeded to show the people how the anointing is obtained. He insisted that; “the anointing does not come by fasting, or even by praying. Otherwise, many people would be anointed. There are a few men (sic) who are entrusted with the anointing: they can only pass it on. The anointing is transferrable. Elijah passed on the anointing to Elisha his faithful servant. In the same way the persons of God in the Word of Faith Movement also pass on the anointing from themselves to faithful followers.

As he closed his sermon, he encouraged the people to do the following: firstly, they should not to be satisfied with where they are. Secondly, they need to connect to the man of God (sic). They need to serve the man of God (sic) with obedience and faithfulness. Fourthly, after they had fulfilled these conditions, they needed to believe that they have been elevated to the next level. Promotion in life (which basically refers to prosperity) can only become a reality through the mediation of the person of God. For Dr Imakando this was what happened to Elisha.

Throughout Dr Imakando’s discourse, the setting of the narrative is conspicuously absent. This narrative has its setting in 1Kings 19:15-19. In this passage of scripture we can clearly see that the call of Elisha as a prophet was initiated by God. It becomes apparent that as Dr Imakando reads the passage, he brings a lot of ideas into the passage. For example where in the passage did he even get the notion that Elijah was opposing Elisha? He was drawing from His theological mould. His firm belief that it is God’s will for every Christian to prosper

materially when he or she has fulfilled all the necessary conditions. Chief among them involves honouring the man or woman of God.

We need to remind ourselves that biblical narratives should be read within their own historical context. Biblical narratives should never be treated as if they have an independent existence. When readers of the biblical narratives spiritualise or moralise narratives they risk cutting off the narratives from “the redemptive history of Christ and this results in a severe fragmentation of the message of the Bible” (Kaiser & Silva 1994:70).

We need to analyse another sermon titled: *The Healing of our Land*. This sermon was preached by Dr Nwaka. In this sermon he did not have a specific text for his sermon. He was selectively using several texts to prove his case. In the sermon, Dr Nwaka was basically talking about the economy of the nation. As he referred to Isaiah 1:19 and Deuteronomy 15:4; Dr Nwaka argued that “when God says you shall eat the fruit of the land”, God was speaking about the economy of the nation. He further argued that the economy of any nation is tied to the land. Dr Nwaka did not even bother to consider the context of his texts. What interested him in these passages of scripture was the mention of the term “land”.

In introducing his sermon, Dr Nwaka observed that the Exodus or the trip from Egypt to the Promised Land as he put it was an “economic trip.” At this point he encouraged the congregation to avoid spiritualising the Exodus. One wonders whether interpreting the exodus as an economic trip does justice to the great historical event.

As Dr Nwaka started developing the body of his sermon, he observed the fact that when God speaks of the fruit of the land (Isaiah 1:19), God was not just speaking about crops. God was speaking about the economy of the nation. At this point he insisted that the economy of any nation is tied to the land. Consequently, he encouraged the listeners to make sure they owned land. He further directed the congregation to 2 Chronicles 7:14. His argument here was that it was the responsibility of the Christians to pray for the healing of the land. This was necessary because the land can become sick. Otherwise why should we pray for the healing of the land if the land could not become sick?

Two further aspects dominant in the Word of Faith Movement that came through Dr Nwaka's sermon were confession by faith and dominion. He supported these ideas by referring to Jeremiah 22:29 where we have the following words: "O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord!" Basing his ideas on this passage of scripture, he argued that the land can hear the word of God. It was for the same reason that he encouraged believers to discover the power of the prophetic word released under the anointing of God to the environment and to the land.²² He also proceeded to argue that believers can even speak to their farms so that their farms can become more fruitful and productive.²³ Therefore, believers can actually dominate their land and environment.

As he developed his ideas further, Dr Nwaka referred to Jeremiah 22:30 where we have this account: "This is what the LORD says: 'Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah'" (NIV). He construed this passage of scripture to mean the

²² The reader will realise that Dr Nwaka is essentially talking about the *rhema* here

²³ We examined dominionist ideas as they are reflected in the Word of Faith Movement in chapter two.

land literally keeps records. These records can either be negative or positive. The land will keep negative records if people commit sinful acts in the Land. Such sinful acts include all manner of injustices as well as murder which includes abortion. At this point Dr Nwaka pointed out that it was these negative reports which the land keeps which are responsible for the high levels of poverty in many African countries. To reinforce his arguments, Dr Nwaka referred to Leviticus 26:19-20.

Dr Nwaka's interpretation of the scriptures is typical of many Word of Faith teachers. They selectively use the passages of scripture to prove their own point of view. They do not even bother to consider the context of the portions of scripture which they appeal to. Dr Imakando and Dr Nwaka may have used different approaches but both of them are acting under the same motivating influence. They are both influenced by Word of Faith notions.

2.6 Conclusion

The Faith movement is a very popular phenomenon in this country. Several people more especially in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches hold to word of faith ideas in one form or other. This movement is attractive because of its promise of material prosperity. The Faith movement is pregnant with aspirations for deliverance from poverty and other spiritual setbacks. These dominant themes found in the Word of Faith Movement arise from the unique reading of the Bible by Word of Faith preachers and teachers.

It is important for us to remind ourselves of the fact that no theology develops in a vacuum. The prevalence of the Faith Movement in this country is directly linked to how the Bible is interpreted in this movement. It is for this reason that it must be noted that what motivates hermeneutics in the Word of Faith Movement is the underlying desire for every Christian to prosper materially. This naturally results in selective application of biblical texts. Any hint from the Bible on material prosperity becomes indicative that every Christian should become economically successful. They support their arguments by way of proof-texting. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005: 222) in this case argues that “the problem with the prosperity gospel ... is its ‘proof-texting’ method.” Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:222) further points out that, “A key principle in biblical interpretation is that theology must be based on the Bible’s total teaching on a subject and not on selective hermeneutics.”

It is also important for us to observe that the Word of Faith hermeneutics is born out of the quest to address certain existential problems that human beings encounter; more especially in a context of poverty and disease. Of course this is not unique to the Word of Faith Movement. As Thomas (2002:176) notes:

The new hermeneutics arises out of the existential interpretation that primarily is concerned with questions of human existence. Thus, it finds its starting point in human beings. The result of trying to understand a text in relation to how it applies to people is that truth is easily relativized.

The main concern is how the passage of scripture applies to the individual. The major challenge in the Word of Faith movement is how the scriptures can help an individual escape the shackles of poverty. This begs another idea: the role that persons of God play in mediating the word of God and subsequently material blessings to the faithful. Believers are encouraged to hear what God is saying through such persons. The Bible almost takes a

secondary role to the Person of God. Anyabwile's (2007: 61) lament describes well the scenario in which the Word of Faith Movement in Zambia finds itself:

If the Bible is no longer the clearest or most complete revelation of the mind of God, then the random often contradictory and failed "prophecies" and "divine utterances" of many preachers cannot be checked. Adherents, in order to maintain membership in the church community and to find another source of authority, vest the preacher or "prophet" with a kind of authority once reserved for the scriptures.

While Anyabwile's assertions were made in a different context they fit the Zambian situation as well. As we have demonstrated in this chapter, it is clear that the view of the Word of Faith teachers concerning the scriptures is seriously flawed. Consequently, this affects their biblical hermeneutics and finally their theology.

As we develop this study further we shall now focus our attention on how Word of Faith hermeneutics influences the doctrines of the Christian faith. In the next chapter we shall endeavour to unpack how the doctrines of God and that of human beings are treated in the Faith Movement.

CHAPTER 3

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD AND THE VISION OF HUMANITY IN THE WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

The doctrines of God and human beings should ordinarily be studied together as far as the Faith Movement is concerned. This is necessitated by the claim that human beings are created in the class of God. This implies that God and human beings belong to the same class of divine beings. Further, both God and human beings are said to operate by faith. In the Faith Movement the assertion that God and human beings operate by faith is demonstrated well by Imakando (2010: 29) who argues that, “Everything about God begins with faith. Creation is a production of faith. God works through faith, without faith it is impossible to please God.”

These sentiments demonstrate how Word of Faith teachers view the role of faith as it relates to God as well as to human beings. In the Faith Movement it is even possible to order God to perform what one desires as long as this is done in faith. Consequently, Imakando (2010: 36) points out that “there is nothing in this world that will not answer to Faith. Faith brings God on the scene because God honours faith.”

Even within the wider context of systematic theology, it makes a lot of sense to study the doctrine of God together with the doctrine of human beings. Human beings are God's creatures. Human beings are therefore dependent on God for their very existence. Further, human beings are created in the image of God. For this reason it makes a lot of sense to study God and human beings together.

The conception of God as held by the Faith Movement risks restricting God's power severely as well as blurring the distinction between God and human beings. When God and human beings as we shall demonstrate as this chapter develops are said to be in the same class; it necessarily follows that God and God's human creatures are the same. The notion that God as well as all human beings must have faith in order to accomplish their will, places a demand on us to demonstrate the necessity of investigating this matter in detail. In this chapter, we shall first of all address ourselves to what the bible teaches on the subject of faith. Thereafter, we shall shift our attention to the doctrine of God. We shall examine the doctrine of God in the Faith Movement in the light of Biblical revelation. Once we have dealt with the doctrine of God we shall then try as much as possible to examine the doctrine of human beings as far as the Faith Movement is concerned. We shall conclude this chapter by providing the biblical vision and destiny of the human race.

3.2 The nature of Biblical Faith

Faith in the Bible is an important concept. Any meaningful relationship with God is based on faith. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews points out that anyone who comes to God must

believe that God is and that God rewards those who diligently seek God (Hebrews 11: 6).

Anderson and Saucy (2001: 230) in this case, argue that:

Faith is simply responding to God – responding to what He (sic) does or says. When Mary learned that she was pregnant with Jesus, her response, “let it be the way God has said” was a response of faith. When we hear God tell us something and we respond, we are exercising faith.

When we respond to God in faith we usually do so in humility before God as a demonstration of our dependency on God. It is against this background, that if we are going to adequately deal with the matter concerning the assertion that God is a faith being, we need to examine how faith is addressed in the Bible. To adequately, carry out our task, it is important we examine the concept of faith from as far back as the Old Testament. Only then shall we provide ourselves with a broader working context as we seek to respond to the notion that God is a Faith Being. In the next section, it is therefore just fitting to take this approach. Accordingly, we therefore, must straight away commence by addressing the concept of faith in the Old Testament.

3.2.1 Faith in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the idea of Faith hinges on the relationship between God and God’s people. This relationship was based on a covenant between God and the people of Israel. It is for the same reason that Brueggemann (2002:76) points out that:

The central theological construct of the Old Testament is covenant – a passionate, interactive relationship between YHWH and YHWH’s people. The primary and defining issue of the Covenant relationship is fidelity. The primary vocabulary for fidelity uses two terms that occur frequently together, “hesed” and “emeth,” rendered steadfast love and faithfulness. The two terms bespeak the utter reliability of one covenant partner (first of all YHWH) to the other.

From the words of Brueggemann we are able to see clearly that God is a faithful God. As a result God commits to keeping the covenant with the people of Israel. On the other hand it is expected of those whom God has invited to be in a covenant relationship with to be faithful to God's covenant demands. The people are called to observe God's commands. Consequently, God says, "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites" (Exodus 19:5-6). God's call places obligations on God's people. Ndjerareou (2006:109) as he comments on Exodus 19:5-6 effectively demonstrates how God's people are to respond to God's covenant demands:

God then presents Moses with the terms of the Covenant that he is to present to the people. Three major points are advanced:

- Israel is God's property, his own treasured possession (19:5a; see also Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psalm 135:4).
- Israel will be a kingdom of Priest (19:6a). A priest has access to God and acts as an intermediary between the people and God.
- Israel is to be a holy nation as God is holy (19:6b; see also 3:5-6). The people must thus be morally pure and consecrated to the service of God.

The three-fold purpose of God will only become a reality if Israel obeys God's covenant terms. Obedience as an expression of love and commitment to God is to be desired over sacrifices (1Sam. 15:20-23). In 1Samuel 15:20-23 Samuel strongly censures King Saul for failing to obey God's instructions fully. Akanni and Weanzana (2006: 350) as they reflect on 1Samuel 15:20-23 write:

To obey is better than sacrifice (15:22). This principle was the foundation for Samuel's integrity, and ignoring it produced corrupt and greedy priests and prophets like Eli's sons. The point is underscored in the NT (Heb 10:5-7). God seeks those who will obey him implicitly and promptly, rather than those who bring expensive sacrifices to atone for deliberate sin (Isa 66: 1-3). God sees disobedience as more than just a refusal to carry out an instruction. It is an indicator of the state of the heart, and whether God is indeed the one we serve. Disobedience is thus equivalent to rebellion, and sluggish or incomplete obedience reveals unspoken rebellion. God does not tolerate rivals, and so he acts strongly against disobedience.

Thus obedience is a very important aspect of Old Testament understanding of faith. The twin concepts of obedience and faith are thus closely associated to each other to the extent that they are inseparable. Holtzen (2007: 70) in this regard argues that "in Genesis 22, faith and obedience are linked when Abraham is blessed because of his obedience to God in the binding of Isaac."

The Hebrew word for faith in the Old Testament is *emunah*. It is derived from the Hebrew root *aman* which carries the idea of being firm. *Emunah* is an action word. It speaks of the resolve to act in decisive ways on the part of those who trust in God. Jeff A. Benner (2007) is therefore right when he asserts:

When the Hebrew word *emunah* is translated as faith misconceptions of its meaning occur. Faith is usually perceived as a knowing while the Hebrew *emunah* is a firm action. To have faith in God is not knowing that God exists or knowing that he will act, rather it is that the one with *emunah* will act with firmness toward God's will.

Acting with firmness toward God's will is the ability not to be moved in one's faith in God regardless of the circumstances on the ground. Fertig (2007: 407) consequently, is therefore able to write:

The strength of emunah is revealed through tests, through ordeals – through the darkness of night. *You shall remember the entire road on which Hashem, your G-d, led you these forty years in the wilderness so as to afflict you, to test you, to know what is in your heart... He afflicted you and let you hunger* (Devarim 8:2-3). It is here that emunah is built, here that emunah must be lived. Through our most difficult ordeals in life our emunah is strengthened. We may not understand, but emunah must remain strong. It is our life force (sic).

This firm persuasion is grounded on the conviction that God is a faithful God. “Israel is called to faith in God because this is a logical response to God’s faithfulness; Israel is to trust God for God is exceedingly and utterly trustworthy” (Holtzen 2007: 70). It is against this backdrop that Paul describes Abraham’s faith as “not wavering at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4: 20 NKJV). Abraham was firm in his faith in God. Even when both his wife and himself were advancing in years he still believed that God was going to fulfill His promise.

Another idea closely associated with Faith in the Old Testament is the word trust. The concept of trust is defined in several related ways in the Old Testament. To proceed with our examination of the word trust let us begin by reflecting on how this idea is used in Ruth 2:12: “May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge” (NIV).

The phrase rendered “under whose wings thou art come to trust” (KJV) and “under whose wings you have come to take refuge” (NIV) is a translation of the Hebrew word *chasah*. It carries with it ideas related to seeking for refuge, fleeing for protection, as well as to put trust in God. In this case the God of Naomi had become the God of Ruth (Ruth 1:16). *Chasah* is found in several passages of the Old Testament (e.g. 2Sam. 22:3, 31; Psalm 2:12; 4:5; 18:2;

etc). In all these passages it projects the idea of taking refuge in the Lord or going to the Lord for help. Another word rendered as trust in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *Betach*. The word *betach* implies confidence in the Lord. Some of the places where *betach* is used are 2 Kings 18:20, 21, 22, 24, 30; 1chronicles 5:20; 2chronicles 32:10; Psalms 25:2 etc).

A third Hebrew word which is translated as trust is *yachal*. It is often translated as trust (KJV) and hope (NIV). It carries with it the idea of waiting in expectation before the Lord. This word is found in Job 13:15 and Isaiah 51:5.

In all these usages of the word trust we can clearly see that all these words are describing the concept of faith in the Old Testament. Faith is an act of fully depending on God for help as well as being convinced that God is able to do what God has promised. Faith in the Old Testament is an integral element in the way the people of God related to as well as conducted themselves before God. God's people were called to walk faithfully before the Lord their God. Now that we have briefly dealt with the concept of faith in the Old Testament, it is now fitting that we deal with the concept of faith in the New Testament.

3.2.2 Faith in the New Testament

The idea of faith in the New Testament is employed in various ways. As we develop this section we shall focus on those usages which have an immediate relevance to this study. First, it is important we start our discussion by mentioning that in the New Testament faith is closely linked to doing the will of God. This is illustrated well by the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32. In this passage, the Father asked the first son to go and work in the vineyard. Initially he said no, later he changed his mind and went and did the work in the vineyard.

The man later asked the second son to go and work in the vineyard. He quickly agreed that he would go to work in the vineyard; unfortunately he could not fulfill the promise. In this parable, Jesus intended to illustrate the attitudes of the religious leaders on the one hand and the tax collectors and the prostitutes on the other. The tax collectors and the prostitutes believed the message of John, as a result Jesus pronounced that they were entering the kingdom of God ahead of the religious leaders. By believing the message of John they were in fact doing the will of God. In other words to have faith as far as the New Testament is concerned is to do the will of God.

Boring and Craddock (2004: 84) commenting on the parable in Matthew 21: 28-32 write:

The specific meaning in the context is that the Jewish leaders originally said yes to the prophetic message from God delivered by John. Matthew has not forgotten that he has pictured the Pharisees and the Sadducees going to John to be baptized by him, 3: 5-7a. But they did not accept his message and repent. Those who had been saying no to God's will revealed in the Torah, the tax collectors and prostitutes, changed their mind and accepted the message.

In this parable obedience to the will of God is projected as an integral component to understanding faith in the New Testament. Jesus said not everyone who says to me , Lord, Lord will inherit the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father” (Matt. 7:21). Just like in the Old Testament faith and obedience are closely linked this is also true in the New Testament. It is for the same reason that Alan Richardson (1958: 29) notes, “God speaks his word, man must hear and obey” (sic).

The other depiction of faith in the New Testament is that the one who believes in God enters into a saving relationship with God (John 3: 16-18). Wiersbe (2007: 237-238) agrees when he writes:

The emphasis in John 3: 14-21 is on believing, because salvation comes through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). The difference between perishing and living, and between condemnation and salvation, is faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus could well have come as a judge and destroyed every rebellious sinner, but in love, He came to this world as our savior, and He died for us on the cross.

The New Testament is full of allusions to the fact that for one to enter into this new relationship with God there is need to believe the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; John 5:24). In the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded that “all prophets bore witness to Jesus, and that through his name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43). Commenting on this passage of scripture, Barclay (1976:84) accordingly notes:

The Christian preacher and teacher is a witness of the resurrection. To him Jesus is not a figure in a book or about whom he has heard. He is a living presence whom he has met. The result of all this is forgiveness of sins and a new relationship with God. Through Jesus the friendship which should always have existed between man and God, but which sin interrupted, has dawned upon mankind (sic).

In the New Testament, especially in the Gospels the concept of faith is closely associated with the miracles of Jesus. The miracles help to point people to place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Michel (1975: 599 – 600) demonstrates this matter well:

The miracle stories often contain reference to the faith of the sick person or those around him (Mk. 2:5; 5:34, 36; 10:52; Matt.10: 10). What is meant is trust in the mission of Jesus and his power to deliver from trouble. These saving acts are

performed in the service of his commission and are intended to confirm an existing faith. The question of faith is clearly bound up with these miracles.

The miracles were not intended to be an end in themselves. They served a more significant function to lead people to faith in God. It is for this reason that some recipients of miracles received miracles not because they had faith in Jesus. The widow in Luke 7:11-16 for instance, received back to life her dead son. Not because she had faith but because Jesus had compassion on her. The response of the people was that God has come to help His people (Luke 7:16). It becomes clear therefore, that this miracle was intended to encourage the people to place their faith in God. Thus Michel is right when he observes that the intention of Jesus “was not to be a mere “healer”, but to be a helper in God’s name.” ultimately, all the miracle stories were intended to spur the people to believe in Jesus so that they could enter into a saving relationship with God.

