

METHODS, Formulas, Rituals, Incantations.... And other forms of Witchcraft.

Peter Dodd.

Email: peterd@pastors.com



Introduction

“Methods, Formulas, Rituals, Incantations... and other forms of *Witchcraft*?”

Over the course of the last few years, I had heard many people talking about the Power of God, and how to use and exercise it. While I was raised in a Pentecostal environment, I have never been a ‘Hyper-Pentecostal’ or ‘Hyper –Charismatic,’ and so while many of the references rolled past me, some of them began ringing alarm-bells in a vague, undefined way. It wasn’t until much later that a friend told me a story about some events in her work place that things fell into place, and I understood *why* I had been uncomfortable with much of what I’d heard.

In her own words, Debbie tells her story:

“Because we have a very difficult woman working in our office, we asked a mature and well-respected Christian for advice on this situation. She told us that when this woman was out of her office, we were to take the [communion] bread and the wine, sprinkle the breadcrumbs around her chair and her workstation, and likewise with the wine. At the same time, [We were] to anoint the lintels of her door with oil. She assured us this would change the whole situation.

“We thought this sounded quite exciting, and went down to the warehouse to tell the [others] what we were about to do. One ... was a very wise and experienced African man, and he refused, saying that in his culture, this would be deemed witchcraft. In deference to his culture, we decided not to continue.

“But on thinking about it in the following months, it *is* quite obviously witchcraft. We would be “spreading the muti” as done by Ngangas (Witchdoctors). By incanting (praying) and scattering the bread and wine, we would “change the situation.” This is giving magical properties to very ordinary things- wine and bread. What possible benefits could they possibly have, - apart from encouraging cockroaches!

At last, I understood...

Very soon after this, the frightening thought occurred to me: “*Could we really be seeing witchcraft in the church?*” The more I researched this possibility, the more frightened I became of the possible answers. Let me say right here in the introduction that I am aware that many may be upset with what they read in these pages. To those, I ask that you read it all through carefully, and check the references for yourself, especially in light of what the Bible itself has to say. Some of the quotations may offend, and I would not recommend that young, impressionable people read this, especially Aleister Crowley’s references to his ‘Magick Arts.’ Having said that, I pray that God uses this to open His people’s eyes to what anyone with eyes to see can directly observe in the Church.

What Methods, formulas, etc?

“No, not you Obelix!”- Getafix the Druid.

Since time immemorial, people have sought to influence other people or events to their favour via invisible means. Most children today grow up with stories of witches and wizards with the ability to make things happen through the use of spells, familiar spirits or potions- Genie and the Lamp, Catweezle, Witch Hazel, Harry Potter, etc. In fact, stories such as these are becoming more and more common as time goes by, and the Information Age makes more books and comics, cartoons and films available. But there is no doubt that people in general are fascinated by the occult- it’s in our nature. The word ‘Occult,’ comes from the Latin, meaning ‘*hidden*,’ and who hasn’t wondered at times what goes on in the unseen realms? Even in Christian Circles, books such as ‘*This Present Darkness*’ and ‘*Piercing the Darkness*’ have piqued our interest in the spiritual realm.

In Matthew chapter 4, we see Satan trying to tempt (or ‘*Test*’) Jesus. In doing so, he took Jesus to the top of the Temple, and tried to persuade Him to jump off, possibly to prove Himself to the Jews. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Many people today also wish for, or even claim the power to command the spirit world. In times past, this was instantly recognised as witchcraft; today it is known as ‘*telekinesis*’, ‘*channelling*’ or even ‘*Positive Confession*.’ Some will immediately ask the question, “*But are we not as Christians to take command over the spirits?*” Before we answer this question, let’s begin by defining what we mean.

A dictionary definition of witchcraft is “*The use of Supernatural means to influence or achieve natural things or events*. See ‘*sorcery*.’ ”

A definition of ‘*sorcery*,’ while not exact, is often given as “The application of witchcraft.”

These definitions obviously open up a great number of possibilities. Are we in fact seeing witchcraft in the church? ‘Surely not!’ one may argue: Modern witchcraft is only practiced by traditional religions, and by a small group of the lunatic fringe known as ‘Wiccans.’

If this is so, let’s refer to one of the greatest practitioners of Wicca, and founder of the modern Satanist Church, Aleister Crowley.

Crowley was born in 1875 and lived in Boleskine Manor on the banks of Loch Ness, Scotland, until his death in 1947. He travelled widely through Europe “Researching” different forms of



occult. He was well known in the early 1900’s as an ‘Alternative Thinker,’ and wrote several books on the subject of the Occult and Witchcraft, which he called “*Magick*,” (as opposed to a conjurer’s ‘magic’ tricks). Interestingly, a picture of him may be seen on the cover of The Beatle’s album cover ‘*Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*’ second from the left, on the back row.¹

A high-ranking Freemason and Yogi, as well as a heroin addict, he referred to himself as a Wiccan *and* a Luciferian. In fact, Crowley saw little difference between the two, Wicca simply being the worship of Nature, with all its nature spirits, (or ‘Sprites’) under the name of ‘Gaia,’ or the “Great Mother Earth.” Chief of all the spirits is Lucifer, the Great Guardian [of Knowledge]. Aleister Crowley’s own definition of witchcraft was, “The Science and Art of causing change

to conform to Will”

Crowley has variously been described as “The most evil man who ever lived” to “The greatest luminary of our time.” He amassed many disciples to his cause, amongst them, Anton LeVey, who spent many years living at the Hotel California in the 1960’s, writing his *Satanic Bible*², Gerald Gardiner, founder of ‘modern’ Wicca, and S.L. Mathers, translator and commentator on the Qabalahs (Hebrew Occult books), and founder of the ‘Order of the Golden Dawn,’ who’s definition of Wicca was: “The Science of the control of the Secret Forces of Nature”.

Before we look at how this has affected the modern church, let’s look a little deeper at how the Bible views witchcraft, divination and sorcery.

Leviticus 20: 6

I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

In Deuteronomy 13 God said to His people:

9 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there.

10 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft,

11 or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

¹ “We just thought we would put together a lot of people we like and admire”- Ringo Starr, *Hit Parader* Magazine, October 1976

² Note the references in the song “Hotel California” by The Eagles.

12 Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.

13 You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

14 The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.

At this point, it must be asked, (assuming that you are a Christian), “*Do you believe and accept the Bible as the revealed word of God?*” If your answer is *yes*, you must accept that all the Bible says is truth, and must be acted upon. If on the other hand, the answer is *no*, then it is possible that for you there are no absolutes, and everything is subjective, i.e. subject to your own interpretation. The third possibility is that you may believe *parts* of the Bible, but reserve the right to choose which parts to believe or not believe. If this is you, then you may find yourself open to accusations of intellectual schizophrenia, having no criteria apart from your own logic or personal understanding upon which to discern truth from error, and fact from myth.

