

From

RAGS

to

RICHERS

J N HORN

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

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FROM RAGS TO RICHES

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

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

Mathew S Clark
Apostolic Faith Mission of S A

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 1

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

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

Lester Sumrall (1984)

1 THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE HEALING EVANGELISTS

1.1 Background

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

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

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

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

(Farah 1980a:146)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Lake 1935:2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 The doctrine of healing

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

Oral Roberts (Harrell 1985:455)

1.2.1 *The relation between the Healing evangelists and the Faith movement*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Quoted in Harrell 1985:455f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Hagin (jr) 1980:90)

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

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

(Copeland [s a]:30)

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

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

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

(Hagin (jr) 1979:68)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Barth 1973:644f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:177)

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

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

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

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:161)

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

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

(Quoted in Dayton 1983:162)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Lake 1981:47)

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

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

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

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

(Lake 1935:2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Price 1940:15)

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

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

(Price 1940:71)

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

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

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

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

(Price 1940:94)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Hollenweger 1977:357)

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.3 Some problems in the healing beliefs of the Faith movement

1.2.3.1 The question of medical help in healing

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

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

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

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

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

(Parker & Tanner 1980:141f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Gossett 1977:9)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The new birth

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.3.4 Eschatology and healing

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

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

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

(Quoted in Hollenweger 1977:359f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.3.5 *The atonement as the foundation for healing*

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Quoted in Steele 1986:140)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Fee 1979:15)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 The doctrine of prosperity

God used the faith message to finance the new churches

Tim Salmon

Rhema Faith Convention 1987

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even the controversial emphasis on faith played a role in Roberts's theology. In his early years he used the phrase 'turning your faith loose' as a precondition for a miracle (Harrell 1985:451ff). Like the later Faith teachers Roberts initially believed in positive confession. In his later years Roberts admitted that his early teachings did not take the sovereign will of God into account.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3.2 The 'theology of giving'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(K Copeland 1974:64f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Gl 3:13-14)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The arbitrary way in which Hagin uses the Bible is evident from his exegesis of Deuteronomy 28. He quotes verses 20, 21, 35, 58, 59, 60 and 61, which all say clearly that the Lord will command certain curses upon those who do not obey the law of God:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Gossett 1976:21f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(K Copeland 1974:63)

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.4 The Faith teaching and realised eschatology

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

Kenneth Hagin

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

Don Hughes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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