Faith in the New Testament is not merely subjective. It has an objective element as well: Richardson (1975: 37) precisely sums up this matter:

From the earliest days of the church there was a tradition (

faith (

3.3.1 Faith is a Master Key to Progress

Imakando (201: 30)²⁴ points out that “faith is the foundation for the fulfillment of every vision, every fulfillment of destiny has been a product of faith.” Faith has therefore assumed an existential interpretation. Nicola Abbagnano (2009) says, “existentialism is always particular and individual – always my existence, your existence, his existence.” It is an individual’s faith which ultimately determines where one eventually ends up in life. One even wonders the place of God in this whole enterprise.

Faith as a result becomes a motivational principle. Faith preachers become motivational preachers motivating the people of God to conceive their destiny and believe that their destinies shall become a reality. In this regard, Imakando (2010: 30) remarks, “It is your faith that will determine where you will end, what you will possess and your position in life.” Faith is thus a defining principle between those who succeed in life and those who fail to do so. Those who have faith will make it in life. While those who lack faith are bound to fail in life. We need to clarify this matter further. Our faith in God should never be construed to only bring about positive results in our lives such as wealth and success; our faith in God also sustains us when we face adverse situations.

In the Word of Faith Movement, faith accordingly, is the principle through which a believer receives from God. Consequently, insists Imakando (2010: 31), “faith possesses, faith receives, meaning that it does not beg God for what He has promised in His word. Faith is the

²⁴ It looks like Imakando (2010) relies heavily on Oyedepo. Even if he does not acknowledge Oyedepo in his book, it is clear that Oyedepo (2005) is the source of much of the material on the Chapter on Faith in Imakando’s book.

raw material that God uses to perform miracles.” Imakando makes this assertion basing on his unique understanding of Hebrews 11:1 where faith is described as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (KJV). He understands the word

of your continual healthy life. If it is true you believe in prosperity, it should show. Jesus said, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not” (John 10: 37).

The import of what is being said is that faith must bring tangible results in the life of one who claims to have faith in God. The implication of what is being advanced is that if one claims to have faith he or she should never be sick or poor. It is for this reason that Imakando (2010: 32) maintains, “Faith will move mountains of sickness, mountains of oppression, mountains of financial lack, mountains of unemployment, etc. in other words, every mountain bows to faith.”

However, this only becomes possible when a believer learns what Hagin (1987: 91) calls the little simple lesson:

All you need to do is to act on the Word. It’s deeply important that you learn this simple lesson, because it is not struggling, it is not crying, it is not fretting, it is acting on what God has spoken that brings results!

This way of looking at faith is grossly one sided. It does not take into account the full meaning of biblical faith. To quote the author of the epistle to the Hebrews again we see that he goes contrary to such a ‘popcorn’ view of faith:

Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised (Hebrews 11: 35-39 NIV).

Now that we have provided a background to the concept of Faith both as it is taught in the Bible as well as in the Faith Movement, it is necessary we examine how the notion of faith sits with the assertion that God is a faith being.

3.4 The nature of God in the Faith Movement

In the Faith Movement God is viewed as a faith being. God is not viewed only as an object of Faith. God is also viewed as one who acts by faith. It is usually believed in Faith circles that God created the world by speaking words of faith. Yomi Akinpelu (2003:103) corroborates with this notion when he writes:

There is nothing God created without first declaring it, this idea may seem preposterous at first but it is the way God has chosen to operate, it is God's modus operandi. In Genesis 1 "and God said" is deliberately repeated to emphasize the fact that the way to activate the spiritual laws that God has put in place to govern the universe is by speaking.

In this case, when Akinpelu talks about spiritual laws governing the universe, he is referring to the law of faith. It is for the same reason that Akinpelu (2003: 103) further argues that:

One might ask when God created the world, who was he speaking to when he said what he said. The answer is that God was releasing faith through his words and setting precedence for man. Nothing can come into existence without faith and the way to exercise faith is speaking words (sic).

This way of looking at things is inspired by a particular reading of Mark 11:22. When translated literally the phrase ě

for this reason that before we examine in detail the notion that God is a faith being we should first of all do an exegetical study of Mark 11:22.

3.4.1 Exegetical study of Mark 11:22

Mark 11:22 is a very important passage of scripture in the Faith Movement. Of particular interest is the phrase ἔ

Thankfully, God has provided a means whereby we can receive the type of faith that he wishes to provide: "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" (Rom. 10:17). However, does the Word of God provide an "intellectual faith" or is there a supernatural element to the Faith that God provides? The Hebrew word translated "Word of God" in Romans 10:17 is the Greek word *Rhema*, which means "the spoken word." Considering the descriptions God gives of His own Word (rhema) throughout the Bible, I would submit to the reader that the faith given to us is *supernatural* (1 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 6:17; John 6:63; John 15:7).

Edwards, takes it for granted that the rhema imparts supernatural faith. This infusion of supernatural faith in the believer as far as Edwards is concerned provides sufficient ground to translate Ě

the point. When an appeal is made to this passage of scripture to advance that God is a faith being that is overstressing what Jesus intended to communicate. Jesus Christ was teaching His disciples the importance of depending on God or placing their faith in God.

3.4.2 Faith as a Creative and Governing Principle of the Universe

In the Faith Movement it is generally believed that God has spiritual laws that govern the universe. One of the most potent spiritual laws that govern the universe as has already been pointed out is faith. Kenneth Copeland (cited in Paul Leslie King 2001: 124) in this regard notes:

We must understand that there are spiritual laws governing every single thing in existence. Nothing is by accident. There are laws of the world of the spirit and there are laws of the natural ... We need to realize that the spiritual world and its laws are more powerful than the natural world and its laws. Spiritual laws give birth to physical laws. The world and the physical forces governing it were created by the power of faith – a spiritual force ... It is that force of faith which makes the spiritual world function.

This view of faith is reiterated by Imakando (2010: 35) when he maintains that “God is no respecter of persons but a respecter of faith.” Here we find a hint that even God is bound by the spiritual law of faith. Imakando (2010: 36) further points out that “there is nothing in this world that will not answer to faith. Faith brings God on the scene because God honours faith.”

Oyedepo (2005:21) buttresses what Imakando is saying by insisting that, “Everything on earth answers to this powerful force called faith. It overcomes all forces of darkness –

economic problems, sickness, disease, family disintegration, untimely death, and every other obstacle you can imagine on earth.”

Not only is faith a principle through which God created the world (Imakando 2010: 29) it is a principle that governs life on earth. God therefore, as we have already noted above has no other option but to oblige and bring to pass what faith calls for. This poses a serious theological challenge. Can God be subject to human faith without ceding God’s sovereignty to human beings?

3.4.3 Faith and the sovereignty of God

The doctrine of God more especially as it relates to the sovereignty of God is seriously modified in the faith movement. The doctrine of the sovereignty of God acknowledges that “God is in control, and nothing happens without his direction” (Theopedia). Similarly, R.C Sproul (2010) writes:

Don’t you realize that if there is one molecule in this universe running around loose outside the scope or the sphere of God’s divine control and authority and power, then that single maverick molecule may be the grain of sand that changes the entire course of human history, that blocks God from keeping the promises he has made to his people?” It may be that one maverick molecule that will prevent Christ from the consummation of his kingdom. If there is any element of the universe that is outside of his authority, then he no longer is God over all. In other words, sovereignty belongs to deity. Sovereignty is a natural attribute of the Creator. God owns what he makes, and he rules what he owns.

So far it has been demonstrated that in the Faith Movement the concept of “Faith” controls everything in the universe. We have seen that even God is governed by the law of faith. Imakando (2010: 30) for instance, insists that “it is your faith that will determine where you will end.” It does not matter what the will of God is for that individual. God must respect the

faith of that individual and grant what that individual believes God for. The prayer “not my will but your will be done” is no longer necessary (see Matt 26:39). But we know very well that Jesus places an injunction on His disciples that when they pray they need to say: “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10). By so doing believers show their dependence on God who rules their lives as well as the entire universe. Faith in God is therefore a trusting relationship that believers place in God.

If faith is conceived as a principle that governs even God, it therefore, assumes an omnipotent and omni-competent status. It can do whatever the believer wants. This type of reasoning does a lot of injustice to the sovereignty of God. When we affirm that God is sovereign we have the following fundamental concepts in view:

- God is the creator of the world. Since God is the creator of the world it means God is different from His creation. McGrath (2001: 299) cautions that “a major theme of Christian theology from the earliest times has been to resist the temptation to merge the creator and the creation.” God’s creation depends on God for sustenance this includes humans (Psalm 104: 27-30). Our faith in God is based on a relationship of submission and dependence on God. It must then be maintained that ultimately it is not our faith that matters it is because God cares for God’s creation that God even responds to our humble requests.
- As creator, God has authority over the world. As such God does not seek counsel from anyone or anything on how to run the world. However, this does not mean human beings have no role to play in God’s created order. God has sovereignly ordained that humans should act under God’s direction in this world. McGrath (2001: 299) accordingly, points out that, “The creation is not ours; we hold it in trust for

God. We are meant to be the stewards of God's creation, and are responsible for the manner in which we exercise that stewardship." The aspect of stewardship extends even to the gifts and abilities that God has endowed humans with. We are responsible of how we make use of them.

- As creator, God is not aloof from the world. God has not abandoned the world to be run by a set of principles while God watches on. God is actively involved in the world. God is actively working to bring God's purposes for humanity and the entire universe to pass.

It therefore, follows that any insinuation that God cannot do anything in the world except by faith is a serious distortion of the Christian view of God. To believe that God is sovereign is a very reassuring thought. This reminds us of the fact that God is in control of the entire created universe. No sparrow falls to the ground apart from the will God (Matt. 10:29). God knows the total number of hair on our heads (Matt 10:30). There are no circumstances in our lives that can escape God's notice. There is need to always remember that God is using whatever situation we may encounter in our lives for God's ends and purposes in our lives. Therefore, faith in God is a humble trust in God who is able to do more than we can imagine. Packer (2008:17) delightfully writes:

If you are a Christian, you pray; and the recognition of God's sovereignty is the basis of your prayers. In prayer you ask for things and give thanks for things. Why? Because you recognize that God is the author and source of all the good that you have had already, and all the good that you hope for in the future. This is the fundamental philosophy of Christian prayer. The prayer of the Christian is not an attempt to force God's hand, but a humble acknowledgement of helplessness and dependence. When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world ...

Christian faith in God is therefore, an affirmation of the fact that it is God who is in control not our faith. It is God who responds to the cries of God's people. Our response of faith is simply an affirmation that God is trustworthy; therefore God will fulfill what God promises.

3.4.4 Evaluation of the concept of Faith in the light of Biblical witness

From our findings so far it has become clear that God is not a subject of faith. God is presented by the biblical witness both in the Old and New Testament as the object of faith. God is one in whom all those who believe put their trust. For to believe in God, is to enter into a relationship of submission and trust in God on the part of the one who believes. The believer, therefore, commits to obeying and doing the will of God.

Faith in the Bible is never projected as an esoteric principle which only a few initiated individuals are able to master. It is for this reason that faith should never be presented as a master key which opens every door of opportunity before the believer. In the Bible faith in God is not just exercised in order to get something from God. Faith in God is a relationship with God which is based on obedience to the will of God. Faith in God is also demonstrated when in spite of the adverse circumstances that an individual may be going through he or she still holds on to his or her faith in God.

To argue that God is a faith being in the way that Faith preachers do is to seriously distort God's will and purpose for the entire created order. God is a sovereign Being. God works out God's plans according to God's own power. God does not depend on anyone or anything to see through the plans that God has ordained. Human beings on the other hand are dependent on God for their very existence. We have so far demonstrated how the notion that God is a

faith being shapes the Faith Movement. In the next section, we wish to focus our attention on biblical anthropology, more especially as it is exhibited in the Faith Movement.

3.5 BIBLICAL TEACHING CONCERNING HUMAN BEINGS

The Word of Faith Movement has imposed a divine status on human beings. In this movement, “although Christ is still confessed as the centre of all things, it is clear that in practice humans become almost part of God himself” argues Horn (1989: 102). Human beings are conceived to be gods. It is interesting to note that such a view is not endorsed by the scriptures. But as we proceed with this study we shall examine the biblical teaching concerning human beings. Alongside this idea we shall also deal with the consequences of the fall on the human race. Only after we have done that shall we be able to properly evaluate the doctrine of human beings as it is advanced by the word of faith movement.

The bible clearly demonstrates the relationship between God and human beings. Human beings are part of the general created order of the universe. As we deal with this matter it is important we examine carefully the biblical teaching concerning human beings. It is only after we have done so that we are able to apply our findings to help analyse the doctrine of human beings in the Word of Faith Movement.

3.5.1 Human beings are created by God

The fact that human beings are created by God demonstrates that human beings depend on God for their very existence. As God's creatures they are subjected to limitations imposed on them by virtue of being creatures. In other words human beings are contingent beings. Hammet (2007:400) is right when he point out that this,

fact establishes universal human accountability to God. No one can say, "Let God go his way, and I'll go mine." No one can treat issues of God's existence and will as unimportant matters, unworthy of concern. For creatures, the most urgent and important question of their existence is, why am I here? Who is my creator, and what is his will for my life? (sic).

What is being said here demonstrates the fact that as dependent beings, human beings owe their very existence to God. In this regard, Erickson (1998: 510) further maintains:

That humans are created means that they have no independent existence. They came into being because God willed that they should exist and acted to bring them into being and preserve them. There is nothing necessary about their existence. They may declare themselves independent and then conduct themselves as if they are, but that does not alter the fact that their very life and each breath they continue to take are from God.

Since human beings were created by God, it therefore necessitates that we say something concerning the reason God created them rather than not. An article in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* indicates that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever" (sic). Erickson (1998: 511) in this regard points out that, "Since we would not be alive but for God, everything we have and are derives from him" (sic). This underlines the concept of stewardship. Human beings were created to be stewards over God's creation.

It must be insisted that human beings were created to be stewards and not exploiters of God's creation. It is for the same reason that McGrath (2001: 299) notes that "the creation is not ours; we hold it in trust for God. We are meant to be stewards of God's creation, and are responsible for the manner in which we exercise that stewardship." Human beings were created to lovingly care for God's creation and not exploitatively (Gen 1:26). Accordingly, Sherlock (1996: 37) maintains that human beings are "designated as God's 'vice-regents', called to manage and utilize together the created world, not wholly independent agents, but as persons accountable to our Creator." Human beings are created to have loving relationships with God, fellow human beings, as well as with the rest of God's creation. Human beings, therefore, have no independent existence from God. Ultimately, "God as creator has the perfect right to say to every creature he (sic) made, 'what did you do with the life I gave you? Did you live it in ways I approve?'"

3.5.2 Human Beings are created in the image of God

The fact that God is the creator of all things implies that human beings share a common origin with the rest of God's creation: they are all God's creatures. That human beings are created in the image of God sets them apart from the rest of creation. The principal scripture used here is Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

The fact that human beings are created in the image of God and likeness demonstrates that they are the climax of God's creation. Kapolyo (2005: 46) therefore notes that "the two material words, image (Hebrew *šelem*) and likeness (Hebrew *dēm ūtī*) imply a similarity

between the Creator God and human beings, the apex of his creation.” We need not labour too much in trying to distinguish between image and likeness. The two terms are used to amplify each other. Kapolyo (2005:46) accordingly, observes that, “although different, the words are interchangeable and when used together simply intensify the similarity. The one or the other does not introduce new elements.”

How the phrase ‘*humans were created in the image of God*’ is interpreted is a vexing issue among theologians. However, we need to concede that in some way or other human beings are like God. D.J.A Clines (1968: 54) corroborates when he argues that “one essential meaning of the statement that man was created in the image of God is plain: it is that man is in some way and some degree like God” (sic).

The challenge this raises is how similar are human beings to God. What is clear is that the similarity between human beings and God should not be pressed to extremes so that human beings assume a divine status. This observation necessarily leads us to deal with the problem of interpretation: how do we interpret the image of God?

Many interpreters of the image of God have turned to extra-biblical and philosophical sources to aid them in their quest to interpret what the image of God is all about (Clines 1968: 54, Middleton 1994: 11). These interpretations assume several aspects. Some scholars maintain that the Image of God should be conceived of in relational terms (Philips & Okholm 2001:73). Philips and Okholm insist that this relationality is first of all God-directed as well as directed towards other human beings (Philips and Okholm 2001: 73, 74). This interpretation of the image of God may be traced to the Reformers such as Luther and Calvin (Middleton 1994: 10).

In addition to relational interpretation of the image of God Millard Erickson includes what he calls the substantive view and the functional view. “The common element in the several varieties of the substantive views is that the image is identified as some definite characteristic or quality within the makeup of the humans,” observes Erickson (1998:520-1). This interpretation of the image of God in human beings focuses on a physical interpretation of the image (Clines 1968: 57; Erickson 1998: 521). This interpretation of the image of God is anchored on Genesis 5:3 where it is noted: “When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.” In this passage image refers to the physical resemblance of Adam and his son Seth.

The functional view of the image of God in human beings does not focus on the relationship between human beings and God. The image consists in what human beings do (see Erickson 1998: 527). In this case the image of God in human beings relates to the exercise of dominion (Genesis 1:26-27). Berkouwer (1962: 70) further amplifies this idea when he writes:

And it is thus understandable that the image of God in man has been equated with that which makes man unique among created things. In this connection, attempts have sometimes been made to find some evidence as to the content of the image of God in man in the scriptural text itself: e.g.’ by reference to Genesis 1:26’ where God’s making man “in our image, after our likeness is directly related to the following words, “Let them have dominion ...

One just wonders whether it is in order to link the creation of human beings in the image of God to the function of dominion. This is more so since functionality is not a reflection of the image of God. It is important to remind ourselves that everything that was created was created for a purpose. Therefore, every creature works in synergy with other creatures to maintain an ecological balance. It is for this reason that Barth (1961:478) in *Church Dogmatics* says; “All creatures exist in a relationship ... None exists for itself. None possesses

meaning or purpose in itself. Each stands in need of another.” It is therefore reasonable to propose a wholistic interpretation of the image of God in human beings: an interpretation that does not just deal with one aspect of humanity. Erickson (1998: 532) sums up this assertion well. He posits that:

The image is something in the very nature of humans, in the way in which they were made. It refers to something a human being is rather than something a human has or does. By virtue of being human, one is in the image of God; it is not dependent upon the presence of anything else.

Schmidt (1983: 194 citing Karl Barth) corroborates with Erickson when he points out that:

Being made in the image of God is ‘not a quality of man.’ ‘It does not consist in anything that man is or does. It consists as man himself consists as the creature of God ... He is the image of God in the fact he is man’ (sic).

From what we have so far said we may conclude that to be human is to be created in the image of God. This implies that our worthy as human beings is found in the fact that we are created in the image of God. However, because of the fall we live less than God intended. This necessarily places a demand on us to examine in detail the fall of the human race. For this reason in the next section we turn to the fall of the human race.

3.5.3 The fall of the human race

Ng’weshemi (2002:2) points out that “because of the fall, humanity has suffered a radical deformity as the *Imago Dei* was damaged, and the human being fell into bondage to sin.” The implication of this is that “the image of God has been perverted or distorted by the fall” (Hoekema 1986: 72). The story of the fall of the human race is narrated in Genesis 3:1-21. Sherlock (1996: 42) accordingly notes:

Yet the sin described in Genesis 3 was no mere peccadio, an unlucky choice of the fruit. Tiny though it may appear in itself, it entailed the wilful rejection of God as Lord, bringing dire consequences. The serpent's craftiness is particularly seen in the comment that the man and the woman would be 'like God' (or gods) if they ate the forbidden fruit (Gn. 3:5).

The sinful act whereby our first parents disobeyed God was a wilful deliberate act against God. Evans (1974: 131) therefore argues that "the essence of the first sin lay in the denial of the divine will; an elevation of the will of man over the will of God" (sic). This ultimately boils down to the quest for human beings to be autonomous from God. The consequences of the fall were severe. It resulted in the breakdown of all relationships that human beings enjoyed. Sherlock (1996:42-43) provides a good summary regarding the breakdown of such relationships:

Human beings no longer *live* as those made in the image of God; sin distorts and mars it at every point. *The relationships, however are not abolished.* Genesis 5:2 affirms that the 'horizontal' aspect of the image of God, the relationship between men and women, continues, even though partnership has turned into rivalry. Likewise, Genesis 9:2-6 affirms that 'downward vertical' relationship remains, but dominion has become corrupted into exploitation. The flood wrought havoc on the ground because of human evil ... most crucially, the 'upward vertical' relationship also remains, but now works in condemnation rather than blessing: God continues to relate to human beings, as obvious from the rest of the Scriptures, yet we remain incapable of knowing God by our own efforts (Rom 1: 18-24)

In their quest to be like God, Adam and Eve became estranged from God, themselves, as well as the world. They had committed the first sin. Grenz (2000:198) in this case argues that "This first sin has permanently tainted the world and has irreparably altered its human inhabitants."