It must seem obvious that God’s people took witchcraft, divination and sorcery seriously, as the penalty for such things was simple: Exodus 22:18 “*Do not allow a sorceress to live.*”

Aleister Crowley, who devoted his life to witchcraft, had much to say about God in his ‘*Notes on Genesis.*’ Note that in Hebrew, the word “Elohim” means ‘God,’ as plural, more than two. Although this may be confusing, it is more easily understood in light of His multi-faceted nature, and that He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in one. Even today, devout Jews recite the *Sh’ma* prayer taken from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4 and 5: “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*”

Crowley’s explanation is radically different

*"ALHIM", (Elohim) is the exoteric word for Gods. "Gods" are the Forces of Nature; their "Names" are the Laws of Nature. Thus they are eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent and so on; and thus their "Wills" are immutable and absolute. It is the masculine plural of a feminine noun, but its nature is principally feminine.*³

Understanding Crowley’s comments should open the eyes of those who have been involved in the hyper-Pentecostal movement. The methods, formulas and rituals of Magick will be seen in the words and writings of many modern preachers and teachers, beginning with Crowley’s contemporaries, to the great television personalities of today.

Although some may argue that using a particular way or form of praying doesn’t necessarily constitute a Method, Formula or Ritual, my contention is that any prayer or petition which does not take into account the Sovereignty of God, and attempts to influence Him without taking into account His Will, (“Twisting His Arm”) is in effect using a formula or method to get what one wants, and is therefore, (at least in essence) a form of witchcraft by definition.

Crowley’s formula for commanding the spirits to do his bidding (Which he described as a Ritual) is a literal formula for demon possession in that the person casting the ‘spell’ attempts to achieve ‘union’ with the spirit by identifying with, and visualising the spirit until it manifests itself:

³ Magick in Theory and practice, chapter IV

TAHUTI, Thee, Thee I invoke. Oh Thou of the Ibis head, Thee, Thee I invoke"; and so on. At the conclusion of this a mental image of the God, infinitely vast and infinitely splendid, should be perceived, in just the same sense as a man might see the Sun.

The second part [Of the Ritual] begins...

The magician should imagine that he is hearing this voice, and at the same time that he is echoing it, that it is true also of himself. This thought should so exalt him that he is able at its conclusion to utter the sublime words which open the third part: "Behold! he is in me, and I am in him." At this moment, he loses consciousness of his mortal being; he is that mental image which he previously but saw. This consciousness is only complete as he goes on: "Mine is the radiance wherein Ptah floateth over his firmament. I travel upon high. I tread upon the firmament of Nu. I raise a flashing flame with the lightnings of mine eye: ever rushing on in the splendour of the daily glorified Ra --- giving my life to the treaders of Earth!" This thought gives the relation of God and Man from the divine point of view.

The magician is only recalled to himself at the conclusion of the third part; in which occur, almost as if by accident, the words: "Therefore do all things obey my word." Yet in the fourth part, which begins: "Therefore do thou come forth unto me", it is not really the magician who is addressing the God; it is the God who hears the far-off utterance of the magician. If this invocation has been correctly performed, the words of the fourth part will sound distant and strange. It is surprising that a dummy (so the magus now appears to Himself) should be able to speak!⁴

Later in the same chapter, Crowley compares witchcraft to Alchemy:

...The real objection to this formula is not inherent in its ... nature. Witchcraft consists in treating it as the exclusive preoccupation of Magick, and especially in denying to the Holy Spirit his right to indwell His Temple.

Now that we are left in little doubt as to the origins of Crowley's thoughts on witchcraft, or his religion, let's answer some questions previously asked. "Are we as Christians not to command the spirits and demons?" The answer to this question, as always must come from the Bible, rather than a man's teachings.

In Matthew chapter 10, verse 7, Jesus sent out his disciples, saying "...And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

As His modern-day Disciples, should we not also be doing the same things? In the related passage of Luke chapter 10, Jesus sent out seventy-two of His followers. When they returned, they reported back:

17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

A little later, we see the following occurrence:

⁴ Magick in Theory and Practice, chapter 2

Acts 19:13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."
 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.
 15 the evil spirit answered them, "*Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?*"
 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

What did these sons of Sceva miss to be so well and truly beaten by a spirit? I would suggest that part of the answer lies in the story of the Roman Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant (Matt 8). Jesus replied that he would come immediately, but the Centurion stopped him (perhaps understanding that to step into his house would ritually defile a Jew).

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.
 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

The Roman Centurion obviously recognised that Jesus was under authority too, and was commended for this.⁵ We too are under authority; Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 on tells us in the passage sometimes referred to as "The Great Commission," *And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* While we are acting under Christ's authority, we have His authority to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons, but should we step out from His Divine Authority, we immediately begin to rely on our own authority, which the demonic world looks upon with great contempt and amusement.

In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus healed a paralytic. When Jesus first saw the paralytic, He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow teach like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately Jesus knew . . . what they were thinking . . . and He said to them, "Why are you thinking such things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? *But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . .*" He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. [Emphasis added]

In the preface of his famous book, *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis revealed two of the greatest mistakes in humanity's beliefs about demons:
There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest

⁵ See Philippians 2; John 5:30-36

in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

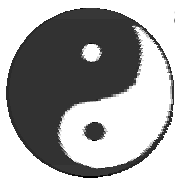
An even greater error, and the one most valued by Lewis' demonic characters, is the combining of the two errors. As the senior demon Screwtape writes to Wormwood:

If once we can produce our perfect work—the Materialist Magician, the man, not using but veritably worshipping, what he vaguely calls "Forces" while denying the existence of "spirits"—then the end of the war will be in sight.

Is this not exactly what we are seeing today? Crowley himself said “ ‘gods’ are the Forces of Nature; their "Names" are the Laws of Nature.” If one can be duped into thinking that one is manipulating ‘Forces Of Nature’ rather than personal spiritual entities, then as Lewis writes, “*the end of the war is in sight*” for the Devil, while men cannot distinguish between these ‘Forces’ and evil. We see today many instances of Satan being described as ‘equal and opposite of God.’ In short, this is blasphemy. Lucifer was a created being, perfect in all his ways until sin was found in him, and he was cast out of God’s Holy presence.⁶ Simply put, God has no Equal. As C. S. Lewis goes on to explain, “*Devil is the opposite of angel only as Bad Man is the opposite of Good Man. Satan, the leader or dictator of devils, is the opposite, not of God, but of Michael*”

By separating magic (Magick) from evil, it becomes possible to portray occult practices as "good" and "healthy," in direct contrast to the scriptural declaration that such practices are "detestable to the Lord." This, in turn, opens the door for less discerning individuals to become confused about supernatural matters.

Many will recognise these principles in the Eastern “Yin-Yang” symbol, represented by a black and white (Occasionally red and white) circle divided in two by a reversed letter ‘S’ with contrasting dots in each half. To the eastern mind, this represents the concept of ‘Balance’: “*There is good and bad in all of us, and in all good is some bad, and in all bad there is some good.*” The increasing acceptance of this concept is diametrically opposed to the Word of God, which states in Jeremiah 17:9, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*



This process is already well underway in American culture. A December 1997 study published by the Gallup organisation, taken from the Princeton Religion Research Center, revealed that 31 percent of Americans believe in ghosts, 20 percent believe in witches, 24 percent believe in astrology, 17 percent had consulted a fortune-teller and 24 percent believe in reincarnation. Gallup found that born-again Christians— defined as those who believe God's Word to be literally true and have tried to encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour— held almost the same beliefs percentage-wise as non-Christians! These are indeed frightening statistics. I would hesitate to ask what the figures would show if polled here in Africa. Perhaps this may explain the fascination with films such as ‘*Star Wars*’ where characters are encouraged to become One with ‘The Force’ and use it to enhance their own capabilities. Clearly depicted as ‘Equal and Opposite’ in the *Star Wars* series are the ‘Good’ side and ‘Bad’ side of The Force as embodied by Master Yoda, and Darth Vader.

