

2 OTHER INFLUENCES ON THE FAITH MOVEMENT

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

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

Daniel McConnell

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kenneth Hagin

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

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

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

E W Kenyon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Quoted in Matta 1987:29)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(McConnell 1982:104)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Daniel McConnell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.2 The independent Charismatic movement

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

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

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

The ministry of Kenneth Hagin blossomed in the second half of the seventies. His Bible College had only fifty-eight students in 1974, but in the 1980-81 school year it boasted an enrolment of 1 985 (McConnell 1982:10). The Bible School served as a catalyst for the faith message. Graduates of the Rhema Bible Training Centre eventually founded Faith churches all over America and in several countries abroad. In South Africa, the Rhema Bible Church, was founded in 1979 by a graduate of Hagin's Training Centre, Ray McCauley. Many charismatics eventually found a spiritual home in these independent Faith Churches.

3 CONCLUSIONS

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 2

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

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

Evangelical Witness in South Africa
(Concerned Evangelicals)

1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Concerned Evangelicals 1986:32)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(McCauley 1985:1)

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

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

2.2 Capitalism and the Protestant ethic - Max Weber

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

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

(Magliatio 1981:140)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Weber 1971:117)

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

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

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

(Weber 1971:181f)

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3 The deprivation theories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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