We cannot discuss the fall of the human race without saying something concerning sin itself. Sin affects all human beings. Grudem (2010: 119) points out that a Christian worldview must

include the idea that there is a measure of moral evil (what the Bible calls “sin”) in the heart of every human being who lives on the face of the earth.” Philips and Okholm (2001: 81) candidly state that “sin has penetrated the whole of our existence, and we are beyond repair. Put simply, we are in a very bad shape.” Kapolyo (2005:110) additionally notes that “sin is part of the very fabric of what it means to be a human being.”

Sin has marred the relationship between God and human beings. The relationship was so distorted that when God visited the human beings they hid from God (see Genesis 3: 8-9). Sin as a consequence has polluted the human race to the extent that every human being has experienced spiritual death. Erickson (1998: 631) explicates further on this matter:

The essence of spiritual death can be seen in the case of Adam and Eve. “For when you eat of it [the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you will surely die” did not mean they would experience immediate physical death. It did mean that their potential mortality would become actual. It also meant spiritual death, separating between them and God. And indeed, after Adam and Eve ate the fruit they tried to hide from God because of their shame and guilt, and God pronounced severe curses upon them.

It must be pointed out that to view sin solely in personal ways does serious injustice to the doctrine of sin. That sin is both personal and social pervades all Scripture (Philips and Okholm 2001: 82). Similarly, Bloesch (1984:1012) argues that:

Sin is both personal and social, individual and collective. Ezekiel declared: “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy” (16:49 NIV). According to the prophets, it is not only a few individuals that are infected by sin but the whole nation (Isa. 1:4). Among the collective forms of sin that cast a blight over the world today are racism, nationalism, imperialism, sexism.

Sin is a universal problem that affects all human beings. However, there is biblical promise of redemption for the human race. It is to this where we focus our attention in the following section. We shall first of all deal with the conception of salvation in the Word of Faith Movement. Thereafter, we shall examine the biblical teaching of salvation.

3.5.4 Salvation and destiny of the human race in the Word of Faith Movement

The fact that human beings are sinners necessitates redemption. It is to this matter that we now devote our attention. We would like to explicate in detail how the subject of salvation is addressed in the Word of Faith Movement thereafter, we shall focus our attention on what the scriptures say on this matter.

In the Word of Faith movement God's redemptive purpose for the human race plays a very significant role. Redemption is conceived as capable of translating human beings from merely being human to spirit beings. Oyedepo (2004:23) therefore notes:

When a human being has a child, that child is a natural reproduction of his parents. Because he is born of humans, he is also human. Human beings are made up of flesh and bone and their offspring are no less. But when a man is born again, he is therefore, no longer a human being, but a spirit being.

The principle here is that like begets like. Human beings beget other human beings. When this principle is applied to God, one may not be misinterpreting the Word of Faith purveyors if he or she claimed that "God begets God". Oyedepo (2004:23-24) further argues:

More often than not, however, we are deceived into thinking that because we still live in our physical bodies we are simply human; but nothing could be further from the truth! Consider Jesus, for instance. He was born of the Spirit, yet He arrived on the

earth very much human. But there was no denying the fact that He was also the Son of God. The same is true concerning you.

Here it becomes apparent that the Sonship of Christ is equivalent to the adopted status of human beings in the family of God. Even as through the incarnation God became human, in the Faith Movement human beings become divine through the process of salvation. This manner of reasoning is a misinterpretation of views held by some Pentecostal leaders. Hayford (2001:100) accordingly argues that “God’s plan of salvation also includes the provision of restoration for man from his fallen state” (sic). To buttress his assertion, Hayford points to Luke 12:32 and Matthew 11:12. As a result, he (Hayford 2001:100) surmises that the common denominator in these two verses is the word “kingdom”. “To give you a kingdom” refers to the restoration of authority. Hayford (2001:101) further argues that, God calls us to a place of remission for sins; to recover His image and likeness by the work of the Holy Spirit, and to be restored to a place of authority and dominion, first in our own lives, and then as agents in reclaiming and advancing the kingdom.”

Hayford differs fundamentally with the word of faith teachers here. The word of faith teachers go far as suggesting that sin is what hinders the full recovery of what God intended them to be: “to exist in the class of God” (see Oyedepo 2005:57). In other words, the purpose of experiencing salvation in the Word of Faith movement is to restore human beings to God’s original intent: to be gods. Munroe (2007: 58) therefore, writes:

When you became a Christian, God changed your name. He said, “I know you aren’t acting like my child, but you are my child ... Now that your spirit and my spirit are reconnected, I can work in you so that your behaviour can catch up with your nature. Who you have been is not who you are.” The Psalmist testifies to this reality. God said, “You are ‘gods’; you are all sons of the most high” (Psalm 82:6).

To reiterate his own point, Munroe (2007: 58) goes on to argue that “God doesn’t say that we are gods because He is trying to elevate our status. He is stating a fact” (sic). To prove his point Munroe (2007) cites 2 Peter 1:3-4 which reads:

His (God’s) divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

This portion of scripture alongside Psalm 82:6 are usually employed to support the notion that human beings become gods as a consequence of the salvation experience. It does not even bother word of faith teachers like Munroe that these passages of scripture may be interpreted differently. For example Psalm 82 is set in a great assembly where God sits as judge. God is said to be judging among gods. In this psalm the term “gods” is clearly referring to the wicked judges. This may be seen through the severe indictment that God passes on the wicked judges: they defended the unjust and passed judgment in favour of the wicked (Psalm 82:2).

The judges were called “gods” by divine decree. Lawson (2006: 39) says, “it was God Himself who said they were gods, and sons of the most high, meaning these human rulers served by God’s sovereign appointment and were directly accountable to him” (sic). The word of faith teachers usually read Psalm 82:6 alongside John 10: 35: “If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came-- and the Scripture cannot be broken.” In John 10:35 was it the intention of Jesus to make a wholesale pronouncement that Christians are gods. Wiersbe (2007: 266) accordingly writes:

Our Lord used Psalm 82:6 to refute their accusation and halt their actions. The picture in Psalm 82 is that of a court, where God has assembled the judges of the earth, to warn them that they too will be judged. The Hebrew word *elohim* can be translated as “god” or as “judges,” as in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9. It is also one of the Old Testament names for God. The Jewish rulers certainly knew their language and they knew that Jesus was speaking the truth. If God called human judges “gods,” then why should they stone Him for applying the same title to Himself? (sic)

In short, second Peter 1:3-4 absolutely, does not endorse the notion that at conversion Christians become gods. This passage of scripture is clearly intended for those that Peter describes as “those who have obtained a faith of equal standing as ours ...” (1Peter 1:1). It is to such where God’s divine power has granted everything they need to live a life of godliness (1Peter 1:3). The word translated “divine” is the word

It is usually believed that because Jesus Christ died on the cross he restored total health to the believers. Hagin (cited in Hejzar 2009: 51) accordingly argues that; “healing the sick is God’s will because Christ bore our diseases. Just as He purchased our salvation through His death on the cross, so he has purchased our healing.” As a consequence, no one who believes in Christ should ever become sick.

On the other hand, in Word of Faith teachings economic benefits have to do with material provisions. No one is expected to be poor. It is argued that Jesus became poor that believers may become rich. It is therefore, maintained that there is no reason why Christians should be poor. The main portion of scripture used to justify these views is 3 John 2 which reads: “Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (see Seet 2005:156). Failure to attain any of the above benefits of redemption is put down to ignorance. It is usually understood as failing to understand that it is God’s will for them to enjoy the benefits that ensue from what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross.

This way of reasoning simply does not do justice to the biblical vision of redeemed humanity. It reduces and trivialises a great biblical idea. It is for this reason that we should now turn our attention to what the Bible teaches concerning salvation. From what we have said above it becomes clear that salvation in the Faith Movement is a loaded term which includes spiritual healing, physical healing, as well as deliverance from poverty.

3.6 A Biblical vision and destiny of redeemed Humanity

The doctrine of salvation in the New Testament has its background in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the concept of salvation is derived from the Hebrew *yeshuah*. It represents the following ideas: salvation, deliverance, welfare, as well as prosperity. *Yeshuah* and other related terms are in turn derived from the root *yasa* which ultimately speaks of deliverance (see White 1984: 967). White (1984:967), further points out that “the Lord ... is my salvation is the heart of the Old Testament.” In the New Testament, the idea of salvation comes from the Greek word *soteria*. It depicts the followings ideas: deliverance, preservation, safety, as well as salvation.

Before we could effectively address the biblical vision and destiny of the human race, it is important we first of all address certain concepts which depict the idea of salvation throughout the Bible. This helps to furnish with a comprehensive understanding of salvation.

3.6.1 Salvation as Redemption

One of the biblical depictions of salvation is the concept of redemption. We shall deal with this matter comprehensively as we examine the Christology of the Faith Movement in Chapter the next chapter. The fundamental idea of redemption is to buy back. John Stott (1986: 175) consequently points out that “the emphasis of the redemption image is on our sorry state – indeed our captivity – in sin which made an act of divine rescue necessary.” This aspect of redemption deals with the rescue or recovery of sinners from the bondage and power of sin.

The believers have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus (see 1Peter 1:18). The doctrine of redemption needs to be considered together with the doctrine of the fall of the human race. When the doctrine of redemption is examined in the light of the fall of the human race, it speaks of the restoration of the human race to God's original intention.

3.6.2 Salvation as healing

In the Gospels, more especially, the Synoptic Gospels, there is a very close link in usage between healing and salvation. In some cases the terms are even used interchangeably. This can be seen in Mark 5:34 where Jesus told the woman whom he had just healed from the flow of blood to go in peace because her faith had healed her. The word translated healed is the Greek

was promised in the Old Testament. The healings indicate that God through Jesus Christ is now dislodging the forces of evil. It is for this reason that Colign (2010: 126) further maintains:

Jesus' healings and exorcisms are an indication that the kingdom of God is dawning. Their object is not only alleviating of suffering but also bringing persons to participate in the reign of God. The fundamental meaning of Jesus' mighty deeds of healing and exorcism is this: God wills human wholeness – in its physical, psychological, and social dimensions.

Since Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom of God, human beings are able to in part experience salvation which touches every aspect of the individual. It must however, be pointed out that salvation has future implications as well. Healings are only a foretaste of the future eschatological blessings that those that believe in Jesus shall enjoy. Ladd (1974:211) in reference to miracles of healing in the Gospels, accordingly, writes:

They were pledges of the life of the eschatological kingdom which will finally mean immortality for the body. The kingdom of God is concerned not only with men's souls but with the salvation of the whole man. The limitation of these physical deliverances illustrate the nature of the present kingdom in contrast to its future manifestation (sic).

Ladd (1974: 211) further argues that, "in the eschatological kingdom all 'who are counted worthy to attain to that age' (Luke 20:35) will be saved from sickness and death in the immortal life of the resurrection." Salvation therefore, deals, with the past, present, and future life of the human race (see Colign 2010: 129). Ultimate healing is a future prospect when God's full salvific purposes would have been realised.

3.6.3 Salvation as New Creation

Salvation is also presented as new creation. Colign (2010: 112) notes that “the new creation describes eschatological cosmic realities that can be experienced in part in the present as the Spirit begins the work of renewal in persons and in the church.” Kittel, G. et al (1972: 254) explain that the concept of new creation depicts the fact “that what was earlier returns or repeats itself periodically in the cosmic course of things, so that in particular the last age corresponds to the first.” We need to remember that “the new creation takes place on three levels: cosmic (new heavens and new earth), corporate (new humanity), and individual (new self)” [see Colign 2010: 112]. The scope of this study only permits us to deal with the new humanity and the new self.

Through the incarnation, Jesus Christ made possible the new creation. Childers and Aquino (2003: 19) argue that “by becoming one of us, the Son of God reaffirmed the original goodness and purpose of creation.” The biblical vision of new creation is recapturing God’s original intention for creation. Hubbard (2002: 1) therefore, writes:

The biblical story, from beginning to end, can rightly be described as an epic of *new creation*. As its prologue opens with Elohim’s creation of heaven and earth, so its epilogue closes with the dramatic appearance of the new heaven and new earth – a place where sorrow and death are no more, and where the dwelling place of God is with his people. *Creatio originalis* give way to *creatio nova* as the one seated upon the throne announces, “Behold, I make all thing new!” (sic)

The biblical vision of salvation as new creation may be seen well in the Pauline conception of Christ as the second Adam. Jesus Christ makes it possible for the recreation of the human race. Hayes (2001: 38) in this regard notes that “Adam stands at the beginning of the old creation; Christ the new Adam stands at the beginning of the new creation. The cross of

Christ opens the way to the new creation which is revealed above all in the mystery of the resurrection.”

When salvation is depicted as new creation, we have in view the destiny of the human race. Hayes (2001:38) in this case therefore, argues that, “to understand salvation as a new creation means seeing creation in its proper relationship to its goal.” This concept is pregnant with theological overtones. Schwarz (2000:158) observes that “the vision of salvation and new creation would lose its driving force without the eschatological promise that permeates virtually the whole Bible.” Accordingly, Hayes (2001: 38) argues that:

If this new creation points ultimately to the eschatological fulfilment of God’s creative aim, within history it is to take the form of a genuine life in Christ (John 5:26; 6:48; 14:6; 1John 1:2; 5:11). This would involve a new unity of humankind (Eph 2:14) in which human beings will put on a new self “which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator” (Col 3:10).

Ultimately, God’s vision for redeemed humanity is recreation. This is to restore human beings to God’s original intention for them.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have been examining the doctrine of God as well as that of human beings. We were compelled to take this approach because in the Faith Movement, both God as well as human beings are seen to be in the same class. We, however, need to make it clear that this way of looking at things has absolutely no theological warrant. God is in God’s own class

while human beings belong to the general class of created things. We have seen that God is sovereign. Since God is sovereign, God controls and directs the affairs of all created things. We have also demonstrated that as a result of the fall human beings are sinners in need of the grace of God for redemption. Human beings were created in the image of God. They were created to be in a relationship of love and dependence on God. But through an act of rebellion against God, they sinned against God, and subsequently, fell away from God's love and communion. Of course, God still kept a promise of restoration for the human race. It is not a restoration to be gods. But this is a restoration of the human race to become what God has always intended us to be as human beings.

As we continue to analyse how the doctrines of the Christian faith are play out in Faith Movement, we now focus our attention on the Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement. In the next chapter our task is to examine how these two great doctrines of the Christian faith are treated in the Faith Movement.

CHAPTER 4

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT: THE CHRISTOLOGY AND PNEUMATOLOGY OF THE FAITH MOVEMENT

4.1 Introduction

Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement assume a rather narrow outlook. This movement “tends to flee from conflicts of the real world into the world of religious individual hope” (see Kim 2003:181). The ethical demands that Christ demands on Christians are largely neglected. We need to point out that to be converted to Christ is also to be converted to one another. Wiersbe (2001:36) therefore, is able to note that, “If a believer cannot get along with God, he cannot get along with others... The same Holy Spirit indwells each believer, so that we belong to each other in the Lord.”

In this chapter, our task is to explore the Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement. It is of great necessity that we do so, since both the Christology and Pneumatology of the Word of Faith Movement are rather vague.

Hocken (2009: 47) observes that “overall the faith movement has been characterized more by Hagin’s prosperity teaching than by his Christology. Similarly, as he refers to the Faith Movement in the West, J.N Horn (1989: 95) notes that “although the healing practices, the positive confessions and the prosperity message have received a great deal of attention in the evaluation of the movement, its Christology and anthropology have been largely neglected.” This is true of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well. This fact may be seen from the following assertion made by Walters (1996: 14) who argues that “the Holy Spirit who is the ‘anointed one’ brought forth the church on the day of Pentecost and commissioned her to be fruitful, multiply and fill the kingdom.”

Generally, “all Christologies may be reduced to two: the ontological, which deals with the person (nature and will) of Christ, and functional, which deals with the activities of Christ” (Folarin 2003; Prasad 2000: 398). Christology in Africa and Zambia in particular tends to lean towards the functional side. Thus, Folarin (2003) is correct when he observes that:

The Christological models often proposed by African scholars are functional. They are "Christologies from below." They focus on the deeds (or works) rather than the person or nature of Christ. The names of some of these models are revealing. The models include "Christ the Witch-Doctor", "Jesus the Medicine man", "Christ the Nganga", "Christ the Chief" ... All these names underscore the power of Jesus to deliver from oppressive situations.

Thomas Bohache (2008:75) further asserts that “the major purpose of African Christology is to find a view of Christ based in African realities and not merely taken over from European or North American Missionaries.” The Christology of the Faith Movement in this leans towards the functional aspect since Jesus is said to have become poor so that we may become rich. Jesus Christ therefore guarantees success to all His followers. All those that believe in

Jesus should never continue to experience pain and poverty. Since believers have been redeemed through Jesus Christ, this redemption does not only entail that an individual now enters a new relationship with God, it also implies that the individual should never suffer in his or her life. It is for the same reason that Oyedepo (2004: 5) maintains that “redemption is a spiritual, comprehensive insurance for a life of dignity. It is not limited to the soul and the spirit; it covers all areas of human endeavor. For whosoever the son of man has set free, he shall be free; he shall be free all around.”

The Pneumatology of the Faith, Movement on the other hand, is similar to the Pneumatology of the Pentecostal Movement in General. Kim (2003:181) argues that Pentecostal Pneumatology concentrates on speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophecies.” Further, Kim (2003:181) as he cites Moltmann notes; “where are the charismatic persons for the life of everyday, in politics, in the peace movement and in the ecological movement? Pentecostal Pneumatology generally tends to focus on an individual while neglecting the wider society. What is being said here simply illustrates the role that experience plays in Pentecostal Pneumatology. Our task in this chapter is to demonstrate the relationship between the Christology and Pneumatology and try to show as much as possible how these great doctrines of the Christian faith play out in the Faith Movement. As we proceed to develop this chapter we shall first of all examine Christology from a biblical perspective.

4.2 Christology: A Biblical Perspective

Veselin Kesich (1991:11, 143) points out that the question “who is Jesus?” has been repeatedly asked throughout the centuries both by those “outside” and those “inside” the church. This question is foundational to understanding biblical Christology. The response given to this question reflects the views one holds regarding Christ. In this section, it is important to first of all reflect on a Biblical Christology and then later apply the insights gained to the subject matter of our study. Historically, theologians have tended to employ certain biblical titles as they present their Christology. In what follows we need to reflect on some of these Christological titles as presented in the New Testament.

4.2.1 Son of Man

It is generally accepted that the title Son of man was Jesus’ most preferred self-designation (Dunn 1998: 9; Erickson 1991:18, Morris 1990: 101). As he demonstrates the popularity of the phrase Son of Man Erickson (1991: 18) observes that “the expression occurs over eighty times in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John and in every case it is used by Jesus of Himself.”

Jesus applies the self-designation Son of Man in several ways. Morris (1990: 102) correctly points out that “it seems that Jesus used the expression to bring out certain aspects of the work he came to do.” Firstly, Jesus used this title in reference to His suffering, death, and subsequent resurrection (Matt 17:9; Mark 8:31; Luke 9: 22).When Jesus uses the title Son of

Man in this context he clearly speaks about his humanity. Kesich (1992:155) in this regard therefore says:

Whenever Jesus spoke about his suffering, passion and death, he always referred to himself as the Son of Man. When he described his humble human condition, he again used this title: “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Lk 9:58, Mt 8:20).

The title Son of man is also used to point the fact that Jesus Christ has authority. “The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Matt 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). This assertion suggests more than just that Jesus was human. It opens a window to His divinity. Jesus also has authority over the Sabbath. “The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). Morris (1990: 102) as he reflects on the incidence of the paralyzed man who was lowered before Jesus to be healed notes:

Jesus spoke with authority in areas where hearers would not have expected him to say what he said. Thus he told the paralyzed man lowered before him: “Your sins are forgiven.” When people objected to this as blasphemy, Jesus said, “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins and then he did the miracle to demonstrate the fact (Mark 2:5, 10-12).

This usage of the title; Son of Man; clearly points to the divinity of Christ. If it is the divine preserve of God to forgive sins, by forgiving sins Jesus was claiming divinity. Jesus also claimed authority over the Sabbath as we have noted above. The only one who can be lord of the Sabbath is God since he instituted it. Morris (1990: 102) further says, “To claim authority over a divine institution was to make a very high claim indeed.”