Is this the same Force that many would encourage us to tap into? What are ‘Christian’ leaders really saying in the church today? We will look a little deeper at this, but in order to do so, we need to look at some of the people themselves first.

⁶ Ezekiel chapter 28, Isaiah 14

The Characters

"I don't preach doctrine, I preach faith." (Kenneth Copeland, Following the Faith of Abraham I, side 2.)

The modern 'Word of Faith Movement' started with the writings of Madam Blavatsky, who founded the Theosophy movement (New Thought). Theosophy was a mixture of philosophy and occult, and attained a great following in the mid 1800's. Amongst those she influenced were Alexander Graham Bell, Mary Baker Eddy, Adolf Hitler and Elvis Presley, the last two of whom kept copies of her book by their bedside until the end of their lives. Although she had a great influence on many people, who in turn influenced many others, the real story begins with E.W. Kenyon.

Madam Blavatsky

Madame Helena Blavatsky was born in Russia in 1831, and arrived in New York in 1873 where she formed the Theosophical Society. She published her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, in 1877. The following year she went to India to establish the Theosophical Society there. Madame Blavatsky edited the magazine *The Theosophist* while in India, but moved on to England in 1887 where she established the Blavatsky Lodge in London. She also started a magazine, *Lucifer* (from the Latin "Luciferus", meaning 'Light-bringer,' or Morning Star). Her master-work, *The Secret Doctrine*, was published in 1888.



Blavatsky claimed she spent several years in Tibet and India being initiated into occult mysteries by various "masters" (*mahatmas* or *adepts*) who had "astral" bodies. These Adepts were said to dwell in the Himalayas and other exotic places. They are known for their extraordinary psychic powers and are the sacred keepers of some mysterious "Ancient Wisdom". They are not divine, she said, but more highly evolved than the rest of us mere mortals. (Evolution, according to Blavatsky, is a spiritual process.) Their goal is to unite all humanity in a "Great White Brotherhood," despite the fact that they dwell in the remotest regions of the world and apparently have as little contact with the rest of us as possible.

"The chief aim of the...Theosophical Society," She claimed before her death in 1891, was *"to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities."*

E.W. Kenyon

Essak Kenyon was a Baptist pastor and teacher. Although he never joined the Pentecostal movement, he did move in Pentecostal circles toward the end of his life. His pioneer radio broadcasts and voluminous writings had broad influence in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. He claimed that if his message were followed it would create a 'Master Race' of Christians who would have complete power over demons and disease. In his book *Identification*, he stated: *"When these truths really gain the ascendancy in us, they will make us spiritual supermen, masters of demons and disease. ... It will be the end of weakness and failure"* (*Identification*, p. 68).



In his early years, Kenyon was influenced by Methodist ideas of 'sinless perfectionism'. In 1892, he enrolled in the Emerson College of Oratory, "an institution that was absolutely inundated with metaphysical, cultic ideas and practices" (McConnell, *A Different Gospel*, p. 34). Charles Wesley Emerson, the head of Emerson College, was a Unitarian minister who eventually left to join the

Christian Science movement. A number of Emerson graduates also went on to become prominent Christian Science practitioners.

Though Kenyon claimed to be opposed to the New Thought cults, and though he claimed to derive his teaching strictly from the Bible, there is no question that he incorporated many New Thought ideas into his doctrine. Like New Thought, Kenyon taught that the spiritual is the cause of all physical effects and that positive confession has the power to create its own reality. He believed that healing and other ongoing miracles are necessary to demonstrate the reality of Christianity. He considered his writings "to be a wonderful new interpretation of the Scriptures, a 'new type of Christianity,' which would bring healing and prosperity to all who possessed his revelation knowledge of the Bible" (McConnell, p. 50).

"If Jesus' physical death could pay the penalty for Sin as some contend," he wrote, "Then why is it necessary that a Christian die? If a Christian dies physically, does he not pay the penalty of his own sin? If physical death is the penalty for sin, then why do not the whole human race pay their own penalty, and save themselves, for all die? But we hold that the physical death of Jesus did not touch the sin issue at all." (Daniel R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 23, 28 note 23)

Kenyon's basic mistake established the foundations for much of what was to come. Kenyon apparently never fully understood that sin brings *spiritual* death, not just physical death. Scripture tells us in Isaiah 59,

- 1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.
- 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Because Jesus was responsible for creating us⁷, only His death could pay the price required by His Father: A Life for a life.⁸ Being responsible for His creation, He had the ability to pay for the sins of all mankind. Hebrews 3:3 tells us

- 3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.

Adam's sin brought separation from God; Jesus' death brought reconciliation between God and Man- the innocent paying for the guilty⁹. Our own physical death is therefore the *result* of sin, not the payment for it.

Kenneth Hagin



Closely following on from Kenyon is one of the most well known Pentecostal preachers today. Founder of Rhema Bible Church, Kenneth Hagin has a folksy, easy-to-listen-to message that is well sprinkled with anecdotes, personal opinion, and occasional Bible verses. The author of several books and booklets, his writings are required reading to all who attend the Rhema Bible Schools and their affiliates. Although he has denied the charges on several occasions, several of his early works were proven to have been

plagiarised directly from Kenyon's writings. As a young man, he claims to have died and gone to Hell, where he was rescued from the clutches of the Guardian Demon by an Angel.¹⁰ Having now

⁷ John 1:1-14

⁸ Leviticus 24:17; Rom 6:23

⁹ 2 Cor 5:18,19; Rom 5 (All)

apparently received a commission direct from God, he founded the Rhema Bible Church. Perhaps not surprisingly, the very word '*Rhema*' shows his leanings towards the theology of the person who influenced him the most: E.W. Kenyon.

'*Rhema*' (Ray'ma) is a Greek word found in the New Testament, meaning 'The Spoken Word,' (As opposed to '*Logos*' or 'The Written Word') The very name, as we shall see, is significant in light of his theology. Perhaps the most famous of Hagin's many books is "*Write your own Ticket with God*." In it, Hagin tells of the four steps that Jesus was supposed to have given him many years ago in a vision. The Holy Son of God, claims Hagin, said these words...

"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 God the Father." With these "steps," Jesus said to Hagin *"You can write your own ticket with God."*

What are the four steps? According to Hagin, they are simply:

1. Say it,
2. Do it,
3. Receive it
4. Tell it.

It doesn't take much to see that this is bordering dangerously close to Aleister Crowley's ideas of Spirits being Forces of Nature. Where, one wonders, is God in this? Does God not have His own mind? Reference has already been made to Isaiah chapter 59, where God says, "*Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*" Yet, Hagin states that anyone, anywhere can use what he freely describes as a formula. Writing one's own ticket with God is nothing short of putting self before God.

The first epistle of John, chapter 5 says the following:

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us

Herein lies the point of the exercise: If we ask anything according to HIS WILL, He hears us. Of course, some might quote from Mark 11:

22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

This obviously assumes that what has been asked is in accordance with God's Will. It may also be argued that in this context, (The withered fig tree) Jesus was in fact alluding to Israel, and the spreading of the Gospel to the gentiles if we look at type, and understand that a fig tree is representative of Israel, and a mountain refers to the Kingdom of God, and the sea is the World. Whichever way you look at Hagin's formula, you must agree that there appears to be little to do

¹⁰ This shows his incorrect theology: Hell was built as a place of *punishment* for Satan- it is not his kingdom! See Rev chapter 20:1-3

with asking God for *His will* in the situation. It appears to be more of a formula for getting what you want. For example, I knew of a lady several years ago who desperately needed a car to get her around town, etc. After praying about it for some time, some people she knew decided to immigrate, and not being able to find a suitable buyer, sold her their vehicle for a ridiculously low price. Shortly afterwards, she was told by someone within the hyper-Faith movement that if she'd had *more* faith, she could have had a better car. The fact remains, that God supplied her *needs*, and not her *greeds*; the vehicle she was given was perfectly adequate.

Having said that, more investigation would appear warranted:

1. What is this "faith formula" or "principle" all about?
2. Where did it come from?
3. Who does it centre on, man or God?
4. Where does it lead?
5. What do we lose if we persist in these Doctrines of Faith?

To begin with, these "laws," or "formulas of faith" are not of God- they are based on an unbiblical false idea, a concept which glorifies not the Lord God, but this magical idea of "faith-word". The Faith Theology sees the Almighty Creator as a God who had faith in His own words; His *words* bring forth creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing"). The teaching is that because "the Word of Faith" holds the creation together, and keeps creation working, that "*faith-filled words are ruling the universe today*" (Kenyon). The "spiritual laws" which were supposedly established by God to run the universe, can be used by the believer to "work" for himself, in order to get what he wants. One only has to know how to operate this "Word of Faith" world system. This borders dangerously close to Aleister Crowley's "theology."

Part of the problem here comes from the idea that both Kenyon and Hagin proclaim:

"[Man] was created on terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority...God made us as much like Himself as possible...He made us the same class of being that He is Himself...Man lived in the realm of God. He lived on terms equal with God...[The] believer is called Christ...That's who we are; we're Christ" (Kenneth Hagin, Zoe: The God-Kind of Life, 1989. pp. 35-36, 41)

"Every man who has been born again is an incarnation, and Christianity is a miracle. The believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth" (Kenneth Hagin, "The Incarnation," The Word of Faith 13, December, 1980).

In Genesis chapter 1, verse 27, we read, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." In Hebrew, the word 'image' is '*Tselem*' meaning 'Shadow, phantom, an illusion or resemblance'¹¹. Just as a photograph may bear the exact *image* of someone, the photo itself is still only paper and chemicals and bears none of the properties or characteristics of the real person.

In the same way, Romans 8:28 and 29 tells us

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

¹¹ Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, No. 6754

How is this done? Paul goes on to tell the Romans in chapter 12,

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Being ‘transformed into the image of His Son’ is a long, ongoing process, and will take the entire life of a Christian to achieve. It is not an ‘overnight event,’ but is accomplished as we read about Him in His Book and allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin that we may confess it and make right with Him through repentance, so making us more like Him *in character*. The Holy Spirit is a personal entity- in other words, a person. Because of this, he treats each person as an individual, and must not be regarded as a Force or “A Law of Nature.” Knowing how close they comes to Aleister Crowley’s definition, Hagin’s ‘principles’ come dangerously close to blasphemy.

Hagin’s words, as recorded in his "Word of Faith" publication begin to show the extent of his theology:

"In the spiritual realm God has set into motion certain laws, just as He set laws in the natural realm. These laws in the natural realm work, don't they? Just as you get into contact with those natural laws or put them into practice, they work for you. Over the spiritual realm the same thing is true. I have come to the conclusion that the law of faith is spiritual law, that God has put this law into motion, and that as surely as you come into contact with it, it will work for you."

What Hagin is saying here is that God’s Laws are Natural Laws, which may be used by anyone, Christian or not, as long as they know *how* to use the Laws and put them into practice. He also suggests that you may get these Laws to work for you, rather than for God in accordance with His Will. This appears to take no account of the sovereignty of God: That God is the Creator of the Heavens and Earth, and as such may do as he pleases. Once more, Paul speaks to the Romans in Chapter 9:

20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, `Why did you make me like this?'"

21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

The ‘Laws of God’ are to be found throughout the Bible, and are designed to bring us to a point where we realise that we are in fact incapable of keeping those ‘Laws’ anyway.¹² This should have the effect of causing us to cast ourselves upon His mercy and crying out to Him for forgiveness for not keeping His laws, nor *wanting to* either.

But where do we see God’s love, righteousness and grace in Hagin’s formulas? It denies that God too is a Personal Being, longing for a *relationship* with His creation. It seeks to denigrate God into an impersonal Force of Nature, much like the Wiccan (and Crowley’s) concept of the Great Guardian of Knowledge, Lucifer. This Luciferian formula drives us further from a relationship with God, and allows *us* to “pull the strings.” The danger inherent in this is that to the one involved

¹² Galatians 3:24

in this type of magick, the one who pulls the strings becomes the puppet master; in other words, it becomes difficult to distinguish who is in fact in control- you or God.

Kenneth Hagin tells us that he received the formula from Jesus in a vision. Does this formula agree with what we see written in the Bible? Apparently not. Where then did it come from? Logic would seem to indicate that it could have come from only four sources: 1) God, 2) Hagin himself, 3) another person, or 4) some satanic influence. Since Hagin tells us that it came to him in a vision, we will give him the benefit of the doubt: It was God, Hagin himself, or Satan. We have seen that the formula does not agree with either Biblical tenets, or with what we know about God, which leaves us with one of two remaining options.

Paul writing his second letter to the Corinthians says in the eleventh chapter,

14 ...for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness...

In reality, I believe that Hagin was deceived by whatever appeared to him. Although this in no way excuses or exonerates him, it may make it more understandable. However Paul writing to the Galatians was adamant:

1:8 but even if we, or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Hagin's Formula is not, and cannot be described as a 'Formula for Faith,' as some do, but rather it is more accurately described as "faith in Faith," and as such is another gospel in that it leads away from a loving, yet Just and Righteous personal God. **Any 'god' who does not have all the same attributes in the same measure as the God of the Bible is not the same God!** This doctrine therefore is that of another god, a god of Force and Power, impersonal and unwavering, rather like the prophet Daniel foretold in the 11th chapter of Daniel, speaking of the great king [Antichrist?] who was to come:

37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

As D.R. McConnell puts it, the god of the Faith Movement rules the universe, "... *indirectly through "immutable laws" rather than directly through His presence and wisdom.*" These "faith formulas" are the "energies" of the New Age. They are the "Infinite Powers" of the magicians and the Wiccans, and are not for Bible professing Christians to dabble in.

Kenneth Copeland



Kenneth Copeland takes much of his teaching directly from his mentor, Kenneth Hagin. Proving the principle that taking a course 2 ½ degrees off a course that is itself 2 ½ degrees off course will take you 5 degrees off course without you noticing, Copeland's message is heretical and blasphemous in the extreme. Known in the past for his strong singing voice, and of late for his association with another controversial speaker, the South African Rodney Howard-Browne, Kenneth Copeland's teachings have caused more doctrinal debate and

outrage in Christian circles than perhaps anyone else in modern history, with the possible exception of the Bishop of Durham.