Jesus Christ also used the title Son of Man in connection with His second coming (Matt 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). The Son of Man will come with His angels in heavenly glory (Matt 25:31).

This Christological designation is important if the Faith Movement can be studied effectively in this country. This is more so since Word of Faith Preachers seem to insinuate that true believers should never suffer nor be sick. But as we have broached above we can clearly see that the Son of Man suffered. It is claimed that one of the benefits of the death of Jesus on the cross was to take away sicknesses, poverty and other problems. We shall deal with the matter comprehensively when we address the way the atonement is understood in the Faith Movement below. In the meantime we need to address ourselves to yet another Christological title.

4.2.2 Son of God

It is important to observe from the very onset that the title Son of God has been misrepresented in the Faith Movement. There is a suggestion that Jesus was adopted as a son of God. Hagin (2007: 17) for instance implies this when he points out that Jesus was begotten when He was raised from the dead. This inherent adoptionism in the Faith Movement demands that we examine in detail the theological significance of this designation of Jesus as the Son of God.

The title Son of God is used severally in the Bible. Kesich (1992: 163) claims that the title “was applied to angels, to the king, to faithful Israelites, and in the New Testament to all men.” Guthrie (1981: 301-302) corroborates with Kesich’s claim when he notes:

It is noticeable at once that the idea of divine sonship is applied in a number of different ways:

- (i) Angelic beings are described as sons of God (as in Gen 6: 1-4, Job 1:6; 2:1).
- (ii) Adam is described as a son of God (Luke 3: 38).
- (iii) In a more particular sense Israelites are called sons of God (e.g. Deut 14:1-2; Jer 3: 19-20; Hos 1:10).

It must be pointed out that when the title son of God is applied to Jesus Christ it demonstrates a unique relationship that exists between Jesus and the Father. Brown (1994: 82) thus observes that, “On the lips of Christians this title attributed to Jesus not only a special but a unique relationship to God.”

At the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus a voice spoke from heaven affirming that Jesus was the beloved Son of God (Matt 3:17; 17:1-5 and Paras.). Jesus is not the Son of God by adoption as the case is with believers. McGrath (2001: 352) insists that a “distinction is drawn between the sonship of believers, which arises through adoption, and that of Jesus, which originates from his being “God’s own son” (Rom 8:31)” as we proceed with our study we need to turn our attention to another Christological title which figures prominently in the Faith Movement.

4.2.3 Messiah

The word Messiah (Hebrew) or Christ (Greek) means the anointed one. In the Old Testament the categories of people who were anointed to fulfill a particular task were the Priests (Lev 8:30), Prophets (1Kings 19:16), and Kings (1Samuel 10:1; 16:13). McGrath (2001:351) correctly points out that:

Although ancient Israel anointed both prophets and priests, the term is primarily reserved for the anointing of a king. Within the context of ancient Israel's strongly theocentric worldview, the king was regarded as someone who was appointed by God. Anointing – that is, the rubbing or covering of someone with olive oil – was thus a public sign of having been chosen by God for the task of kingship.

On the other hand, Dunn (1998:5) argues that,

It is likely that anyone who raised the sort of popular interest and excitement which John the Baptist and Jesus provoked would have been regarded as a candidate for such a Messianic role (cf. John 1:20; 6:15). And a basic fact is that Jesus was executed as a Messianic Pretender – king of the Jews (Mark 15:26 pars.). In the hearing before Caiaphas the question was raised, “Are you the Messiah, Son of the Blessed?”

While Jewish nationalistic Messianic aspirations were popular at that time Jesus never fitted that category. Kesich (1992: 159) accordingly writes:

In contrast to the popular and apocalyptic conceptions of the Messiah, Jesus lived the role of God's anointed one through suffering. He thereby brought into existence a new people of God, which he personified, a new community which followed and which shared his destiny. Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God points to a messianic self-consciousness which could not have been fully expressed by any current title or image. Jesus stood outside the circle of “popular messianic leaders.”

Jesus discharged His messianic role through the enablement of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4: 17-19; Acts 10:38). He was anointed to carry out God's mission in the world. Binz (2010: 1) consequently observes that "the gospel increasingly demonstrates that the inaugurator of God's kingdom is the suffering Messiah who will give his life to bring salvation to the world." The concept of a suffering Messiah does not make sense in the Word of Faith Movement. Anderson (2004: 221) accordingly, points out that "material and financial prosperity and health are sometimes seen as evidence of spirituality and the positive and necessary role of perfection and suffering is often ignored."

4.3 Christology: A Historical Perspective

Early Christological developments either focused on the divinity of Christ or His humanity. Two Christologies dominated the early church. These Christologies were representative of two cities: Alexandria and Antioch. Johnson and Weber (1993: 129) note that "Alexandria was known as the center for the Word-Flesh Christology while Antioch became the center for Word-Man Christology." The Alexandrian school focused most of its attention on the divinity of Christ. The Antiochian school on the other hand, focused more on the humanity of Christ. We have chosen to deal with the Alexandrian and Antiochian Christologies because insights gained from examining these Christologies will help us to effectively evaluate the Christology of the Faith Movement more especially where the relationship between His divinity and His humanity are concerned.

Philip Schaff (1950:706-707) summarizes the orientation of the two schools in this manner:

The Alexandrian school of theology, with its characteristic speculative and mystical turn, favored a connection of the divine and human in the act of incarnation so close, that it was in danger of losing the human in the divine, or atleast of mixing it with the divine; while conversely, the Antiochian or Syrian school, in which sober intellect and reflection prevailed, inclined to the opposite extreme of an abstract separation of the two natures. In both cases the mystery of the incarnation, the veritable and permanent union of the divine and human in the one person of Christ, which is essential to the idea of Redeemer and Mediator, is more or less weakened or altered.

As we proceed with this study we need to first of all deal with Alexandrian Christology.

McGrath (1998: 51) sum ups Alexandrian Christology precisely when he writes:

We could summarize the trajectory of Alexandrian Christology along the following lines: if human nature is to be deified, it must be united with the divine nature. God must become united with human nature in such a manner that the latter is enabled to share in the life of God. This, the Alexandrians argued, was precisely what happened in and through the incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ. The second person of the Trinity assumed human nature and by doing so, ensured divinization. God became human, in order that humanity might become divine.

Before we address departures in Alexandrian Christology there is need to take into account what Schaff (1950: 706) pens as the four elements that constitute orthodox doctrine concerning Christology: “He is true God; He is true man; He is one person; and the divine and human in him, with all the personal union and harmony, remain distinct.” Apollinarius a key figure in the Alexandrian school represented a major departure from orthodox Christology as spelt out by Schaff above.

The basis of the teaching of Apollinarius was that the divine (Logos) and the human natures were merged into one nature. The full significance of the teaching of Apollinarius is brought out by Kelly (1958: 291-292) in the following statement:

The flesh, being dependent for its motion on some other principle of movement and action (whatever that principle may be), is not of itself a complete living entity, but in order to become one enters into fusion with something else. So it united itself with the heavenly governing principle [i.e. the Logos] and was fused with it ... Thus out of the moved and the mover was compounded a single living entity – not two, nor one composed of two complete, self-moving principles.

Consequently, Apollinarius taught the full deity of Christ while minimizing if not rejecting all together, His humanity. He could therefore, “speak of a crucifixion of the Logos, and a worship of his flesh” (Schaff 1950:710). His main influence was soteriology. Kelly (1958: 291) points out that, “He was convinced that, if the divine is separated from the human in the Saviour, our redemption is imperiled. Considered merely as man, Christ had no saving life to bestow.”

The Gospels project Jesus Christ both divine as well as human. Any suggestion that He was less than human is a serious theological misdirection. In what follows we shall demonstrate how the Faith Movement is a departure from orthodox Christology. Before we do that there is need to say something on Antiochian Christology.

While Apollinarius denied that the integrity of the two natures in Christ, the Antiochian school had the tendency to swing the pendulum to the other extreme. They denied that there was one personality in Christ. Schaff (1950:717) reproduces the views of Theodore of

Mopsuestia a representative of the Antiochian school who disputed the term theotokos in this manner:

“Mary,” says he, “bore Jesus, not the Logos, for the Logos was, and continues to be omnipresent, though he dwelt in Jesus in a special manner from the beginning. Therefore Mary is strictly the mother of Christ, not the mother of God. Only in a figure, *per anaphoram*, can she be called also the mother of God, because God was in a peculiar sense in Christ.

Nestorius who also stood in the Antiochian tradition argued vigorously against addressing Mary as theotokos (Mother of God). He could not bring himself to accept the idea that Mary is the Mother of God because God cannot have a mother. He therefore, proposed that Mary should be addressed as christotokos (Christ-bearing). Kelly (1958:311) describes Nestorius’ views candidly:

Nestorius used intemperate language which was calculated to inflame people whose approach differed from his own. God cannot have a mother, he argued, and no creature could have engendered the Godhead; Mary bore a Man, the vehicle of divinity but not God. The Godhead cannot have been carried for nine months in a woman’s womb, or have been wrapped in baby-clothes, or have suffered death and been buried.

Soteriology is at the center of the two schools that we have briefly reviewed. The insights gained from the two movements are helpful to our study since the Faith Movement occupies itself with the benefits that accrue to the believer through the death of Jesus Christ. In the Faith Movement, it is generally accepted that through the death of Christ on the cross the believer has been redeemed from all problems which includes physical, social, as well as

economic dimensions. It becomes, therefore, necessary to provide an examination concerning the doctrine of the atonement.

4.4 The doctrine of the Atonement

The heartbeat of the Word of Faith Christology is anchored on what Jesus did for the believers through His death on the cross. In the Faith Movement it is widely accepted that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross has made possible for believers to enjoy several benefits. These benefits are usually referred to as redemptive rights. Concerning these redemptive rights, Oyedepo (2004:7) writes:

When you know your redemptive rights and positioning, you will develop and constantly carry a victory mentality. Until you know and have an understanding of who you are, by virtue of your new birth, you will still remain in the very bondage of Satan from which Jesus has already set you free. But when you know these things – the things that accompany salvation (Heb.6:9) – it become easy for you to appreciate your liberty.

The redemptive rights or benefits that result from the death of Jesus Christ among other things include new birth, physical healing, as well as financial success. In a nutshell, Christology of the Faith Movement revolves around their particular view of the atonement, which asserts that through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ did not only pay for sins but he also provided for physical healing. In the next two sections we wish to focus our attention on the study of the biblical teaching on atonement. We would like to examine several ways in which the atonement is presented in the Bible.

4.4.1 The Atonement in the Old Testament

McDonald (1985:27) observes that “the reality of the atonement arises out of the fact of the estrangement of God and man. It is because sin is real that the atonement is required.” The reality of the atonement finds its foundation in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Hill (2004: 25) corroborates with this viewpoint when he writes:

In the covenant graciously established with Abraham and his descendants, particularly in its mosaic form, God provided an elaborate system of cultic observances, involving the death of animals, for dealing with the sins of his covenant people. While offerings of grain, oil, and wine were acceptable as sacrifices of consecration and thanksgiving, to approximate the place of the sinner’s death only the lifeblood of an animal, a “clean” and unblemished animal, was permitted to be offered. The symbolic role of the animal’s blood was crucial.

In the atonement we see an innocent victim taking the place of the guilty party. Thus a substitutionary principle was established. Of particular importance to our study are the following words: “For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11 KJV). In this passage of scripture an innocent animal had to be sacrificed in the place of the sinner. The Blood that makes atonement is representative of death. Nicole (2004:39) affirmatively says, “The life of an animal is in its blood as long as it is alive. When it dies, life departs from it as the blood flows out of its body.” Rooker and Cole (2000: 53) corroborate:

The blood of the sacrificial victim makes atonement for the worshiper, for the victim’s blood (life) is being offered in the worshiper’s place. Thus the concept of substitution is foundational to the understanding of the Israelite sacrificial system. The emphasis on the blood is not merely the existence of blood within the body or the natural vitality of blood that was effective for atonement. The focus is on blood that is shed.

In the sacrificial system the victim suffers and subsequently dies in place of the worshiper. The worshiper as a consequence receives forgiveness of sins. Gruenler (2004:94) surmises well this principle when she observes that:

The atoning work of Yahweh in the Old Testament is exemplified in the shedding of blood for the remission of sin, by which he reveals that rebellion against him is deserving of death and that only by the divine principle of a life for a life is his demand for righteousness and justice satisfied.

4.4.2 The Atonement in the New Testament

In the New Testament the idea of atonement is closely linked to the life, death, burial, and subsequent resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This whole enterprise is motivated by the love of God for humanity (John 3:16). McDonald (1985: 25) in this regard argues that:

It is the biblical conception of the atonement that enables us to attain to a right view of God. For in the atoning cross there comes into fullest action his love and his holiness, which are not just detachable attributes of God but realities of his fundamental being. It is the action of his essential nature as holy love that redeems mankind. The holiness of God is the creative principle of his justice that would punish sin, and the love of God is the creative principle of his grace that would forgive sinners.

The atoning work of Jesus encompasses the entire life of Jesus. In other words His birth, death, burial, and resurrection were part of God's redemptive plan for humanity. This assertion is attested to by Gruenler (2004: 96) who notes:

Christ performs a work of redemption both in life and in his death and resurrection which fulfills the law "to the smallest stroke" (Mt 5:17-18). It is a work of grace on our behalf, but it is a work of grace because it is first of all a work fulfilling the Law. We are saved by works, the works of Jesus.

It therefore follows that the works of Jesus have a redemptive purpose. This truth is demonstrated by the words of Jesus in John 20:30-31. Here the miraculous activities that Jesus performs are recorded so that the people may believe. And by believing they may have eternal life. Through His life, death, and subsequent resurrection Jesus Christ brings people in right standing with God. Gruenler (2004: 96) accordingly, observes that:

Jesus the Messiah thus performs a double work of redemption. First, as the new Adam, he actualizes true humanity in himself by perfectly fulfilling the moral law of the Old Testament. Second, in his death and resurrection he fulfills the ceremonial law of the Old Testament as the perfect substitute who bears the penalty of death on our behalf, satisfying vindicating and propitiating divine holiness once and for all.

Hooker (1994: 29) corroborates well with Gruenler when she insists that, “Christ’s death, then, is no accident, but part of God’s plan for mankind’s redemption.” Further, Hooker (1994:30) points out that, “Christ is not simply the victim but the willing participant in his death.” Thus in Mark 10:45 we encounter the fact that the Son of Man gave His life as a ransom for many.

McDonald (1985: 68), in reference to the words of Jesus in Mark 10:45 writes:

The passage more than any other in the synoptic Gospels reveals Jesus’ own conviction about his death. In classical usage the term ransom (lytron) was uniformly applied to expiatory sacrifices, and this is the idea here. A ransom is not needed at all except where a life has been forfeited. What Christ is saying, then, is that the forfeited lives of men are ransomed by his own life of self-surrender in death. By giving his life he frees man from death; in his death man has life.

The word translated ransom in Mark 10:45 has the general meaning of a price paid for the release of the slave or prisoner of war (see Dowd 2003: 996). The death of Jesus is the ransom that was paid for the liberation of human beings from sin (McDonald 1985:68).

The death of Jesus Christ equally plays an important role in the Pauline understanding of the atonement. Ladd (1993: 465) observes that “Paul uses variety of expressions referring to Christ’s death, his blood, his cross, or his crucifixion.” To properly understand the Pauline view of the atonement it is important to examine some concepts that Paul employs in this case.

As we proceed with examining Pauline concepts concerning Paul’s understanding of the atonement we need to first examine how Paul understands the idea of redemption. In Pauline thought the concept of redemption is represented by the following terms, *apolutrosis*, *agorazo*, and its related term *exagorazo*.

The term *apolutrosis* is used in several places in the Pauline corpus. Paul uses it in reference to the salvation of sinners through the work of Jesus Christ. Its basic lexical significance is to redeem or set free through payment of a ransom. Barclay (1974:195), points out that *apolutrosis* is used in the following significant ways in the New Testament:

- (i) It is used of our ‘redemption from sin’, and always in connection with the work of Jesus Christ. It projects the idea that we have received redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Eph 1: 7; Col 1: 14; Heb 9:15). This demonstrates that forgiveness of sins is closely related to the death of Jesus Christ.
- (ii) It is used of ‘the new relationship of friendship’ into which human beings enter through the work of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:24).

(iii) It implies, not only forgiveness for past sins, but ‘new, changed life for the future’. It implies adoption into the family of God (Rom 8:23).

(iv) *Apolutrosis* does not end with this life. It is eschatological. It is a foretaste of a process and a glory which will find their consummation in the coming of Christ in heavenly places (Luke 21:28; Eph 4:30).

Redemption in the New Testament is also represented by two further terms: *agorazo* (and its closely related term *exagorazo*) and *peripoieomai*. The term *agorazo* literally means to buy back (Arndt and Gingrich 1957: 13). As he refers to *agorazo/exagorazo* Penney (2000: 243) further notes that, “*agorazo* means to buy at a market place (1Cor 6:20, 7:23; 2Peter 2:1). When *agorazo* is prefixed *ek* (“out of”) it means that believers have been bought at the market place and released out of it (Gal 3:13; 4:5).

Peripoieomai on the other hand, carries the following ideas, to save or preserve, acquire or obtain for oneself (Arndt and Gingrich 1957: 655). In Acts 20:28 the church is said to have been acquired through God’s blood. Penney (2000: 243) intimates that while *agorazo* emphasizes the idea of purchasing, the verb *peripoieomai* puts emphasis on “acquired.” This shows that the church is therefore, God’s possession. This idea is reiterated in Ephesians 1:14 where believers are preserved until the redemption of God’s possession (*peripoiesis*). The believers have been acquired to be God’s possession.

A further concept that demonstrates the Pauline understanding of the atonement is the word reconciliation. The idea of reconciliation (*katallage*) plays an important part in Pauline

understanding of the atonement. In Romans 5:11 *katallage* is translated as atonement (KJV) as well as reconciliation (NIV). Penney (2000: 244) points out that “reconciliation means a change of relationship from hostility to harmony and peace.” Colign (2010: 177) further notes that, “to reconcile is to make peace (see Eph 2:15-16). In biblical terms, peace means far more than lack of conflict; it is a state of wholeness and well-being.” God takes the initiative in reconciling alienated human beings to God. Colign (2010: 192) accordingly, writes:

In reconciliation, God desires to bring wholeness and peace to those who have been fractured by sin. God has borne the cost of reconciliation in Christ and now offers forgiveness to all who respond. Besides being adopted as God’s children, believers are joined to one another in Christ to form a new community empowered by the Spirit.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is foundational to the image of reconciliation in the New Testament. It is for the same reason that Turaki (2006:52) notes:

... Grounding of peace in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross receives great emphasis by the apostle Paul (Rom 5: 8-11; Eph.2:14-15; Col. 1:19-22 and 2Cor. 5:18-21). Paul relates God’s peace to Christ’s work of atonement and reconciliation and then grounds the theology of God’s redemptive work of Christ: “Having made peace through the blood of the cross” (Col 1:20).

Through the cross the enmity that once existed between God and human beings has been removed (Rom 5:11; Eph. 2:11-16). Reconciliation therefore brings peace between God and human beings as well as between individual human beings (see Turaki 2006: 53).

What has been said so far should naturally lead us to consider yet one more image of the atonement in Pauline corpus. The imagery is found in Romans 3:25 where Paul speaks of Christ as having been presented by God as a sacrifice of atonement (NIV) and as the propitiation (KJV). The Greek word which translates this idea is *hilasterion* (

for something.” On this understanding of the verb “*nasa*”, McCrossan (1930: 18) maintains that:

We all admit that this verb (*nasa*) in Isaiah 53: 12 teaches us that Christ bore our sins vicariously; so all unprejudiced minds must admit that this very same verb (*nasa*) in Isaiah 53:4 teaches us that Christ bore our sicknesses vicariously.

However, not everyone agrees with McCrossan. John Stott for instance does not buy into McCrossan’s arguments. Stott (1986: 244) advances that there are three difficulties raised by McCrossan’s understanding of the verb “*nasa*”. Stott (1986: 244) firstly notes that “*nasa* is used in a variety of Old Testament contexts, including the carrying of the ark and other tabernacle furniture, carrying of armour, weapons and children. So the verb ‘to bear’ (*nasa*) in itself does not mean to bear punishment.” Secondly, Stott (1986: 245) argues that “the concept McCrossan puts forward does not make sense. ‘bearing of the penalty of sin’ is readily intelligible, since sin’s penalty is death and Christ died for our death in our place. But what is the penalty of sickness?” Thirdly, Stott (1986: 245) maintains that “Matthew (who is the evangelist most preoccupied with the Old Testament Scripture) applies Isaiah 53:4 not to the atoning death but to the healing ministry of Jesus.”