Copeland's ideas of God and faith are ones of which Mr. Crowley himself would thoroughly approve.

"And the whole New Testament calls Him the first-born.... The word 'born' began to ring in my spirit; it just began to roll around: born, born. I never had let Him go through that in my own thinking.... And while I was laying there thinking about these things, the Spirit of God spoke to me. And He said, 'Son, realize this: Now follow Me in this, don't let your tradition trip you up.' He said, 'Think this way: A twice-born man whipped Satan in his own domain.' And I threw my Bible down. I said, 'What?' He said, 'A born-again man defeated Satan. The first-born of many brethren defeated him.' He said, 'You are the very image and the very copy of that one.' I said, 'Goodness gracious, sakes alive!' And I began to see what had gone on in there, and I said, 'You don't mean--you couldn't dare mean, that I could have done the same thing?' He said, 'Oh, yeah, if you'd had the knowledge of the Word of God that He did, you could have done the same thing, 'cause you're a reborn man, too.'" (Kenneth Copeland, "What Happened from the Cross to the Throne" tape # 02-0017)

A little knowledge can be a ridiculous thing. In preaching this 'other' gospel, he has built a whole doctrine around it, and so brought many people with him into a dangerous and blasphemous heresy. The Word of God also says that *all* have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. This will of course be taken by adherents to the Word of Faith movement to mean unrepentant, non-believers, forgetting that the Scripture also tells *Christians* in 1 John chapter 1:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

The sad fact is that Christians are not perfect; just forgiven. We will not, and cannot approach perfection in this life to the extent that some would have us believe, and any righteousness we do have as Christians is given to us solely through the redeeming work of Christ at Calvary. Even as Christians, we do not have any inherent power, other than the power to be called Sons of God.¹³

Like many others, Copeland seems captivated by so-called "Spiritual Laws." Reference these words with those of Aleister Crowley's in the first part of this paper: (Page 4)

"Words create pictures, and pictures in your mind create words. And then the words come back out your mouth.... And when that spiritual force comes out it is going to give substance to the image that's on the inside of you. Aw, that's that visualization stuff! Aw, that's that New Age! No, New Age is trying to do this; and they'd get somewhat results out of it because this is spiritual law, brother." (Kenneth Copeland, Believer's Voice of Victory (television program), TBN, 28 March 1991.)

¹³ John 1:12

If this is indeed a "Spiritual Law," then where is God? He is reduced to an impersonal force, subject to other forces. But then, many including Kenneth Copeland would have us believe that this is so.

"Faith is a spiritual force.... It is substance. Faith has the ability to effect natural substance." (Kenneth Copeland, *Forces of the Recreated Human Spirit* (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1982), 8.)

"God used words when He created the heaven and the earth.... Each time God spoke, He released His faith -- the creative power to bring His words to pass." (Kenneth Copeland, *The Power of the Tongue* (Fort Worth: KCP Publications, 1980), 4.)

This would bring us to the point where the logical question would be, "What is the *biblical* definition of Faith? Hebrews chapter 11 tells us that *...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. This word translated 'faith' is different to the word faith used by so many of the Faith Preachers today. Biblical Faith comes from the Greek word '*Pistis*' (Πιστις) meaning absolute conviction through persuasion. Blind Faith, or "Just believe it 'cos I said it" is not a Biblical concept. Faith has to be based upon evidence, and even God said to Isaiah, "Come, let us reason together..."¹⁴ Faith being an entity in and of itself is clearly not biblical. It is the same as the word translated '*Trust*' in the Old Testament. Copeland however has different ideas: "*Believers are not to be led by logic,*" he writes. "*We are not even to be led by good sense*" (Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Faith*, p7)

"The force of gravity...makes the law of gravity work...this force of faith...makes the laws of the spirit world function." (Kenneth Copeland, *The Laws of Prosperity* p18-19 (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1974)) Once more, we see the subtle idea that we can influence God through following certain rules or laws to get what one wants. Unfortunately, like the misplaced logic in the previous statement, his ideas are reversed. As the Physical Law of Gravity makes the Force of gravity work, so God instituted spiritual laws for us to live by, not with the idea that following these rules would make us good enough, but so that we could recognise that we could never be good enough to follow the 'rules' willingly¹⁵ and so rather seek a relationship with the Law-Giver. This demonstrates the 'Law of Grace' found in Romans chapter 5 verse 8- But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were *still* sinners, Christ died for us. But on this subject too, Copeland has some unbiblical views.

"It wasn't a physical death on the cross that paid the price for sin...anybody can do that." (Kenneth Copeland, *What Satan Saw on the Day of Pentecost* (Kenneth Copeland, Fort Worth: Messages by Kenneth Copeland, audiotope #BCC-19), side 1.)

"Satan conquered Jesus on the Cross and took His spirit to the dark regions of hell" (Kenneth Copeland, *Holy Bible: Kenneth Copeland Reference Edition* (Kenneth Copeland, Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1991)

"He [Jesus] allowed the devil to drag Him into the depths of hell.... He allowed Himself to come under Satan's control...every demon in hell came down on Him to annihilate Him.... They tortured Him beyond anything anybody had ever conceived. For three days He suffered everything there is to suffer." (Kenneth Copeland, "The Price of It All," p3.)

¹⁴ Isaiah Chapter 1

¹⁵ Ref Gal 3:24-25

"How did Jesus then on the cross say, 'My God?' Because God was not His Father any more. He took upon Himself the nature of Satan. And I'm telling you Jesus is in the middle of that pit. He's suffering all that there is to suffer; there is no suffering left . . . apart from Him. His emaciated, little wormy spirit is down in the bottom of that thing and the devil thinks He's got Him destroyed. But, all of a sudden God started talking." (Kenneth Copeland, Believer's Voice of Victory (television program), TBN, 21 April 1991.)

"That Word of the living God went down into that pit of destruction and charged the spirit of Jesus with resurrection power! Suddenly His twisted, death-wracked spirit began to fill out and come back to life.... Jesus was born again -- the firstborn from the dead the Word calls Him -- and He whipped the devil in his own backyard." (Kenneth Copeland, "The Price of It All," 4-6.)

"Heaven has a north and a south and an east and a west. Consequently, it must be a planet." (Kenneth Copeland, "Spirit, Soul, and a Body I" (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1985, audio tape #01-0601, side 1)

Throughout history, Satan has tried to downplay the effect of Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection. Statements such as the ones above fall directly into this trap, as first suggested by Satan himself in the Garden of Eden: "You shall be as God." To equate sinful man with the Son of the Almighty is heresy.

When Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, he makes it clear that it is believing Christians he is talking about: Romans Chapter 3

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The point Paul is trying to make is simple: "*There is no one righteous, no, not one-*" even as a Christian. We are no better than 'sinners' apart from the Grace of God.

Paul Yonggi Cho

Paul Yonggi Cho -- pastor of the world's largest church, located in Seoul, South Korea -- claims to have received his call to preach from Jesus Christ Himself, who supposedly appeared to him dressed as a fireman. Cho has packaged his faith formulas under the label of "fourth dimensional power." He is well aware of his link to occultism, arguing that if Buddhists and Yoga practitioners can accomplish their objectives through fourth dimensional powers, then Christians should be able to accomplish much more by using the same means. In case one is tempted to confuse the size of Cho's following with the truth of his teachings, let me point out that the Buddhist version of



"name it and claim it" (Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism) has an even larger following than Cho. He recently made the news by changing his name from Paul to David. According to Cho, God Himself came up with his new name. As Cho tells the story, God showed him that Paul Cho had to die and David Cho was to be resurrected in his place.

Cho's story of how he learned to pray is interesting, and shows his Gnostic 'Revelation Knowledge.' When he began to pastor his church in Seoul, he was very poor and living in a single room. While wondering what he was doing trying to work without a bed, a desk and chair, or any means of transport, and he began to pray to God for these things to be supplied. He prayed hard for a desk, a chair and a bicycle, but after six months, he was still lacking all three and became very discouraged. Cho says:

"Then I sat down and began to cry. Suddenly I felt a serenity, a feeling of tranquillity came into my soul. Whenever I have that kind of feeling, a sense of the presence of God, He always speaks: so I waited. Then that still, small voice welled up in my soul, and the Spirit said, 'My son, I heard your prayer a long time ago.'

'Right away?' I blurted out, 'Then, where are my desk, chair and bicycle?'

"The Spirit then said, 'Yes, that is the trouble with you and with all My children. They beg Me, demanding every kind of request, but they ask in such vague terms that I can't answer. Don't you know that there are dozens of desks, chairs and bicycles? But you've simply asked Me for a desk, chair and bicycle. You never ordered a specific desk, chair and bicycle.'

Hank Hanegraaf, in *Christianity in Crisis*, Page 82 writes: *"Cho is well aware that pagan religions harness the same power he is proclaiming. He claims that God told him that Buddhist and Yoga adherents worked miracle cures because they, unlike their Christian counterparts, had more fully developed their fourth dimensional powers. Referring to the Buddhist version of a "name-it-and-claim-it" cult called Soka Gakkai, (a variants of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism) Cho says that while they belong to Satan, their fourth-dimensional acumen has provided them with dominion over their bodies and circumstances. By "repeating phrases over and over again ... these people are creating something" and performing "miracles," says Cho. "But if the devil could do these things, why should not the Church of Jesus Christ do all the more?"*

Cho tells us how he prayed for his needs: *"I ordered these things in such articulate terms that God could not make a mistake in delivering them. Then I felt faith following up ... "*¹⁶ Cho says that the Lord never welcomes vague prayers, and goes on to teach that the believer gets these specific requests supplied by visualizing them and then bringing them into existence by faith! Here is the point at which charismatic development leaves Christianity and crosses into the territory of paganism. This contradicts Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 6:

7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Cho teaches the need for a vivid mental picture coupled with a burning desire and a firm conviction that the goal is already accomplished. He calls this process: *visualizing* the goal, then *incubating* it into reality by *strength of faith* (or would that be *will power?*). He teaches that believers may order up wealth and success; anything they want as long as it is moral. The key to getting these things is the art of fantasizing them, because God cannot bring them into being unless the individual incubates the image. In the first part of this article, Aleister Crowley explained how

¹⁶ Is it possible for God to make a mistake? See Matt 6:8

to cast a spell. It may be of value to return to page 5 and compare Crowley's spell casting with Cho commanding God to do his bidding.

While Cho is attributed by many with coining the phrase "Fourth Dimension," in fact, a book of the same title and similar subject was published in 1888 by Charles H. Hinton, a mathematician and geometrist. Hinton's theory stated that the spiritual world is another dimension, as illustrated by a line drawn on a sheet of paper. The points at the end of the line are a fixed distance apart; if an observer was to view the opposite point along the plane of the paper, he would be limited to that plane, however, if the paper were folded or bent so that the two points were opposite each other, the observer, trapped by the plane of the paper, would still perceive the opposite point the same fixed distance apart, even though in reality they were right next to each other. Obsessed by this 'warped reality,' Hinton spent the larger part of his life trying to gain acceptance for his theory, in spite of great scepticism, mainly due to his idea that those in this 'other dimension' are what we call spirits.

Cho has stated that the Fourth Dimension can be manipulated by following certain formulas. Remarkably similar to Hagin's 4 steps, Cho lists four steps in his 'incubation' formula: a) Visualize a clear-cut goal or idea in your mind; b) have a burning desire for your objective; c) pray until you get the guarantee or assurance from God that what you desire is already yours; d) speak or confess the end result into existence. (Paul Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension*, So. Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1979, vol. 2, 18-33). One could though, with some justification, ask why if these steps were received from the same source as Hagin, are they not *exactly* the same?

Though Cho attempts to give some biblical justification for his ideas, he tells us that he obtained them in the first place because God communicated them directly to him. He claims that God spoke to him describing the material world as belonging to the third dimension. God supposedly told him that because all human beings are *spiritual* beings (as well as physical beings) they have the fourth dimension in their hearts, and by developing the art of concentrating visions and dreams in their imaginations, they can influence and change the third dimension (material things) just as the Holy Spirit did when He brooded over the primeval earth. According to Cho, God told him that Buddhist and yoga adherents work "miracle" cures because they explore and developed their human fourth-dimensional power, *imagining* mental pictures of health and *willing* them into their bodies. God told him that all human beings have the power to exercise legitimate dominion over the material world through this fourth-dimensional activity.

Cho's theology therefore begins with the subconscious mind and ends with God and Cho switching roles. Cho describes the obedience of the Holy Spirit to his will: "... *I can go into the fourth dimension of the Holy Spirit, and I tell Him what is needed in my church in Korea, and He carries out the work*" (*The Fourth Dimension*, p. 49). Jesus' attitude was quite the opposite, "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

The following report by Malcolm Jones, of "Dawn 2000," is taken from *Evangelicals Now*, April 1995, p.9 (Cho's words are in *italic*)

"One almost stood in awe at the amount of time this man spends in prayer each day, and yet one felt grave concern at his philosophy of prayer.

He gave us two reasons why we should pray. Firstly, "*God has a tremendous need, and we minister to his need of fellowship*". If Cho is right, one wonders how the Godhead survived before we were created. Surely, Scripture presents us with a self-sufficient God!

Apparently, God ministers to our need as we minister to his. And he does this by giving us visions. He speaks to us through visions. "*Visions are the language of the Holy Spirit. It is visions which change you.*" Church planters were told that "*The church you see is the church God will give you, for visions and dreams are the mother of faith.*" It is claimed that this idea is rooted in God's promise to Abraham that he would be given all

he saw. Cho seems to have overlooked the fact that Abraham was neither seeing visions nor dreaming dreams at the time, but simply looking over some real estate.

Secondly, prayer is important because, *"only through prayer can the powers of darkness be broken."* No, he was not talking about prayers for the success of the gospel, but prayers that will bind or drive out demons. *"If you don't bind Satan, you can't free people"*, he claims. The gospel seems not to be the power of God to deliver lost people. It needs to be preceded by binding the demons that hold such people in their grip.

So, on Sundays, Cho does not preach from the written Word. He doesn't talk about the gospel, but only about God. (One shudders to think what god that might be, if he is not the God revealed in the Gospels.)