Classical Pentecostals have always insisted that there is healing in the atonement. Anyabwile (2007:148) points out that this type of understanding of the atonement appeared in the movement at or near its inception. According to Anyabwile (2007: 148), Seymour listed three benefits of the atonement:

First, the atonement provided forgiveness for sins, second, Jesus' atonement ensured sanctification leading to adoption as sons of God and freedom from sin. Third, the atonement destroyed sickness and disease and healed physical bodies.

Menzies and Menzies (2000: 167) staunch supporters of the notion that there is healing in the atonement commenting on how Matthew uses Isaiah 53:4 in Mathew 8:17 write:

...regardless of how Isaiah understood Isaiah 53:4, Matthew understood it messianically and applied it to the healing ministry of Jesus. In so doing, Matthew, writing after the cross and the resurrection, bears witness to the faith of the early church. Matthew 8: 14-17 establishes that the early church understood Isaiah 53:4-5 as a messianic prophecy fulfilled in Jesus' atoning work on the cross (cf 1Peter 2:24) and, further, that his prophecy included the gift of physical healing.

Of course this type of reasoning cannot be sustained for long. It does not take into account the fact that the full restoration of all things which will include the restoration of bodies is still a future prospect. Moo (1997:40) therefore argues that "not everything that was won by our Lord in His atonement was fully realized immediately, for as Romans 8:22 observes, the whole creation is waiting for its release and final redemption at the second coming of our Lord."

In the Faith Movement this conception of the atonement is extended further. It does not just cover for the forgiveness of sins and the healing of diseases. It is stretched to include material prosperity as well. In Zambia, "the notion that through the cross of Jesus Christ God has provided for all the needs of the people has become very attractive" (Chanda 2010:10). This idea builds on Hagin's assertion that "a lot of folks understand that in Christ, they've been

redeemed from spiritual death and sickness and disease. But they don't realise that they've been redeemed from poverty" (cited in Chanda 2010:10).

Oyedepo (2001: 16) as he exults in the achievements of the atonement writes:

Everything God is and has, is now made available to you. You have become one with Christ – you are joined with Him. Moreover, you have gained in Christ all that you lost in Adam, in the beginning, you have regained in Christ. You are now restored to your former place of authority and dominion. You can now hold sway over every situation in life, by virtue of the new class you have taken on. You are as invincible and as indestructible as God.

It is therefore, expected of every Christian never to be sick or poor. This is because Christ paid the price on the cross. One wonders whether this is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. However, these notions are fuelled by aspirations for people to break free from poverty.

The Christology of the Faith Movement usually takes on a functional slant. Its emphasis is on what Jesus Christ has done for the believer through His death on the cross. It is therefore argued that through the stripes of Jesus Christ believers have been healed from all the maladies that afflict them. This includes social-economic challenges as well as illnesses. It is felt that Jesus paid for all these. It is clear that the Christology of the Faith Movement more especially its conception of the atonement is wanting at many points.

When the doctrine of the atonement is pressed to its logical conclusion it becomes apparent that it does not in any way guarantee that all diseases will be healed here and now. It does not equally support any notion that when Jesus died on the cross he provided for material success. It is at this point that the Word of Faith proponents strip the atonement of its eschatological significance. It must be conceded that through His death and subsequent resurrection, Jesus has overcome the power of sin and hostile forces. But it needs to be made clear that the final consummation of that victory is still a future reality.

In the Faith Movement it is not taken automatically that simply because Christ through His death and subsequent resurrection has made it possible for Christian to become wealthy, healthy, and successful; that Christians will become rich. They need to fight for it. This is where the anointing which exemplifies the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Faith Movement. For instance, Oyedepo (1998: 7) defines the anointing as “the empowerment of the Spirit of God for supernatural accomplishments.” Oyedepo (1998:7) further notes that the anointing is the “Spirit at work in man (sic), producing extraordinary results.” Having made these comments let us now turn our attention to the Pneumatology of the Faith Movement.

4.5 Pneumatology and the Faith Movement

The ‘Word’ and the ‘Spirit’ are essential concepts in the word of Faith Movement. They are significant particularly, because they provide a window on how the doctrine of revelation is understood in the Faith Movement. These two concepts, therefore, provide us with a window

into Faith Movement Pneumatology. The word of God is usually conceived in a two-fold manner. First, the word of God is regarded as the *logos*; which is usually associated with the written word, the Bible. Second, the word of God is viewed as the *rhema*. The *rhema* is usually associated with the spoken word. This happens when the Spirit of God makes the words from the Bible come alive. This is where the Faith Movement is founded. It is on this unique understanding of the *rhema* where the entire Faith Movement theological edifice is grounded. It is here where we can locate the philosophical justification of this movement.

The main thrust of this chapter is to examine several ways in which the notion of the *rhema* word is used in the Faith Movement more especially here in Zambia. As we do so we shall also simultaneously devote some time to do a comparative study of the *rhema* and the *logos*. As we develop this chapter, we shall first of all how the “*logos* and *rhema*” concepts are used in the New Testament. We shall conclude this section by demonstrating how these concepts feed into the Faith Movement Pneumatology.

4.5.1 The Rhema concept in the New Testament

“The written word (*logos*) must become the quickened word (*rhema*) to create proper faith” says Robert Straube (2010: 125). This idea is shared by almost all Word of Faith teachers. It is generally fuelled by the belief that the *logos* is different from the *rhema*. Accordingly, Straube (2010: 126) further speaks of the *logos* in this manner:

“Logos” is the unchanging, self-existent “word of God.” Its God’s counsel, settled in eternity before time began, and due to continue on into eternity long after time has run its course. David spoke of this divine *logos* in Psalm 119:89 when he said, “forever O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.”

On the other hand, Straube (2010: 127) contrasts the rhema and the logos in this manner:

“Rhema” is derived from a verb meaning to “speak,” and denotes specifically a word that is spoken; something that occurs in time and space. In Romans 10:17, Paul said “... faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” He used the word “rhema,” not “logos”.

Additionally, Law (2006: 45) argues that:

Both rhema and logos are Greek words that are translated “the Word of God,” but logos has a greater context. Logos refers to the Word of God in its entirety, from Genesis to Revelation. It is the inspired Word of God that is forever settled in heaven. The word rhema means “a word that is spoken.” It is the word used when God takes a part of the whole Bible and speaks it to you under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The logos is seen as usually pointing to the written corpus which is usually referred to as the Bible. The “rhema” on the other hand, is often seen as a revelation from God. This revelation takes place when the Holy Spirit breathes upon the “logos” so that it becomes a living word. This type of reasoning does not take seriously the work of the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit relates to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as well as to the work of the Holy Spirit in directing human affairs. The Bible in its entirety is the divine word of God. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit in that case. Therefore to make an assertion that the *logos* is different from the rhema is a moot point.

In the New Testament there are several instances where the logos and rhema are used interchangeably. To demonstrate this it is necessary we examine some important portions of scripture which are usually employed by faith teachers to illustrate this seeming difference.

4.5.1.1 The rhema as employed in Matthew 4:4

In the above portion of scripture Jesus rebuffs the Devil's suggestion to turn the stones into bread so as to prove that He was indeed the son of God by pointing out that man does not live by bread alone but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. In the temptation periscope (Matthew 4:1-11), as He responded to the Devil's temptations, Jesus responded by quoting portions of scripture from Deuteronomy 6 and 8. Davies and Alison (1988: 352) accordingly observe that, "in each temptation Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy, from Deut. 8:3 in 4:4, from Deut. 6:16 in 4:7, and Deut 6:13 in 4:10."

The words found in Matthew 4:4 are a direct citation of the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 8:3. In both passages of scripture the rhema is used to convey the idea of the word of God. Jesus was therefore, in Matthew 4:4, not referring to the rhema as the now word of God. He was referring in particular to the instructions given by Moses to the Children of Israel. Consequently, the word *rhema* as used both in Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4 is used as if it were *logos*. Peterson (2010: 45) accordingly writes:

The Hebrew word for "Word [of the Lord]" is *dabar*. This word in the Septuagint was translated into two Greek words *logos* (word, speech, discourse, reason, account, decree, etc) and *rhema* (word, speech, utterance, etc). Obviously these two are used interchangeably for the same concept when applied and translated from *dabar*.

This is also true regarding the way *rhema* is used in Matthew 4:4. Since Matthew 4:4 is referring to Deut. 8: 3 it is clear that Jesus is referring to the word of God in general. This particular principle: "that man does not live on bread alone" can therefore apply to the entire written word of God. God's word in its entirety is dependable.

4.5.1.2 Rhema in Romans 10:17

To properly read this portion of scripture it is necessary to take into account the context in which Paul writes these words. This passage is speaking about how human beings may receive salvation from God through Christ. Salvation is now only possible by believing the gospel. In a sense Romans chapter ten deals with the end of the law (see Käsemann 1980: 279). Thus from now on salvation cannot be obtained through observance of the law, but by obeying the gospel. “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4 NIV).

Faith comes as a result of obeying and believing the word (rhema); the word (rhema) of faith which is proclaimed (Rom 10:8). Consequently, if one confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised Him from the dead, the same will be saved (Rom 10:9). Constable (2010) thus writes:

In the early church the phrase “Jesus is Lord” was one of the most common and simple expressions by which believers confessed their faith in Christ (cf Acts 2:36; 1Cor. 8:6; 12:3; Phil. 2:11). It is a confession parallel and very similar to Israel’s basic confession of Yahweh: “Yahweh our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4, the Shema).

It therefore, follows that when Paul in Romans 10:17 points out that faith comes by hearing and hearing through the

above in our analysis of Romans 10:17. In contrast to Leckie, Rudolf Schnackenburg (1991: 280) observes:

The word (

going to live. He believed the word (logos) that Jesus had spoken to him and went away. The man believed the logos and his son was healed.

Logos is also used in the context of spiritual gifts in 1Corinthians 12: 8. In this passage the word logos is used twice as the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. The first one refers to the utterance of the wisdom of God as revealed through the Gospel of Christ as one is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The word of knowledge as a spiritual gift most likely refers to receiving insights on the meaning of the Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit (see Fee 1989:593). The logos in this passage is used in a very specific way. This brief analysis concerning the specific usage of the logos clearly demonstrates that these terms (rhema and logos) are used interchangeably.

4.6 The Theology of the Word of God in the Faith Movement

So far focus has been concentrated on examining the logos and the rhema concepts as used in the Bible. Thus far it has been demonstrated that in the New Testament the logos and the rhema when referring to the word of God are used interchangeably. As we examine the theology of the Word of God within the Faith Movement it is appropriate we start by listening to a very famous voice in the Faith Movement. Paul Yonggi Cho (n.d)²⁷ thus writes:

In the Greek language there are two different words for 'word', logos and rhema. The world was created by the Word, logos of God. Logos is the general Word of God, stretching from Genesis to Revelation, for all these books directly or indirectly tell about the Word, Jesus Christ. By reading the logos from Genesis to Revelation, you can receive all the knowledge

²⁷ Paul yonggi Cho is Senior Pastor and Founder of Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea. It is the world's largest church.

you need to know about God and His promises; but just by reading you do not receive faith. You have received knowledge and understanding about God, but you do not receive faith. Romans 10:17 shows us that the material used to build faith is more than just reading God's Word: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." In this scripture, 'word' is not logos, but rhema. Faith specifically comes by hearing the rhema.

The main philosophical reason for maintaining that the logos and the rhema are different is the fact that the logos is said not to impart faith. Faith can only be imparted by the rhema. It is for this reason that Yonggi Cho (n.d) defines the "rhema" as a specific word to a specific person in a specific situation. Surprisingly, Yonggi Cho in the above quote says the logos either directly or indirectly says something about Jesus Christ. One cannot help but wonder how the logos that testifies about Jesus Christ can fail to impart faith. This is ironical; more especially that the logos says something about Jesus but fails to do so in a specific manner.

This distinction between logos and the rhema poses serious challenges as far as the theology of the Word of God is concerned. At the most, this way of reasoning is charged with neo-orthodox ideas. Walters (1996:15) a representative of the Faith Movement accordingly writes:

Although the Bible is of utmost importance, it is not knowing Bible verses alone that will change us. Some people make the mistake by saying the Bible is the word of God. This is not strictly true. It is God's record and it contains His word, but it also contains the words of man and the words of Satan. Jesus was not talking about the Bible, He was talking about God's word in the Bible, when He said to Satan, "... *it is written, 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'*" (sic).

It is therefore, necessary to examine some theological assumptions concerning the Word of God in the Faith Movement in the section that follow.

4.6.1 The rhema word imparts faith

In the faith Movement it is claimed that the Word of God only becomes effectual when it is energized by the Holy Spirit so that it becomes the rhema. To lead the discussion in this section let me again cite a few words from Yonggi Cho:

Peter never walked on the water because of logos, which gives general knowledge about God. Peter required that Christ give a specific word to him: Peter asked, "Lord, if you are Jesus, command me to come." Jesus replied, "Come." The word Christ gave to Peter was not logos, but rhema. He gave a specific word, "Come", to a specific person, Peter, in a specific situation, a storm. Rhema brings faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by rhema. Peter never walked on the water by knowledge of God alone. Peter had rhema.

This is an interesting interpretation of the biblical text found in Matthew 14: 28-29. Peter is said to have walked on water because of the rhema. The word of God as logos is ineffective in this particular case. Peter needed a rhema in order to walk on water. It is the rhema that is able to make things happen! Even a casual examination of the above text will show that the passage is not about rhema or logos. In the passage there is no hint that Peter walked on water because he received the rhema. At the most someone may be reading his preconceived notions into the scripture.

The revealing the *rhema word* is an important function attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Faith Movement. When the Holy Spirit reveals the rhema to the believer this usually results in faith. The Word of God is usually conceived on a differential continuum ranging from the logos (written word) to the rhema (the spoken word) or now word of God. Therefore, faith is imparted to the believer as a result of one receiving the rhema. Without having access to the rhema the believer will become ineffective no matter how devoted to the logos one may be.

For the letter (logos) kills but the Spirit (rhema) gives life! The rhema as can be seen is the bedrock of Word of Faith theologies.

Before we wind up this section, something needs to be said on the concept of Faith as illustrated in the Bible. In the Bible faith always has an object. Biblical faith does not have an independent existence. It is always faith in God (Mark 11:22). Faith has a subjective element as well. One believes in the Lord for salvation. No one can be saved who does not believe in the Lord for salvation. Faith also works out in our daily living. This is the confident trust in the power of God to preserve our lives in this world. Faith also believes that God can do whatever He wishes to do. Such a notion opens the door for the possibility of miracles.

The word of God strengthens our faith because it is a testimony to the faithfulness of God. The same God who acted on behalf of God's people as recorded in the scriptures is able to do the same on our behalf. This is trust in the loving kindness of God. He has promised never to live or forsake us (Hebrews 13: 5). In this case then faith is a simple trust in God. There is no need to go hunting for a 'special revelation' from God to strengthen our faith. All one needs is to trust God's word as it is recorded in the Bible.

4.6.2 A new revelation

Closely related to the above conception of the Word of God is the notion that God is perpetually bringing forth a new revelation. We have already noted that in the Faith Movement revelation is not only ongoing but progressive as well. To claim that revelation is ongoing in the sense that God continues to reveal Himself through His created order is

acceptable (see Psalm 19, Romans 1:20). However, in the faith movement revelation is ongoing and progressive because God continues to reveal new things beyond what is recorded in the Scriptures to believers by the Holy Spirit.

This has resulted in believers in this movement to be more devoted to the teachings of the Faith teachers than to the explicit teaching of what God says in His word. Theoretically, the Bible seems to be held in very high esteem in the Faith Movement. Practically that is not the case: since the rhema takes the primacy over the logos. Followers in this movement keep reaching out to get this new revelation from the ordained men and women of God.

This has serious implications on how the word of God is conceived in the Faith Movement. Only a few experts who have been schooled to receive such 'special knowledge' have access to the rhema. Consequently, the rest of the followers go to these experts to receive 'their word' from God through the persons of God. The word of God as a consequence becomes inaccessible to ordinary people. It becomes a preserve of a few elite saints. This ultimately impoverishes the faith of the followers.

The other implication which naturally results from such a conception of the Word of God is the written Word (the Bible) is effectively declared redundant. What becomes really important is for one to receive the rhema either directly from the written word or through the declaration by the person of God. The end result is followers who are completely illiterate as far as knowledge of the Word of God is concerned. We end up with a version of Christianity that has no foundation on the Biblical witness: a Christianity which is more Gnostic and cultic than Christian.

There is yet another implication which flows from such a conception of the word of God. It results from what we may identify as an internal contradiction between the rhema and the logos. To illustrate this it is important to revisit the earlier quote from Yonggi Cho. Yonggi Cho (n.d) pointed out that, “Peter never walked on water because of the logos, which gives general knowledge about God. Peter required that Christ give a specific word to him.” To put what Yonggi Cho is saying in its theological context one can’t help but to note the apparent contradiction this poses. Does this not suggest that the Bible as a whole belongs to a general concept of general revelation, whereas the rhema refers to specific or special revelation?

Theologically, ‘general and special revelation’ have different objectives. Stott (1999: 44-45) for example defines general revelation as follows:

‘General revelation’ is so called because it is made to everybody to the generality of mankind. It is also called ‘natural’ because it is made through nature, through the created order... The rationality, intricacy and beauty of the world on the one hand, and our sense of right and wrong, of duty and failure, on the other, speak to us of God.

Stott provides a fair assessment of general revelation. Theologically general revelation denotes God’s revelation through His creation. Special revelation has nothing to do with any specific revelation other than God’s self-revelation through His word as well as through the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, Stott (1999:47) notes that “special revelation was made through miracle (inspiration and incarnation).

What has been said so far does not suggest that the Holy Spirit has no part to play in making people understand the full meaning and significance of the Bible. Stott (1999: 53) in this regard points out that, “The Holy Spirit enlightens our eyes so that we now see what he has revealed.” Tramel (2008: 18) in agreement with John Stott writes:

Having completed written revelation to humanity and finishing the process of inspiration in the production of these books, one element remains as an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. The words from the printed page must illuminate the hearts and minds of readers and listeners in every generation. Such is the Spirit's divine role of providing illumination of the sacred texts. Whether done in a corporate gathering, of thousands, or in the seclusion of a Christian's private room, this surely ranks among the greatest works of the Holy Spirit in the present age.

4.6.3 Positive Confession

As we continue examining the theology of the Word of God in the Faith Movement it is necessary we turn our attention to the role that positive confession occupies in this movement. To lead our discussion the words from Gloria Copeland (2005: 72) are helpful:

The Word that is in you in abundance is also the Word that you hear coming from your mouth, for out "of the abundance of the heart [the] mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). If you are in a situation where you need a scripture to come out of your mouth and you find yourself speaking doubt and fear instead, that's an indication that the Word you need to overcome that situation is not in you.

What is being intimated is the fact that positive confession of the word of God can take you out of every adverse situation and open unlimited possibilities before you. The key to overcoming is to confess positively all the time. Positive confession is premised on the notion that whatever God created He did so by speaking or confession. It is argued that God brought all things into existence by speaking. Oyedepo (2005: 157)²⁸ in this regard argues:

There is a believing on the inside and a speaking forth on the outside that gives birth to the creative force of faith. The heart and mouth combined equals the creative force in man. What you believe on the inside and you speak forth on the outside, is created for you.

²⁸ David Oyedepo is a Native of Nigeria. Yet we have made extensive use of material from his book because he has a number of churches in Zambia. Through his books he has become a major voice in the Faith Movement in this country.

What Oyedepo brings out demonstrates his understanding of Romans 10:10. The Passage reads: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom 10:10 NIV). Oyedepo’s claims cannot be sustained by this passage of scripture. However, his assertions are typical to how proponents of the Faith Movement interpret and apply the word of God.

Such claims are motivated by the belief that human beings and God are in the same class. Both God and human are spiritual beings. Therefore, they operate under the same spiritual laws. It is for the same reason that Oyedepo (2005 158) maintains, “Through faith, God believed in His heart, and God spoke with His mouth, and everything He said came to be!” since human beings and God are in the same class, it therefore, follows that through speaking by faith, human beings are also able to create. Consequently, Oyedepo (2005 158) further notes:

You can create what things are not in existence. You are commissioned to be co-creators with God. God does not count it robbery that you are standing in that office. That is the purpose for which he created you in His image and in His likeness – to abide in His very class.

Oyedepo’s argument proceeds as follows; since human beings are created in the class of God all that they need to do in order to create their own reality is to speak forth by faith. This is what is usually referred to as positive confession. Whenever believers confess positively they need to believe that what they have declared by faith will become reality. “Every statement of scripture is a commandment – they are not only to be learnt, they are to be proclaimed. They are to be declared. They are to be prophesied” (Oyedepo 2005:161).

'Confessions' must always be positive. If one is sick or has no money, He or she should not confess sickness or lack of money. All one needs to do is to confess positively. They need to confess that they are not sick but healed. They are not block but that they have a lot of money.

Kenyon (1998: 66) points out that "many people have a negative confession. They are always telling what they are not, telling of their weakness, of their failings, of their lack of money, their lack of ability, and their lack of health. Invariably they go to the level of their confession. A spiritual law that few of us have recognized is that our confessions rule us." In other ways what you confess will determine your life style. Confess positively, you end up becoming successful in life. This way of looking at the word of God has serious consequences for the Christian life. It may eventually lead to escapism: where reality is denied.

This whole argument leads to one thing. Do we really need to confess the word of God? This enquiry is necessitated by the fact that both God and human beings are in the same class. God created the universe by speaking. If we follow this logic we may argue that human beings can equally create their reality by speaking. This analysis places the whole business of positive confession in questionable theological territory.

4.6.4 The authority of the Word of God

As we deal with the authority of the word of God; we need to revisit the sermon delivered by Dr Nwaka. In his sermon delivered during the *Seeing Beyond the Sacrifice* conference²⁹, Dr

²⁹ The quote is from a sermon preached on 31st August, 2010

Nwaka insisted, “surely it is not a sermon we need. We need your word. We need your visitation.” The sermon is not usually necessary what is necessary is the word of God; *a new revelation* from God for this age. Usually what is called the word of God is a prophetic utterance given by the speaker. It is the prophetic utterance or declaration which performs the miracles.

Kenyon (1998:71) referring to the effect of the Word of God in a believer, points out that, “His words in our lips will perform the same prodigies that His words performed in Jesus lips.” Simply by speaking the word Jesus did miracles, it is also believed that simply by speaking the word the believer can perform whatever Jesus did. It is believed that what makes this possible is the presence of the Holy Spirit on the word of God. Oyedepo (2005: 92) notes that “the Bible is packaged in two realms: the letter realm, and the spirit realm. It is important that we note the dual existence of the word of God. It exists at two levels the natural which is the written word, as well as the supernatural level which is the spiritual existence of the word.

Faith teachers try as much as possible to demonstrate that they hold to the whole counsel of God’s Word. But evidence on the ground does not favour them in this regard. They place more emphasis on the spirit character of the word of God. Oyedepo (2005: 94) for instance writes:

Revelation comes from the Bible. The Bible is packaged in letters, but behind the letters is the very breath of the Almighty. There is a Spirit of God hovering over every verse of Scripture like Genesis Chapter one, when the Spirit of God was brooding over every statement of the scriptures. Those who are able to contact the move of the Spirit are the ones who have testimonies from the scriptures.

It is clear not every Christian can access the spirit of the word of God. It is only those who have special knowledge who are actually able to access the Spirit of the word of God. It is no wonder that ordinary Christians are asked to connect with the word of God declared by the experts by sowing the seed. Connecting with the word of God in this manner makes it effective to achieve what the man of God declares. Ordinarily this begs the question of authority. Do we appeal to the Bible as our final authority in matters of faith and practice, or we need to appeal to the spirit behind the word of God. Is it even necessary to embrace such esoteric views of the Word of God as we have seen above? As we bring this chapter to a close we need to show the relationship between the Spirit and Christ; as well as the Spirit and the Word. We shall also make a few remarks concerning the role that the notion of the anointing plays in the Faith Movement as an empowering principle.

4.7 The Spirit in Relation to Christ and the Word of God

There is a very close relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ as well as the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. In this section our task is to explore this subject further.

4.7.1 The Spirit and Christ

Chanda (2008:171) points out that, “The Spirit and Christ are inseparable. His incarnation was made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Kärkkäinen (2010: xiv) is even more elaborate when he writes:

In the New Testament Gospels, an authentic Spirit Christology comes to the fore. Jesus’ birth (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35); baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:33); testing in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1); and ministry with healings, exorcisms, and other miracles (Matt. 12:28; Luke 4:18; 11:20) are functions of the Spirit.

As far as the biblical witness is concerned Christology and Pneumatology are closely related. From the words of Kärkkäinen we can clearly see that Jesus Christ depended fully on the Holy Spirit to fulfill His earthly ministry. Chanda (2008:172) further notes:

The significance of maintaining that Jesus depended on the enablement of the Holy Spirit for all He did is that it helps to keep in focus the humanity of Christ. His incarnation makes him part of the human family. As a result he is affected by what the human race goes through. Even as he had compassion for the poor and other socially marginalised, the church needs to emulate him as a model of compassion. The church needs to incarnate itself in society and experience what the disfranchised people experience daily in their day to day living. Only when this has happened can the church offer love to the suffering masses.

The Faith Movement falls short here. Because it is focused mainly on promoting material prosperity it risks becoming a movement that disregards the poor. Jesus Christ models before all believers the fact that it is possible to minister to the poor, the sick, and other marginalised people through the power of the Holy Spirit.

4.7.2 The Spirit and the Word of God

There is a close affinity between the Holy Spirit and the word of God. As far as biblical witness is concerned the Bible is divine in origin. Its production was superintended by the Holy Spirit. In 2Timothy 3:16 we are informed that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (sic). The apostle Peter has the following to say concerning the origin of the Scriptures:

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:19-21 NIV).

It must be pointed out that the way the rhema word is conceived in the Faith Movement has potential to delink the Bible from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not only actively involved in the production of the scriptures; The Holy Spirit is also involved in making sure the scriptures are understood. It is for the same reason that Williams (1996: 241) writes:

It follows that true biblical interpretation calls for pneumatic understanding. The proper exegesis of scripture is far more than linguistic analysis; it is most profoundly a matter of spiritual apprehension. Since Paul and the other biblical writers wrote words “taught by the Spirit,” true understanding can occur only when one is existentially in accord with the same Spirit. When a person stands within the same pneumatic experience as the biblical writers did, he then has the capacity to receive what scripture teaches (sic).

4.7.3 The anointing as an empowering principle

As we noted in chapter 2, the anointing is a dominant principle in the Word of Faith Movement. It is important we discuss this concept before we conclude this chapter. The concept of the anointing links Christology and Pneumatology. Oyedepo (1998: 6) points out that “the anointing holds the answer to all the questions of humanity.” Oyedepo (1998: 7) defines the anointing as:

... the empowering of the Spirit of God for supernatural accomplishments. It is the Holy Spirit at work in man, producing extra-ordinary results. The anointing is God’s devise for equipping men to do exploits (sic).

Adeyemi (2005:7) as he corroborates with Oyedepo writes:

The anointing is the divine ability or the power of God to carry out heavenly instructions on earth. God knew that man could not survive on the earth without His divine ability. Therefore He gave His people [those who are of the household of faith] divine power to walk successfully in His house. The anointing is a seal of citizenship of heaven, and it is a mark of the only begotten Son of God, upon the sons of God (sic).

Oyedepo is of the view that it is impossible to understand what the anointing is without first knowing who the Holy Spirit is. Consequently, Oyedepo (1998:7) further notes:

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. He is also the Chief Executive of the divine programme on earth. He is in charge of the affairs of God on the earth, and is behind every exploit in the kingdom of God. Nothing has been known to move without His involvement, because He is the motivator, energizer and operator of every revealed plan of God (sic).

Chanda (2008: 65) argues that “the anointing is understood differently by various Pentecostal and charismatic groupings. Sometimes the idea of the anointing is conceived in plural terms. It is not just the ‘anointing’; it becomes many ‘anointings’.” Eckhardt (cited in Chanda 2008:65) a proponent of multiple anointings points out that “there are many anointings received directly from the Lord, but there are others that will come through the laying on of hands.” Accordingly, Chanda (2008:68) observes that Eckhardt supplies a four-fold purpose of the anointing: 1). Promotion and exaltation; 2). Gifting and equipping; 3). Separating and releasing; 4). Healing and deliverance. Copeland (n.d) on the other hand, insists that “the same anointing that enabled you to be born again will heal your body, help you succeed in business, and empower you to prosper spirit, soul, and body and in every aspect of your life.”

From what we have so far discussed, we can clearly see that the anointing therefore becomes an empowering principle for children of God to become successful. Adeyemi (2005: 8) therefore, points out that “the anointing produces every good and satisfying thing that man needs to live successfully on this earth” (sic). This way of looking at the anointing restricts the ministry of the Holy Spirit severely.

The whole purpose for acquiring the anointing is personal: to help the individual become more successful be it in business, ministry, as well as life in general. The way the anointing is understood in the Faith Movement makes the anointing to work like a magical wand. The Bible is clear concerning the purpose of the anointing. The anointing as we see it in the life of Jesus is associated with the work of the Holy Spirit on his life and ministry. God anointed Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit so that could minister to people effectively (Luke 4: 17-18; Acts 10:38). The purpose of the anointing was not for Jesus to accumulate personal success and wealth. God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit for service.

Theologically, it is important to always keep the balance between the word and the Spirit. It was the Spirit of God who inspired the Word. The Spirit of God continues to illuminate the believers so that they may be able to understand the word of God and properly apply it. It was the Holy Spirit who was responsible for the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4.8 Conclusion

The Christology and Pneumatology of the Faith Movement have several theological challenges. The Christology of the Faith Movement usually takes on a functional slant. Its emphasis is on what Jesus Christ has done for the believer through His death on the cross. It is therefore argued that through the stripes of Jesus Christ believers have been healed from all the maladies that afflict them. These include social-economic challenges as well as illnesses. It is felt that Jesus paid for all these. It is clear that the Christology of the Faith Movement more especially its conception of the atonement is wanting at many points.

When the doctrine of the atonement as it is laid out in its biblical context is clearly scrutinized, it becomes apparent that it does not in any way guarantee that all diseases will be healed here and now. It does not equally support any notion that when Jesus died on the cross he provided for material success. It is at this point that the Word of Faith proponents strip the atonement of its eschatological significance. It must be conceded that through His death and subsequent resurrection, Jesus has overcome the power of sin. But it needs to be made clear that the final consummation of that victory is still a future reality.

The conception that the Word of God has a dual existence as letter and spirit is a very important concept among Faith Preachers as it opens a window into the Pneumatology. The Faith Movement advocates what is usually referred to as the progressive revelation of the “new word” which is called the rhema. This becomes the main function of the Holy Spirit. This clearly demonstrates a lack of understanding of what is meant by progressive revelation in theological circles. Tramel (2008: 23) in this regard notes:

“Progressive revelation” as exhibited gradually from the Old Testament to the New Testament is a viable truth. “Continuing revelation” that minimizes the Bible at the expense of modern utterance is a fallacy that demands rejection.

Tramel’s concerns are legitimate. There is a danger of adding to the Scripture in the name of seeking after a new revelation from God. Such notions of “continuing revelation” are given impetus by straight jacket distinctions between the logos and the rhema as these two terms relate to the word of God. These two terms as has been ably demonstrated are used interchangeably in the New Testament. They are usually used either as the logos of God or the rhema of God. When used in this manner they denote the Holy Scriptures.

What needs to be made clear is that the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from Christ. The Spirit testifies about Christ. In the same way the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the Word of God.

CHAPTER 5

PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

5.1 Introduction

Our major task in this chapter is to demonstrate how the conception of prosperity and success from the African context gives impetus to the Word of Faith Movement. It is important to do so since some elements of the Prosperity message correlate with African ideas regarding prosperity and success. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) in his article entitled *Did Jesus wear designer Robes* writes:

The Prosperity Movement also taps into deep roots in traditional African religions. The prayer vigils and healing camps are the equivalent of traditional shrines where people go to have their destinies revealed and spiritual problems solved. The prosperity message resonates with African religious ideas because of the belief in mystical causality. Tithes, like prayers, are ritual actions that are supposed to make things happen

As we develop this chapter, we shall first of all deal the concept of curses and blessing. Thereafter, we shall deal with the question of how prosperity and success sits within the African religious framework.

5.2 Curses and Blessings

The concept of curses and blessings occupy a lofty place in the Word of Faith Movement in Zambia. I am sure this holds true elsewhere as well. Derek Prince made this teaching popular in Zambia in the 1980s through his association with Kaniki Bible College in Ndola. The students and graduates of Kaniki Bible College were very instrumental in spreading the message about curses and blessing to almost every part of the country. This took place through Kaniki Bible College student outreach ministry where students were sent out in ministry teams to go and minister to people through out the country. The main thrust of these ministry teams was to minister deliverance from demons and curses. What is being said is corroborated by Peter Pedersen the founder of Kaniki Bible College in a thank you note to Derek Prince Ministries. In part the note reads:

Every time I travel across central and eastern Africa, I am often filled with sadness when I see the damaging effects of witchcraft and ancestral worship. In my view, this is one of the key reasons why a number of African nations make little progress. It is a hindrance to God's blessings; therefore poverty still clings to so many people. In most cases where effective evangelism is done, confrontation with curses and demonic oppression is part of the deal. And that's where books by Derek Prince on deliverance from demons and spiritual warfare are vital tools for countless men and women I know of in Zambia, Uganda, Nigeria and other parts of Africa. When our students are on outreach, they always bring testimonies of how people who were enslaved by demonic oppression have been set free. And they are glad for Derek's teaching they have received thanks to your financial gifts. Just recently, one of our graduates set a man free from demonic oppression in northern Uganda. This man was in a coma. But when the student prayed for his deliverance, Jesus set him free and healed him. This miracle was observed by family members who were Muslims, and it opened the door for the Gospel.

We should of course, be reminded that currently the major drivers of the message on curses and blessings in Zambia are Nigerian preachers through Satellite Television as well as books,

and DVDs which flood almost every charismatic book store in the country (see Jenkins 2011: 153). It is usually felt that the difference between success and failure in one's life may come down to curses and blessings. Prince (2006: 17) describes curses and blessings in this manner:

To the superficial observer, human life presents a confused mingling of light and shadow, arranged according to recognizable pattern, governed by no discernible laws. Across this scene two men may start out walking side by side. Similar background and ability, they are headed in the same direction. Yet one walks almost in the light of success and fulfilment. The other, close by him, scarcely sees the light. He is continually overshadowed by failure and frustration, and his life is snuffed out at an untimely age.

He puts the differences between the two characters to blessings and curses. The successful individual is blessed while the one who is struggling is presumed to be under a curse. In fact the views propagated by Derek Prince are shared by many in the Word of Faith Movement.

Since the concept of blessing and curses is such a dominant issue in Africa, it is necessary we examine these concepts in detail. We wish to first of all deal with the notion of curses. Our focus will be mainly on the causes of these curses. Thereafter, we shall examine what the bible teaches concerning curses and blessings. As we proceed in developing this chapter we shall then examine the notions of curses and blessings in the light of the believer's relationship to Christ.

5.2.1 Causes of Curses

There are a lot of factors that are believed to be responsible for someone to incur curses on his or her life. This in part is due to the fact that “belief in mystical powers is prominent throughout Africa. It is experienced daily in every village and city. Endless stories of these unseen forces are told by young and old,” observes Gehman (2005: 85). It is usually believed that curses can only come on an individual if he or she does something that makes him or her to invoke the curse on that individual’s life. Usually curses are believed to come on an individual either through personal sin or the sins of the parents. Oparaocha (2010:17) therefore, notes, “If you are a righteous man (sic), a curse without a cause shall not affect you. It is clear that when you are living in sin, the door is open for a curse to affect you.”

Those curses that one inherits from his or her parents are what are referred to as generational curses. Oparaocha (2010:17) accordingly, argues that “Generational curses are inherited from our parents, grandparents, or ancestors, who sinned and opened a doorway for the curses to flow from generation to generation.”

After making the above observation, Oparaocha (2010:17) goes on to list some physical manifestations of curses in human behaviour. Among other things they include; the curse of sickness, stagnancy, poverty, unfinished projects, and failure at the edge of your miracle. Now that we have made these preliminary observations we need to point out the major causes of curses.

5.2.1.1 Idolatrous backgrounds of parents and ancestors

Idolatrous backgrounds of parents and ancestors are usually seen as the main reasons why a lot of people in Africa are affected by generational curses. Ugbine (2007: 37) therefore writes:

Generational curses are caused as a result of idol worship. When people are involved in idol worship it brings curses on the family it brings curses on the family even to children yet unborn. Idol worship is what God heavily frowns at and when people reject God and worship idols they are cursed from the third to the fourth generation.

Biblical justification for generational curses that come as a result of idol worship is grounded on Exodus 20:4-6:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand *generations* of those who love me and keep my commandments (NIV).

Basing her arguments on the above passage of scripture, as she argues for the efficacy of generational curses, Odhuno-Shani (2009:70-71) rhetorically argues:

Should we then be worried about the fact that our forefathers, who are no more, worshiped other gods? Will God really punish innocent children for sins that were committed before they were even born? Can we assume that some of the misfortunes and calamities that befall Christians could be as a result of the idolatrous practices of the forefathers?

From what has been said so far, we can clearly, see that there is consensus within the Word of Faith Movement on the fact that idolatrous backgrounds of parents as well as ancestors bring curses on people. Let us now consider yet another cause of curses in Africa. Ross (1998:4) is emphatic when she contends that “Generational curses come from deliberate sins that are

heart-breaking or offensive to God. The Bible says in Deuteronomy chapter 27 that idolatry ... brings curses.”

5.2.1.2 Flouting Covenant obligations

Oyedepo (2003:36) notes that some curses may be classified as covenant curses. These curses are caused as a result of flouting covenant obligations. Oyedepo (2003:36) insists that “God is committed to His covenant forever. As we fulfil our obligations, God fulfils His” (sic). It is for the same reason that Oyedepo (2003:36) further proceeds to maintain that it is a “covenant obligation to honour your parents” (Ephesians 6:2; Proverbs 20:20). Consequently, Oyedepo (2003:36) writes:

From the above, it is obvious that there is a covenant demand upon everyone to honour his parents and give them their due benevolence. Indeed, our goodwill and good works towards our parents are obligatory. This is the only way we can escape the covenant curse of struggles and untimely death (sic).

From what is being broached, if one does not honour his or her parents that individual risks attracting curses on his or her life.

Oyedepo (2003: 36) also indicates that there is a covenant curse of poverty. It is usually pointed out that this curse is usually incurred when one robs God. This notion is premised on Malachi 3:8-10. Robbing God is manifested through one’s failure to consistently pay his or her tithes to God. This is usually cited as the main reason why a lot of Christians are poor. Scott (2009: 39) in this regard contends that “the tithe brings covenant, covering, protection, and favour. It brings strength to you and protection from the battles you are not even aware of.”

5.2.1.3 Involvement with the occult

Croft (2011:86) points out that “involvement with the occult and idolatry brings with it self-inflicted curses and penalties.” Oguejiofor (2011:1-2) defines the occult as “what is hidden or concealed (from the Latin *occultus* = secret), to be revealed only to adepts or those initiated into hidden powers, secrets or knowledge of the group.” Oguejiofor (2011:2) further notes that “the hidden and special powers of occultism are very often understood in association with coercion and command of possibilities which are beyond humans and often associated with the supernatural.”

Occult practices may include practices such as witchcraft, wizardly, magic, etc (see Medubi 2011: 51). Stanley (2008: 483) notes that “numerous references are made in scripture to the practice of astrology and to those who act as mediums. These practices, among others, are well within the definition for occult or occult practices.” It is usually affirmed among Christian circles that involvement with the occult has negative effects on the Christian life. Koch (1970: 18) in this regard argues:

For years I have witnessed the truth of this fact, that magic and almost all other occult practices either destroy the Christian faith of a person or just prevent it from developing ... those who occupy themselves with occult practices are in fact contravening the laws of God.