The Scriptures are God's Word for all in general, but Cho wants to speak to people's felt needs, and only the Holy Spirit knows what they are at any given time. So Dr. Cho claims to listen to God's word coming directly from the Spirit - without reference to Scripture - and give that to his congregation.

He is committed to the idea of territorial spirits. For example, Cho claims he had to fly Japanese pastors to Korea, because they could not understand his teaching in Japan. It seems that South Korea is a relatively demon-free zone now, compared to Japan - which is tough luck if you can't afford to fly out of Japan to receive enlightenment.

What a relief it must have been for the people of the New Testament that they didn't have to fly from their demon-ridden society to be delivered by the gospel or taught the truth in Jesus!" (Evangelicals Now, April 1995, p.9)

In his book *The Fourth Dimension*, Cho dares to assert that we can control the Lord Jesus with our words:

"You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth. If you speak about salvation, the saving Jesus appears. If you speak about divine healing, then you will have the healing Christ in your congregation. If you speak the miracle performing Jesus, then the presence of the miracle performing Jesus is released. He is bound by your lips and by your words. He is depending on you." Fourth Dimension, (page 83)

How many Jesus' are there? This is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Christian faith as revealed in the Scriptures, but a "Jesus" of his own imagination, - or worse.

Cho's visualization theology will serve those opposed to Christianity. Here is how he develops it: (All quotes from *The Fourth Dimension*, pp. 36-47.)

- Man's spirit is his subconscious mind which includes the imagination.
- The subconscious is in the spiritual fourth dimension.
- The fourth dimension (home of the spirit/subconscious) contains both good and evil, and controls, creates, and "incubates" the third dimension natural realm.
- Any man's spirit or subconscious, Christian or non-Christian, can be developed to control the natural world and "carry out dominion" upon their third dimension circumstances (e.g., "visualize a bike, get a bike").
- To accomplish this, the human spirit/subconscious must join up with the spirit of either the evil fourth dimension or the good fourth dimension. Thus, Buddhists possess the identical subconscious powers as Christians.
- "God then taught me," writes Cho, *"that since we can link our spirit's fourth dimension to the fourth dimension of the Holy Father-we can have all the more dominion over circumstances ... we can exercise great control and power over the third dimension."*
- We "incubate" the subconscious through our imaginations and visualization. Thus, "only through a vision and a dream can you visualize and dream bigger churches."

- "The Holy Spirit comes to cooperate with us" to create through our imagination and visualization. The Holy Spirit then begins "to carry out dominion."

The fruits of the "fourth dimension" seem to be "revealed secrets for answered prayer and church renewal." Cho's doctrine of creating through our imagination is one more building block on the faulty foundation supporting positive confession and the power of the mind. Those who accept Cho's mind power "secrets" are enslaving themselves to Satan rather than submitting to the Holy Spirit. The "fourth dimension" claims to prepare believers to exercise dominion over the "third dimension" material world. Instead, it may actually be preparing an apostate church to serve the false Christ, but more of this later.

Benny Hinn



Benny Hinn is an example of a Man-with-a-Ministry that has taken the teachings of others, and taken them to ridiculous extremes. Hinn claims to be an Israeli Arab, although there is some doubt about this. Claiming to have been passed 'The Anointing' by the late Katherine Kuhlman, Hinn gathers a large following in spite of his outrageous claims, and in fact states that he communicates regularly with the ghost of Katherine Kuhlman, who enabled him to write her biography. The Bible calls this necromancy

In Deuteronomy 18, we are told in verse 10, "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, [astrologer] or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

One asks therefore why a person such as this has such a large following in the Christian church, and why he is endorsed by so many other evangelists, especially Paul and Jan Crouch of Trinity Broadcasting network (TBN). Taking use of formulas and methods to extremes, Benny Hinn said of Faith:

- Never, ever, ever go to the Lord and say, '*If* it be Thy will';
- No Christian should ever be sick;
- We Christians possess 'power in our mouths' to heal or kill just as witches possess it;
- Job tapped into the negative side of the faith force by a negative confession;
- Christ 'became one with the nature of Satan' and was 'born again' in hell;
- Christ would have sinned without the Holy Spirit and would have remained in the grave 'if the Holy Ghost had changed His mind about raising Him from the dead'
- We are 'little gods' and even part of God with all the power of God; and
- We are 'little messiahs,' everything that Jesus ever was."¹⁷

Benny Hinn claims to actually be a channel for God--that God enters him and takes over his mind and tongue to the point where he is unaware of what he has said. After his sermon on December 31, 1989, at Orlando Christian Center, during which he gave several future prophecies, Hinn

¹⁷ Adapted and/or excerpted from the 2/94 The Berean Call (P.O. Box 7019, Bend, OR 97708, and from a 1992 Media Spotlight Special Report (P.O. Box 290, Redmond, WA 98073).

exclaimed that he was drunk- presumably on the Holy Spirit- and asked someone to tell him what he had just said. Apparently agreeing with Paul Yonggi Cho, Hinn then explained how words have a force of their own: " . . . *the anointing is dependent upon my words. God will not move unless I say it. Why? Because He has made us co-workers with Him. He set things up that way.*" (Benny Hinn, *The Anointing*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 1992. p82.) As an example of a modern Ultra-Faith preacher, his teachings and doctrines echo his beliefs, and show the origins of his theology. Some of his most outrageous statements were made during the course of one live television fund-raising event in 1990. During this event, he made the following statements:

Poverty comes from Hell. Prosperity comes from Heaven. Adam was a super being; he was the first superman that lived. Adam could fly like a bird. Adam could swim underwater and breathe like a fish. Adam went to the moon. Adam walked on water. Adam had dominion over the sun, moon & stars. Sow a big seed, when you confess it, you are activating the supernatural forces of God. (Benny Hinn, Praise-a-thon (TBN), November 1990)

Looking at some of the statements made above, a second glance will show that Hinn perhaps understands more about the Word of Faith movement than we do. The 'Word of Faith' that he and other 'Faith Preachers' talk of is not in fact the Word of God. The word 'Rhema' means in New Testament Greek, 'a spoken word,' and context dependant, a sudden understanding of a topic. From Benny Hinn's words, as well as those of Hagin, Copeland and Cho, it becomes evident that the Word of Faith they speak of are words spoken through faith in the supernatural forces that visualisation and 'Natural Laws' contain. "*Never, ever, ever go to the Lord and say, 'If it be thy will'.*" says Benny Hinn. Is he truly arrogant enough to believe that we may tell God what to do? Even Jesus Himself said to his father, "...not my will but Yours." Who then is "pulling the strings?" And what is the Biblical view on this?

Biblical View

"There are two foundational facts of human enlightenment: (1) There is a God; and (2) You are not He."

So what then is a Christian supposed to think about this? What is the Christian view? Hopefully in the previous section, I have traced a progression from Essak Kenyon, and Kenneth Hagin through Kenneth Copeland to Paul Yonggi Cho and Benny Hinn. Obviously, there are many others involved in the Word of Faith Movement, but I have chosen only to deal with those closely involved in the movement from the beginning; those 'reputed to be pillars' of the movement, in order to show where the doctrines come from, and where they may lead us.