Stevens and Green (2003: 171) corroborate with Koch and accordingly maintain that the occult;

is expressly forbidden in the Bible. Deuteronomy 18:9ff. forbids the children of Israel to be cajoled by their Pagan neighbours into the occult. In the New Testament the prohibition is no less stringent (e.g., 1Cor. 10: 20-21. Why this hard line? Because you are submitting yourself, in the occult, to a power that is not from God and may well be in active revolt against him (sic).

The only surprising thing is how an individual can be so deeply involved with the occult and yet still maintain to be a Christian? This is amazing. Now that we have looked at how one's involvement in the occult may bring curses let us examine one further cause of curses.

5.2.1.4 Words spoken by those in relational authority

Piscopo, *et al* (2009:162-3) describe curses that may arise from the words of people who have relational authority over others as follows:

Word curses can come from those who have relational authority over us. We know God has ordained that society operates on the principle of authority. In relationships between people, one's position gives him or her authority over another: a husband has authority over his wife, parents have authority over their children, and employers have authority over employees.

Gondwe (2003: 157) further argues: "Parents have immense biblical authority to influence the destiny of their children for better or worse. Their words are not mere words. They carry with them the power to bless or to curse." Additionally, Smith (1991:188) points out that curses and blessings are power filled words pronounced in a cultic setting, usually by authoritative persons such as family heads, priests, kings, and prophets. We have so far dealt with the causes of curses; it is now important that we examine blessings and curses in the light of biblical teaching.

5.3 Blessings and curses: a Biblical perspective

The idea of blessings and curses is clearly a biblical concept. However, the way these concepts are interpreted and applied pose a serious theological challenge. The task of this

section is to examine what the Bible teaches on this subject and attempt to provide a viable interpretation of the blessing/curse trajectory in the Bible. Kaiser [et al] (1996:167) argue, “it must be remembered that properly pronounced blessings and curses were extremely effective in biblical teaching (Gen 48:14-20; Judg 17: 1-2; Mt 21:18-22).” Smith (1991:188) further notes that curses and blessings:

Were often accompanied by symbolic actions that were believed to strengthen and effect the curse or blessing. Usually the statements of cursing and blessing directly attribute their power to God, and even when such attribution is not stated it is implied by the status of the one who pronounces curse or blessing and by the circumstances in which the pronouncements are made.

As far as the teaching of the Word of Faith Movement is concerned, it is usually claimed that their teachings on curses and blessings find support from the bible. Since this is the case it is therefore, important that we examine what the Bible teaches concerning curses and blessings. As we do so let us begin by first of examining the Biblical teaching on blessings.

5.3.1 The concept of Blessing in the Bible

Viands (2009:1) points out:

In his first words to mankind, as recorded in Genesis, God blesses them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth ...” (Gen 1:28). This blessing of human proliferation is a prominent theme, in Genesis, and is a crucial component of God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants (sic).

Blessing in the Old Testament is reserved for those who keep God’s covenant demands (Deut. 28:1-2). Preuss (1995: 180) points out that blessing; “increases life and brings rest, success, fortune, fertility (Gen 24: 60; 27:27 f.; and 30: 27, 29f.), peace, and well-being (2Sam 8:10; Ps. 133:3).” Accordingly, Mann (1988:15-16) notes:

The meaning of blessing is irreducibly concrete, even materialistic, stubbornly refusing to be converted into a purely “spiritual” category. For this reason the Pentateuchal narrative will often point with ingenuous delight to the great possessions of its characters – numerous children, large heads of sheep and cattle, ample gold and silver – for these things are seen not so much as the rewards of hard work as the gifts of a beneficent God.

Blessing does not preclude work. God’s blessing on the people is usually a fruit of hard work. For this reason Mann (1988:16) argues that “Genesis 1:28 informs us that blessing does not exclude human work; indeed it clearly requires some human effort.”

In the Old Testament blessing either proceeds from God or human beings. Barth (2010: 141) consequently, argues that, “A blessing is the word which has divine power to pass on good things. It is thus clear that originally and properly the word of God alone can be a blessing. All human blessing, as Numbers 6:24 shows, is contingent upon the blessing of God.” The words of Balaam render credence to this assertion: “How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the LORD has not denounced?” (Numbers 23:8 NIV).

In the New Testament, the concept of blessing takes a very big shift. The blessing finds its fulfilment in Christ. It is those who have faith in Christ who are blessed (Galatians 3:9). The gospel, therefore, becomes the vehicle through which the blessing of God is conveyed. While the idea of blessing in the Old Testament was projected in concrete terms, in the New Testament the blessing is connected to Jesus Christ. The notion of blessing in the New Testament is demonstrated by two terms: *makarios* and *eulogeo*. The general idea behind ‘*makarios*’ in the New Testament is that which describes a blessed state (see Matthew 5:3-11;

11:6). Blessing in the New Testament does not place any emphasis on how much material possession one has accumulated. Kent (2011:21) in this regard writes:

More often than instructing us to pray for God to bless us, the Bible exhorts us to bless God. Or it presents a countercultural view of blessing. Jesus said nothing about health and wealth; rather, he said you are blessed if you are poor in spirit, mourning, merciful, pure in heart, hungry for righteousness, persecuted, and falsely accused. (see Matt.5).

Generally the word *makarios* was used by Jesus in reference to those who wished to participate in the Kingdom of God. This truth is demonstrated by the beatitudes in Matthew 5 which speak of how the citizens of the kingdom of God ought to conduct themselves. Stassen and Gushee (2003: 21) accordingly, observe that, “the one who enters the Kingdom is healed from blindness and follows Jesus’ way with faith-perception seeking justice and surrendering false values such as wealth, status-seeking and power.” This shows that one was blessed not because he or she received some material benefit but simply because they were associated with Christ.

On the other hand, *eulogeo*, whenever it is employed in its noun form *eulogetos* in the New Testament always applies to praising God. In the New Testament *eulogetos* as an expression of praise to God is used in the following passages of scripture: Luke 1:68; Romans 1:25; 9:52; Corinthians 1:3; 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; and 1 Peter 1:3. Thus *eulogetos* carries with it a mood of rejoicing and praise towards God. In its literal sense, *eulogetos* carries the idea of speaking well about God.

The verb eulogeo on the other hand, when used, may describe the endowment of salvation to those who believe in God. Those who have faith in God are blessed (eulogountai) together with Abraham (see Galatians 5:9). Eulogeo in this case is used to designate salvation. What Paul has in mind is salvation by faith. Those who have faith in God receive God's gift of salvation. That is the meaning Paul wants to convey when he states that those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham. Therefore, the blessing here is equivalent to salvation. The Gentiles have also been favoured along with Abraham. They are also God's people. This is what constitutes the blessing. Gundry (2011) comments on the inclusion of Gentiles into the community of faith in the following manner:

“That God is justifying the Gentiles because of faith” describes what is going on at the time of writing as a fulfilment of what was said to Abraham: “All the Gentiles will be favoured in you.” Paul describes this prediction, moreover, as a proclamation of good news to Abraham “ahead of time,” that is, long before the current Gentiles head it.

As we have demonstrated, as far as the New Testament is concerned, the notion of blessing has nothing to do with how much material possessions one has accumulated. You are blessed simply because you belong to those who believe in God through Christ. Now that we have dealt with the issue of blessing in the Bible we need to turn our attention to the biblical usage of curse.

5.3.2 The concept of curses in the Bible

In the Old Testament the first pronouncement of the curse was in the context of the fall (Genesis 3: 13-19). The curse affected every sphere of existence. It affected the relationship

between Adam and Eve. It also distorted the relationship between human beings and their environment. Grudem (1999: 205) accordingly, writes:

In the punishments God gave to Adam and Eve, he did not introduce new roles or functions, but simply introduced pain and distortion into the functions they previously had. Thus, Adam would still have primary responsibility for tilling the ground and raising crops, but the ground would bring forth “thistles and thorns,” and in the sweat of his face he would eat bread (Gen. 3:18-19). [sic]

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 sets before God’s people two options: blessing and curse. Blessing if they obey God’s commandments and curse, if they disobey the commandments of God. Disobeying God’s commandments would result in serious judgment or curse inflicted on God’s people. It is for the same reason that Wiersbe (2007: 363) notes:

If the nation followed the idolaters and disobeyed the Lord, the Lord would judge the whole the whole land and it would become an example to others of what happens when God’s law is violated. Visitors would behold a country without people, farms without produce, land like the devastated land around Sodom and Gomorrah, and cities destroyed and left in ruin. The utter desolation of Israel would be a reminder that it’s a costly thing to disobey the will of God.

It is clear that in the Old Testament, the curse was brought upon God’s people mainly due to contravening God’s law. The idea of curse therefore carried some form of judgment on God’s people.

In the New Testament, there are two predominant terms that represent the idea of the curse: anathema and katara. Anathema, more especially as used in the New Testament, speaks of those that are excluded from the favour of God and devoted to destruction. At Romans 9:3 Paul wished he could be cursed (anathema) and cut off from Christ for the sake of his

brothers the Jews. By saying this, Paul was wishing to be excluded from God's favour, separated from Christ and the benefits of his death, and therefore, be devoted to destruction, as an expiatory victim on behalf of his people (see Robinson 1837: 48). The way Paul employed anathema in this context shows that the one who was under the curse was excluded from God's community completely.

Paul in the epistle to the Galatians exclaims that whoever preaches a different Gospel contrary to what was preached to the Galatians should be cursed (Gal 1:8). Even here Paul uses the word anathema. Anathema speaks of severe judgment on those that were preaching what Paul calls another gospel. In this passage Paul wishes that those who preached 'another gospel' be separated or excluded from the community of faith.

On the other hand, *katara* literally means to imprecate or to invoke evil upon. *Katara* is used in Galatians 3:10 and 13. In verse 10 Paul argues that all those that are unable to keep the law are under a curse. This idea needs to be read against the backdrop of Galatians 3:9 where those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham.

In these two passages (Gal.3: 8,9) the two words; *eulogeo* and *katara* are laid side by side. Those who have faith are blessed while those who rely on observing the law but fail to keep it are under a curse. We can clearly see as Hunter (1983:45) points out that the "curse of God rests upon all who do not fully and totally keep the Law. In Galatians 3:13 Paul provides the way out of the curse. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

We have so far examined several concepts associated with the idea of curses and blessings as they are taught in the Word of Faith Movement. We have also dealt with this subject from a biblical perspective. Our task now is to discuss blessing and curses in the view of the believer's relationship to Christ.

5.4 Blessings and Curses in the light of the Believers' Relationship to God

In Numbers 23:8 Balaam exclaimed, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" (KJV). In the Word of Faith Movement, it is generally accepted that blessing and curses can affect those who believe in Jesus Christ as well as those who do not. Gondwe (2006:173) a representative of this notion writes:

It does not matter whether one gives to the work of God or to the work of men. Neither does his religion spiritual state matter. That is why many people in the occult are very wealthy. They are not wealthy because they are in occultism. It is because they know and aggressively apply the law of seed time and harvest time. The good hearted non-believer will be blessed materially and have quite a respectable life on earth ... (sic).

This is an interesting idea but it is clearly grounded on very thin theological ground. The notion that it is possible for the non-believer to receive a blessing from God simply because in the Word of Faith Movement blessings are mainly assessed on the basis of how much material possessions one has; misinterprets the biblical teaching on curses and blesses. Since our task in this section is to discuss blessings and curses in view of the believers' relationship to God we must carefully examine how these concepts become effective as far as the Faith Movement is concerned.

5.4.1 Blessings and Curses at work

“Invisible forces are at work that determine each person’s destiny, whether for the better or for the worse. The Bible identifies these respectively as blessings and curses” (Prince 2006: 16). Every single person is said to be faced with this predicament. Whether Christian or non-Christian we are all either blessed or we are under a curse. There is no neutral ground. Prince (2006: 20) insists that curses will affect “many areas of people’s lives: business, career, health or finance.” In this rather long account chronicling how curses affect Christians, Prince (2006: 20) writes:

On a ministry journey in Southeast Asia I met an intelligent well educated judge, who was descended from royalty. She knew Jesus personally as her Saviour and was not conscious of any unconfessed sin in her life. Yet she told me that she was not satisfied. Her successful career and her high social position had not brought her personal fulfilment. As I talked with her I discovered that she was descended from many generations of idol worshipers. I explained to her that, according to Exodus 20:3-5, God had pronounced a curse on idol worshipers down to the third and fourth generation. Then I showed her how to receive release from this curse through Jesus her saviour.

From what Prince is saying curses will affect everyone. It does not matter how devoted to Christ one may be. The biggest challenge with what is being advanced is that curses are given an independent existence of their own. They are not related to sin in any way. The biblical teaching on curses clearly goes against what Prince seeks to propagate. As we have already demonstrated above the Bible connects curses to infractions of God’s commandments. In Deuteronomy 28 it is demonstrated that both blessing and curses will only come upon God’s people depending on whether they obey God’s commandments or otherwise (see Deuteronomy 28: 1-2, 14-15). So to give curses an independent existence is to miss the point.

5.4.2 Blessings and Curses in the light of the New Testament

The Word of Faith Movement teachers base their teachings on the notions of blessings and curses on the Old Testament. They do not consider the fact that revelation is progressive. Some of the Old Testament teachings are simply not applicable in the same way they were applied in the Old Testament today. For example the complex sacrificial system which involved sacrifice of animals is not necessary today in the light of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made at the cross once and for all.

Morey (2011:44) accordingly argues; “Did not the Lord explicitly state that the Old Testament in its entirety spoke concerning Him (Jesus Christ) and that the Old Testament in its unexplained ceremonies, unfulfilled prophecies and unsatisfied longings is fulfilled in His own person and work.” The same logic may be extended to the notion of blessing and curses. Both find their fulfilment in Christ. He became a curse when he died on behalf of sinners on the cross. Subsequently, those that now believe in Him become the blessed of the Lord (see Galatians 3:13-14). It must be said then that curses are concerned with punishment for violating the commandments of God whereas the blessings are associated with the blessings that come with the Gospel for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that we have conclusively dealt with the notion of blessings and curses as they relate to ideas of prosperity and success in an African context, it is just in order that we now address how belief in supernatural powers gives impetus to the growth of the Faith Movement in Africa.

5.5 African Traditional belief in supernatural powers

Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) argues that:

African traditions strongly believe in the existence of invisible forces, especially malevolent powers, and in the efficacy of ritual action to fight the forces of evil. When prosperity is lacking, African church leaders most commonly explain it by pointing to demonic forces, curses, and witchcraft rather than to an individual's sin. Churches offer "anointing for vengeance" to help dismantle spiritual traps set by envious family members and relations.

From what Asamoah-Gyadu demonstrates, it is apparent that the belief in supernatural powers in the Word of Faith Movement in Africa fuels the rapid expansion of this movement. These supernatural forces are often thought to work against the prosperity and health of the people. Believers are therefore, encouraged to fight these strange spiritual forces so that they may enjoy their prosperity and good health from God. Of course this belief as we have already noted runs deep into African religious concepts. Gehman (2005: 85) in this regard observes that "the belief in mystical powers is prominent throughout Africa. It is experienced daily in every village and city."

Gehman (2005:85) further argues that "mystical powers such as magic, sorcery and witchcraft affect everyone for better or for worse." What Gehman is saying, is corroborated well by Olukoya (1999: 10) who maintains; "this nation (Nigeria) as well as other nations are being controlled by witchcraft forces." Olukoya (1999: 10) further argues that "the battle for this country and other African nations is not the battle to be fought with guns. It is a battle to be fought in the heavenlies."

What Olukoya says, fortifies the notion that nothing happens without a cause in African traditional and religious thought. It is for the same reason that Irele and Jeyifo (2010:75) accordingly point out that “each natural phenomenon and entity has an innate force that drives it for good or bad consequences on earth and overall human welfare.” It is this innate force which is usually referred to as the life-force. This life-force is believed to exist in human beings as well as in all other things (see Gehman 2005: 86). The life-force can either work for the individual or community or it can work against the individual or community. Gehman (2005:86) elucidates well on this matter when he writes:

Through the use of magical spells or curses a person’s fortune can be reversed. Through the use of powerful life-forces a person may achieve great success. Therefore, nothing occurs in life by accident, but all is determined by the natural law which operates behind the life-force in people and things.

The life-force can flow from all beings which encompass both material and immaterial beings. Mawere (2011: 39) accordingly observes:

The immaterial beings are found at the top of the hierarchy and the material beings at the bottom. This also implies superiority of immaterial beings over material beings in African metaphysics. Yet even among immaterial beings themselves, there are beings that are superior to others.

Corroborating with Mawere, Gehman (2005:87) writes:

Even though the life-force or energy emanates from everything, there is a hierarchy of powers. God stands at the head of this hierarchy with the potential of all power. Beneath him are lesser divinities, spirits and ancestral spirits. Lowest in this hierarchy is the world of animals, plants and minerals. Standing in the middle is ‘man’ with his own powerful life-force (sic).

Health and prosperity, and success are therefore, a result of how well the life-force is manipulated. This is more so as Irele and Jeyifo (201:75) observe when they argue that “disease and catastrophes are attributed to either personal or impersonal spiritual maneuvers.” As we proceed in developing this section we need to comment on the role that ritual plays in African traditional religious thought. Thereafter we shall say something on the traditional experts and the role that they play in manipulating the life-force.

5.5.1 Ritual in African Religious Thought

Gehman (2005:86) points out that “the chief purpose of religion in African culture is to acquire greater life-force from the other higher beings and lesser creatures or objects in order to enhance health, wealth and status in life.” This is where ritual comes in. For this reason Grillo (2012:112) writes:

African religions are pragmatic in focus and share the view that humans must vigilantly maintain harmonious relationships in both worldly and divine realms in order to prosper. Ritual is the means to negotiate a responsible relationship in the human community, with ancestors, spirits, divinities, and cosmos. African rituals are reflexive strategies seeking practical ends: they establish identity, elicit revelation, access divinity to foster empowerment, and effect transformation.

As we can see from what is being said, ritual plays a very cardinal part in sustaining the life-force which conveys health and prosperity. Such rituals involve elements like prayers, sacrifices, as well as offerings. Adeyemo (1979: 33) points out that “traditionally, sacrifices and offering are believed to be a means of contact or communion between man and the deity” (sic). Magesa (1997: 177), on the other hand, argues that:

When life is threatened or weakened, prayer is most abundant, both private and public prayer: prayer is a means of restoring wholeness and balance in life. In African

religion, prayer is comprehensive, requesting the removal of all that is bad and anti-life in society and demanding restoration of all that is good.

Magesa (1997: 181) further argues that “when it is an issue of restoring or maintaining life, such rituals take the form of sacrifice or offerings.” Adeyemo (1979: 33 citing Mbiti) additionally observes that:

Sacrifices and offerings are acts of restoring the ontological balance between God and man, the spirits and man, and the departed and the living. When this balance is upset, people “experience” misfortunes and sufferings, or fear these will come upon them. Sacrifices and offerings help, at least psychologically, to restore this balance.

It is important to remind ourselves, that such rituals as paying ones tithes and offering are important elements in the Faith Movement for an individual to become prosperous and successful. Since we have commented on the role that rituals play in maintaining the life-force we now need to turn to the role that traditional experts play in facilitating prosperity and success.

5.5.2 Traditional experts

Religious experts in Africa include people like priests, rainmakers, officiating elders, and even kings (see Mbiti 1969:3). To this category we could add herbalists, diviners, and mediums. As we proceed with our study, our concern shall be limited to herbalists, diviners, and mediums.

“Herbalists are people with knowledge of herbs, roots or even fruits with the power to prevent or cure disease or other afflictions.” (see Magesa 1997:188). It needs to be pointed

out that some herbalists are also diviners. This is the case since they depend on the guidance of spirits to diagnose diseases and people's problems. It is believed that some herbalists received their power to heal from ancestors (see Archer 2005:8). Speaking about the role that herbalists and diviners play Archer (2005:8) argues that "these traditional healers do not just cure illnesses. They bring things back to normal when jealousy, hatred, greed or selfishness has spoilt the way people are living or things in nature."

Diviners, on the other hand, as Kazembe (2009: 57) observes, "treat illnesses primarily through facilitating the direct intervention of the spiritual world." Schmidt (2006) points out that "consultation of diviners is alive as ever." Schmidt (2006) further argues that "if diseases, bad harvests, natural catastrophes, accidents or quarrels disturb the harmony, the cause of evil has to be identified. Diviners help in the process of discernment." Magesa (1997: 190) points out that "diviners are people who have the power to "sniff out" hidden sources of disorder, who can advise on procedures to correct the situation."

According to Gehman (2005: 104) mediums may be seen as traditional prophets who specialize in mediating between the unseen realm of spirits and living humankind. It is usually believed that through "ecstatic séances, mediums communicate with the unseen world" (see Gehman 2005:104, Magesa 1997:190). As we proceed with our study, it has become necessary for us to demonstrate how the Word of Faith Movement more especially in Africa receives impetus from traditional beliefs.

5.6 The Word of Faith Movement and African Traditional beliefs

As we have already pointed out the Word of Faith Movement taps deep into African religious ideas. In this part of our study, our main concern is to show how the Word of Faith Movement resonates with African Traditional religions. It is therefore, in order to explore the interface between the Word of Faith Movement and African Traditional Religions from the following aspects: Healing and Deliverance, Wealth and Success, and Prophecy.

5.6.1 Healing and Deliverance in the Word of Faith Movement

In African traditional thinking, death, suffering, misfortune, diseases, and even accidents are thought to be caused by mysterious forces. Phiri (2009:99) insists that among the Chewa people, sickness and death are rarely due to natural causes.” This is true among other tribes of Zambia as well. The Bemba people of Northern Zambia usually say “Lesá tona Chakwe.” Literally, this phrase translates “God cannot destroy that which belongs to God.” There is no misfortune that occurs without mitigating circumstances. These circumstances include human enemies (through witchcraft) as well as evil spirits.

Sickness in African religious thought can either have physical, social, or even spiritual dimensions (see Phiri 2009: 99-100). However, it must be made clear that there is little distinction between spiritual and physical dimensions in African religious thought. The causes for spiritual as well as physical sicknesses are usually believed to be the same.

Ndung'u (2009: 88) as a result argues that "within the African worldview, life is seen in its totality rather than in segments." Ndung'u (2009: 88) further points out that in Africa

People are at peace when their relationship with God, the spirits, other people and the rest of the society is good. A broken relationship spells disaster for the individual, and, by extension, for the rest of the family and society at large.

When such a scenario occurs, a need arises to seek a remedy. In the African traditional religious thought the people turn to the religious experts for help. These experts as we have already pointed out are people like Herbalists, Diviners, Mediums, etc. In the Word of Faith Movement, especially in Zambia, followers go to the persons of God for remedy. These persons of God have the necessary anointing to minister deliverance on the victims. This whole thing correlates well with what Mana (2002: 95) says when he argues that in Africa

Salvation is mainly a worldview where reality is a network of forces that destroy human beings, forces that 'destabilise' individuals and forces of decay in societies, are terrible realities which bring disease and death. They are responsible for physical and psychological disorders whose symptoms are easily detected by specialists.

In Zambia a number of churches are springing up almost in every city and town whose specialty is healing and deliverance. They are often led by people who call themselves prophets. The idea behind the proliferation of healing and deliverance churches comes from the tendency which seeks to argue that behind every negative occurrence there are some spiritual forces at work. Meyer (1999: 171) in this regard argues that "sickness and weakness are understood to be the result of evil spirits intruding into a person's spirit and body." Even though Meyer is writing from a Ghanaian context, the assertions are true even in the Zambian context. It therefore, becomes the responsibility of prophets to find out the root cause of sicknesses or problems that people may be experiencing.

In the Word of Faith Movement, more especially as it manifests itself within the African context, poverty is sometimes viewed as a spirit or a spiritual problem. Anderson (1999: 221) notes that poverty is seen as a curse that is to be overcome through faith.” In the Word of Faith Movement, especially as it drinks from the African traditional and religious roots, poverty can be overcome by deliverance as well as by faith. This is demonstrated well by Olukoya (1999: 195) in the following prayer for overcoming witchcraft:

In the name of Jesus, I believe the word of God is steadfast and unshakable, endures forever, powerful and it is the power of God that is able to deliver me out of any bondage. The word of God is God Himself speaking and not man. Therefore, nothing shall be impossible for me because of the word of God I believe in my heart and confess with my mouth (sic).

The notion that nothing happens without a cause demands that people look for answers beyond the occurrence itself. Where non believers will usually consult traditional religious experts, in the Faith Movement persons of God are usually consulted for answers.

5.6.2 Wealth and Success in the Faith Movement

As we have already pointed out, in the Faith Movement, wealth and success is seen as a sign of favour and blessing from God. Oyedepo (2001: 31) in this case writes:

Friend, redemption has established such a spiritual status for you that grants you the privilege to live a heavenly life in this world. There’s no shortage in heaven, no lack, no struggling! And the Bible says Jesus has raised you up, and made you sit together with him in heavenly places. And as an ambassador of heaven here on earth, you are to enjoy heavenly supplies and provisions, granting you immunity from lack and want.

It is clear that leading a life of luxury is a sign of God's favour and blessing upon Christians as far as Word of Faith preachers are concerned. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) therefore, notes that in "this new type of Christianity, success and wealth are genuine marks of faith." To be wealthy and successful in the African Traditional worldview may entail that someone has received favour from one's ancestors. Gehman (2005: 67) accordingly argues:

After death the ancestors are in need of such things as food, shelter, clothing, money, and tools. It is the responsibility of the living to provide this upon death, when the living descendants care for them, the ancestors provide the living with all that is needed in life including protection, long life, wealth and success; but if neglected, the ancestors become offended and inflict severe punishment upon them.

This concept correlates with the Word of Faith notion which teaches that one can only become wealth and successful if he or she provides financial support either to God through God's representatives: the persons of God here on earth.

5.6.3 Prophets as mediators of health, wealth, and success

In the Word of Faith Movement, it is abundantly clear that Prophets are becoming the norm. Prophets are experts at diagnosing the problems of the people as well as prescribing the solutions to those problems. It is for this reason that the ministry of the prophets is closely linked to deliverance. Prophets are believed to be experts at revealing causes of sickness, business failure, as well as any misfortune that may befall the people. This rather lengthy quote from Prophet Kure (1999: 16-19) represents well what is being said:

A sister in Kano suddenly took ill a wonderful Deeper Life Church member, a leader and a perfect example of God's finger... A certain mysterious sickness came upon her with excruciating pains that sent her fainting... when I saw her lying down I called her name repeatedly but there was no response. After she regained consciousness she said, "Don't let me die." As I began to call forth the issues as directed by the Lord,

many things began to happen. Interesting enough, when I mentioned Bonny River, the sister screamed. I asked her if she had a covenant in her life. She said she could recall that, as a little child, a certain woman took her to the shores of Bonny River to perform a sacrifice. The woman asked her to undress and she remained naked while the sacrifice was being performed. She now remembered that something, which represented her seed, came out of her after some incantation. This revelation gave me a clue to the core of the problem.

The methodology employed by Prophet Kure in diagnosing the reasons behind the above woman's sickness is not very different from what a diviner would normally do. The only difference is that the diviner may usually appeal to ancestral spirits for help in diagnosing the problem while a prophet as the case above demonstrates appeals to the Spirit of God. The worldview is the same: nothing happens without a spiritual cause. Therefore, one needs spiritual experts to identify the cause of the misfortune.

After diagnosing the cause of illness for the woman in question prophet Kure (1999:21) says, "Praise God, the sister was delivered and she has never had cause to faint or suffer such horrible attacks." Just there the link between prophetic ministry and deliverance is established. Prophecy is also linked to prosperity. This is further demonstrated by Kure (1999: 210) who argues:

Every word that comes out of your mouth, if it is the word of God is prophecy. Your life is therefore founded in prophecy. In these last days your life will only exist by prophecy. It is by prophecy that every ordinance of God, the harvest and missions will be fulfilled. It is also by prophecy that our oils will be fulfilled and not run dry.

When Kure makes reference to "our oils not running dry", he is referring to the incidence recorded in 2Kings 4:1-6. Where through the instruction of the prophet Elisha, the widow's oil could not stop running out until every vessel in her house had been filled. It is felt that the

prophet of today has a similar function. He or she mediates God's blessings which imply that Christians are supposed to enjoy unprecedented wealth and success.

5.6.4 The role of intermediaries in the Word of Faith Movement

The fact that men and women of God play an intermediary role in mediating health, wealth, and other blessings from God to the people is quite widespread. In chapter 2, we argued that "in the Word of Faith Movement the anointed 'man or woman of God' plays a critical role in enabling the followers to prosper." This is said to be the case since it is usually the persons of God who have direct access to God. Believers are therefore required to connect to their blessing through the persons of God. The logical conclusion to this matter is that the Faith Movement has multiple mediators between God and God's people. The biblical assertion that there is one mediator between God and God's people (1Timothy 2:5) thus becomes redundant.

Jestice (2004: 16) argues that in Sub-Sahara Africa:

Religion in the entire region is embedded and can be discerned in beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, and the roles of religious officials. The religious officials occupy important positions as mediators between the spiritual realm and the physical world of human experience. Setting themselves apart from the main group of followers as leaders, mediums, priests, and interpreters of the divine order...

This concept finds a lot acceptance in the Word of Faith Movement. It is no wonder that the Word of Faith Movement revolves around strong charismatic leaders. As we observed from what Dr Imakando broached above, one's promotion is only becomes possible through the men and women of God. Emma Isong (2011) in a sermon titled *It may be hard but not*

impossible delivered at Living Water Global Churches declared; “I release your prosperity. After this conference some of you are going to begin to prosper, your business will open; your financial doors will open.” This demonstrates clearly the role that the Word of Faith preachers play in mediating health and prosperity. If their followers are going to prosper materially or to succeed in life, they need to believe what these persons of God are prophesying over their lives.

5.6.5 Prophetic ministry as a component of the Word of Faith Movement

In the Word of Faith Movement prophets are seen to be responsible for deliverance, healing, as well as mediating prosperity and success. This works out because the prophets have power to declare or prophesy prosperity and success. Kure (1999: 255) as a consequence points out that “actually, in the prophetic programme of God for the church, as well as in the Scripture, when God declares a man physically or financially rich, such a man turns out to be indeed the richest man in society” (sic).

From Kure’s assertion, it is apparent that God blesses the people through two main avenues: through the Scriptures as well as through prophecy. Therefore, the scriptures as well as prophetic declarations by persons of God stand on equal footing. As a result, if an individual is to prosper, there is need to believe both the scriptures as well as prophetic declarations.

As we have already noted, when a prophetic word is spoken it should be believed. It is only when what the prophet supposedly speaks on behalf of God is believed that there will be prosperity and success. There we have the link between prophetic notions and faith ideas in

the Word of Faith Movement. It is the prophet who confesses or speaks success and prosperity; it the responsibility of the believer to believe that what the prophet says shall come to pass. A favourite scripture usually employed to support their views is 2 Chronicles 20: 20b which says; “Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper” (KJV).

From what has been said so far it is clear that the Faith Movement finds fertile ground in African traditions and religious ideas. Therefore, notions such as, “nothing happens without a cause,” found in African Traditional Religions, are echoed by the Word of Faith Movement in Africa. When someone is not making progress in life, it is assumed almost every time that there are some evil forces at work hindering his or her progress.

Whereas in African Traditional thought, people when faced with misfortunes, would normally consult diviners in order to ascertain what is wrong with them, in the Word of Faith Movement, the people usually consult persons of God who assume the role of the prophet to tell them why they are suffering such misfortunes. The Word of Faith Movement even if historically exported from the United States of America, has found a home in most African countries south of the Sahara and expresses itself in ways that fully reflect the religious beliefs and traditions of its new home.

5.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we bring this study to a close, we need to remind ourselves concerning the task of Christian theology and more especially systematic theology. Grenz (1994:3) observes that "systematic theology is the reflection on and the ordered articulation of our faith."

Pannenberg (1991: 6, 7) on the other hand notes:

The task of theology is not only to investigate the origin and the original content of the Christian faith and of the doctrine of the church, or the changes they underwent in the course of history, but also to determine the truth which is contained in that tradition.

Pannenberg (1991:7) goes on to point out that:

All theological disciplines share in this task, but undoubtedly it is the special task of systematic theology and to the degree that the question of truth content in documents of the Christian tradition is dealt with in biblical exegesis and in church history, those disciplines share in the special task of systematic theology.

Grenz (1994:3) goes on to argue that, "Theology is primarily the articulation of a specific religious belief system itself (doctrine). But it also includes reflection on the nature of believing, as well as declarations concerning the integration of commitment with personal and community life". It is for the same reason that Grenz (1994:4) further writes:

Christians engage in theological reflection in response to the presence in the church of certain perceived needs, including what we may designate as "polemics," "catechetical," and "biblical summarization." "theologians carry out their work because of the need to define the Christian belief system in the context of alternatives (polemics)"

According to Jacob (et al 1911:109) modern polemics must defend the spirit of Christianity against non-Christian philosophies, sectarianism, indifference, and separatism."

These observations, when applied to the Word of Faith movement give us permission to evaluate this movement relevantly. Grenz (1994:4) further notes that "theological enterprise is also an out working of the need to offer instruction to the people of God (catechesis)." As far as we are concerned, failure to establish new believers in the fundamentals of the Christian faith has resulted in aberrant theological conclusions within the Word of Faith Movement. According to Grenz (1994:4), the "third impetus for the theological task arises from the need Christians have always sensed to bring basic themes taught in the Bible into summary form (biblical summarization)." This third point underscores the importance of systematic theology. Since this study is an exercise in systematic theology. Our task is simple. It is to examine what the Bible teaching is concerning the major doctrines of the Christian faith as well as how these doctrines are reinterpreted in the Word of Faith Movement.

In this study we have sufficiently established that Word of Faith ideas are quite dominant especially in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Vreeland (n.d) correctly notes:

No other Movement has been more pervasive in the Independent Charismatic tradition than the Word of Faith Movement and none other has been as persuasive. Researchers and Pentecostal historians have difficulty finding any independent charismatic church or ministry that has not been exposed to the word of faith movement to some degree.

In the Zambian context, mainly due to church conferences and satellite television even denominational Pentecostals³⁰ are getting their fair share of exposure to Word of Faith ideas. We have argued sufficiently that these Word of Faith ideas are a product of how the Bible is viewed, read, and interpreted. From what we have said so far, it has become apparent that the hermeneutics of the Word of Faith Movement is driven by the underlying desire for every Christian to prosper materially. This usually, results in selective application of biblical texts. More often than not, biblical texts are given independent existence apart from the historical context of the Scriptures. In the final analysis what really matters is not what the Bible teaches on a particular subject, the men and women of God in this regard assume the final authority since it is what they teach which is taken to be the 'word of God'. Sound biblical hermeneutics is substituted for the so called prophetic declaration by persons of God.

In this study we have also endeavoured to show how the Bible is viewed in the Word of Faith Movement as well as how it is interpreted. The Bible in the Word of Faith Movement is conceived as possessing a dual existence. This arises from a somewhat pressed distinction between the rhema and the logos. It is almost insinuated that the Bible only becomes effective when it has become the rhema. Some views on the distinctions between logos and rhema may even go to extremes. Fisichella (2003: 94) is representative of such extreme views when he argues that:

When you become fully aware of the difference between logos and rhema, you will realize that logos is Jesus, but rhema is Christ. Logos is the printed or published word and rhema is the anointed or empowered word. Logos is the gospel story of Jesus

³⁰ Here reference is made to denominations such as Pentecostal Assemblies of GOD, Apostolic Faith Mission, as well as The Apostolic Church In Zambia

before he stepped into the river Jordan, while rhema is the biblical account of Christ revealed after he stepped out of the river Jordan.

We have however, demonstrated with strong biblical evidence that there is basically no difference between rhema and logos. In some instances these two terms are even used interchangeably as we saw at 1Peter 1:23-24. When the Bible is viewed in this manner it becomes clear that any meaningful hermeneutical exercise becomes an almost impossible task. How can one possibly interpret the spoken word which is said to be spoken directly from God? This Faith Movement at this point, depends on esoteric and extra-biblical knowledge which is not available to most of us.

In this study we have also noted that both God and human beings are faith beings are viewed in the Word of Faith Movement. The biblical teaching is for human beings to have faith in God. The Bible never teaches the idea that God also needs faith in order to accomplish what God wills as God. The Bible actually says whoever comes to God must believe that God exists and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek after God (see Hebrews 11:6). In the Word of Faith Movement, the idea of faith is projected in such a way that everything including God is subject to faith. Even God is presented as one who needs to have faith in order to make things happen. Gloria Copeland (n.d) in this regard maintains that “God framed the worlds by faith. Everything God made, He made by faith. Everything he does, he does by faith” (sic). Kenyon (1998: 35) equally maintains that “God is a faith Spirit. He brought the universe into being by faith” (sic). In response to such unorthodox ideas we need to remind ourselves that such views undermine seriously the sovereignty of God.

When it comes to the doctrine of human beings, in the Word of Faith Movement, Human beings are said to have been created in the class of God. In other words, they are gods (see Kenyon 1998:7, 13). The biblical teaching, however, is that human beings are creatures and for that reason they are subject to the authority of God. According to Leith (1993:98), “to be a creature means that human beings are defined by the purpose of God the creator.” Leith (1993: 98-99) further points out that “to be a creature is to be limited and dependent. To be a creature is to be limited by time and space. A creature can be in only one particular space – here and not there.” This argument clearly contradicts the assertion held by some people in the Word of Faith Movement that human beings are gods. It clear that what the word of Faith Movement teaches concerning God and human beings is clearly not in keeping with historical Christianity.

Christology and Pneumatology have had a fair share of reinterpretation in the Word of Faith Movement. As we have broached in chapter Christology cannot be separated from Pneumatology. In this work we have argued that studies in Christology either assume an ontological approach or a functional approach. The ontological approach focuses on the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. While functional Christology has to do with what Christ is able to do. As has already been pointed out in chapter four the Christology of the Word of Faith Movement assumes a functional slant since Jesus Christ is viewed as one who guarantees prosperity and success to His followers. This is premised on the conviction that when Jesus died He provided remedy for all the maladies that afflict the people of God. This includes both socio-economic challenges as well as illnesses in this life. It is for the same reason that Green (2011: 139) points out that “Jesus entered the world as a naked baby without anything. He gave up owning everything to not having anything.” Further, Green (2011:139) notes that “it is through this act of poverty that we have become rich.” When it

comes to the timing of these riches which Christians are supposed to acquire through Christ, Green (2011:139-140) argues that:

We are “to be wealthy” or “to become” wealthy current in the present not at a later time in the future. We don’t have to wait till we get to heaven to receive all of God’s riches because we are now God’s children. We have already become either a prince or a princess in God’s kingdom and are now heirs to God’s Royal throne.

This almost suggests that everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ must necessarily become rich materially. Pneumatology, on the other hand is reduced in most cases to play a role to empower Christians to succeed in their personal lives. The role of the Holy Spirit in directing Christian mission and ministry does not receive the emphasis that it deserves.

The Word of Faith Movement ultimately may be reduced to two concepts: Blessing and curses. If one has material wealth and is successful in all the other aspects of his or her life that individual is blessed. On the other hand if an individual is poor and struggling to cope with the pressures of life then that individual is under a curse. The idea of blessing and curses is a natural outcome when the people’s faith

The Word of Faith Movement, more especially as it manifests itself in Africa has adapted itself to a very great extent to some African traditions and religious ideas. In African traditional thought it is usually believed that nothing happens without a cause. It is therefore, believed that behind every misfortune, there is a cause. In the same way, in the Word of Faith Movement, no one can be poor, sickly, or even unmarried without a cause. That cause may be taken either to be lack of faith or there may be a curse on the individual’s life.

When we bring together all that has been said, it becomes clear that the Word of Faith movement is anchored on very thin theological ground. As we conclude this study it has become apparent for us to conclude that that the Word of Faith Movement is a departure from historical Christianity. As has already been pointed, almost all the major doctrines of the Christian faith have been reinterpreted to fit the aspiration of the proponents of this movement. To maintain that Christians can get or become whatever they want by simply confessing their faith is to make God redundant in their lives. Who needs God when human beings can create whatever they wish for themselves.

From what we have seen so far, the only option left before us is to note that the Word of Faith Movement's departure from historical Christianity is fuelled by the unique approach to the scriptures which does not take biblical interpretation seriously. In this regard, Harrison (2005: 7-8) says, according to the Word of Faith Movement:

Denomination-based educational institutions teach students to interpret the Bible according to the denomination's core beliefs, but those interpretations are often not what the Bible "really" says, especially concerning believers' God-given right to material prosperity and other controversial issues about which they claim to have discerned the true mind of God.

Ultimately, to build one's theology on the so called 'special revelation' or 'rhema' from God is to blame for the departure from historical Christianity.

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