"So what difference does it make to me?" one might well ask. The answer of course lies in another question, "Where does it come from, and where does it lead?" Hopefully, the first part has been answered already. The progression ultimately begins in Eden with the devil telling Eve, "You too can be as God." Unfortunately, mankind bought into the lie hook, line and sinker. Even today, man is looking out for himself first and foremost. One of Aleister Crowley's more famous remarks was, "The whole of the [Luciferian] law shall be '*Do as thou wilt.*'" Anton LeVey candidly admitted that Satanism is a very selfish religion, dealing essentially with obtaining what you want out of Satan and his Principality. Today, we see thousands of people 'coming to Christ' for 'a better life.' Jesus himself said however, "A servant is not above his master...If they persecute me, they will persecute you!"¹⁸

¹⁸ John 15:20

While there is little shame in being deceived, the greater shame is in not admitting it or repenting from it. On several occasions, Hagin has told people to ‘check him out.’ *“It’s there in the Bible,”* he says, *“Check it out!”* While the verses in question may be there, and he may have quoted them word-for-word, as always, *“A text out of context is a pretext.”*

Without reference to the original context, a passage of Scripture can be made to say almost anything, yet Scripture itself is absolute, and not open to ‘personal’ interpretation¹⁹. The author’s original meaning is the meaning which must be used at all times. Although much of the imagery used in the Bible has symbolic significance, the first rule of Hermeneutics (Study of the rules for interpretation) is that the first meaning of a passage or text is the primary meaning, and the one which must be used in its natural context. Unfortunately, within the Faith Movement there is a growing idea that the written Word of God is no longer enough.²⁰ Every fellowship must have an Apostle and Prophet in leadership over it, they teach. The dangers inherent in this unscriptural idea are great. The Bible teaches that the fellowship is to be ‘governed’ by the Elders in the church, who in turn are subject to that fellowship, not governed by a single person, a trend we are seeing more and more in today’s churches.

In Revelation chapter 2, Jesus’ words to both the churches in Ephesus and Pergamos condemn those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans, or ‘followers of Nicholas.’ A study of the Greek word, ‘Nicolaitan’ however, reveals that it is ‘one who has subjugated the people,’ - one who has raised himself up. How many of the ‘Big Names’ of Televangelism answer to their own Elders or overseers, - or do their Elders answer to them? Jesus was known as a man of the people, yet today we see many preachers and pastors building up ‘empires’ around them screening out the ordinary person so that none may approach without having been ‘vetted’ by at least two or three assistant pastors first. How then may one approach to bring scriptural rebuke or correction where necessary?

Perhaps for this reason, accountability is sadly lacking in today’s larger churches. Second Timothy chapter 3 tells us clearly,

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Knowing that Paul was referring to the Old Testament, we understand that everything we need for Christian Life and Leadership is contained in the Bible. We no longer require the office of a prophet to give us direction from God; the Prophets of Old have done that already through Scripture²¹. This obviously ends the need for us to ‘inquire of the prophet’ as one would a seer or soothsayer before one does anything, as Scripture is our guidance. Some however may disagree. Take for example the following quote from an unnamed source:

"...There is no other way for the work of God to go forward. We must hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to us. Thank God for the level of prophetic release that is already present, but we need to be sure we are hearing from Him constantly and that we are not following our own plans or schedules."

How does one judge whether one is following God or our own plan or schedule here? No criteria are offered to confirm whether they are actually "hearing from Him" or not. Nor is there any

¹⁹ 2 Pet 1:20

²⁰ Often derisively referred to as “Old Manna”

²¹ Hebrews 1:1-2

recognition that God has *already* spoken definitively in Scripture, and that this is our only objective, infallible and authoritative reference point in applying God's truth to our situation. The impression given is that God continues to give divine revelation directly to the 'Prophet' and what is "received" now is of equal or even superior value and validity to the Bible. Instead of praying for wisdom to interpret the Scriptures, we are urged to pray "for an increase of spiritual revelation". This contradicts what the Lord says in Paul's letter to Timothy, that the Scriptures are completely sufficient, enabling us to be "thoroughly equipped" for "every good work". It also allows a totally subjective view of the Word of God, in that anyone may now reply to questioning that it was *their* revelation, and not open to question by others. (Gnosticism)

The attitude of many of these leaders is also sadly telling. 1 Corinthians chapter 14 says
29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.
32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

James tells us in the third chapter,
1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

This gives us a very clear indication that we are called upon to judge what is being said in the church. This is not the same as judging another's motives, it must be stressed, but where someone's doctrine wanders from Scripture, it must be corrected for the sake of all those listening.

This returns us to the question, "What difference does it make?" Most Christians know the Fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians chapter 5. Less well known are the Fruits of the Flesh, found earlier in the same chapter.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;
20 *idolatry and witchcraft*; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions
21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. [Emphasis added]

Witchcraft, as said earlier, is the attempt to influence the physical realm through Spiritual means, namely, offering methods, formulas, rituals, and incantations, etc. 1 Samuel 15 tells us,

24...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

We are also told in Micah 6 what is required of us:

8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

The Christian Walk is one of humility; putting the Lord first. To do this, we must be continually asking Him *His* Will, not demanding our own. Many believe that the whole purpose of man is to provide a relationship with God. If this is so, then attempting to get what one wants through intermediaries or rituals is a diabolical plan to sever that relationship with God. It may be of value to revisit once more C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape letters*:

If, once we can produce our perfect work—the Materialist Magician, the man, not using but veritably worshiping, what he vaguely calls "Forces" while denying the existence of "spirits"—then the end of the war will be in sight.

What, one wonders, would C.S. Lewis think of today's situation? How right he was, even then in 1941. How would people answer in this age? The sad fact is that there are some with an outlook similar to those of the Nicolaitans. Because someone has a 'successful' ministry, it is reasoned, he (or she) must be anointed of the Lord. Because of this perceived 'anointing,' they tend to think of themselves beyond reproach. "Touch not the Lord's Anointed!" is a common misquote, yet as already pointed out, we are commanded to judge what is said.

In contrast to Benny Hinn, the Apostle Paul says in 1 Tim 4:

6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

"There's a group here in California that thinks they are the judgement seat of Christ. Dear God in heaven, I wish I just could just ... they call it a ministry, my foot. You know I've looked for one verse in the Bible; I just can't seem to find it. One verse that said, "If you don't like 'em, kill 'em." I really wish I could find it." -Benny Hinn

"You see, frankly, that's the way I think about it. I'm sorry, I'm not exactly the normal kind of guy, you know, I'm from Israel. Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun, I'd blow your head off." (Benny Hinn speaking about "heresy hunters")

*"'And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.' The reason this man was struck with sickness is because he had been persecuting God's servant and oppressing the people of God. We see in the Word of God, God declares in His Word, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm." Now that was spoken concerning Israel, yet applies to the body of Christ today, **and we must be so careful not to attack men of God even when these men of God are not living right.** (From *Praise The Lord*, Trinity Broadcasting Network, June 8, 1998.)[Emphasis added]*

Where is the love of God in these statements? Where, for that matter is the love of Truth? If one is truly seeking Truth, one will re-evaluate one's own self from time to time in light of the Absolute Truth: Scripture. This happens to nearly everyone from time to time, and is to be commended, not rejected under the pretext of 'Touching the Lord's Anointed.' Where is the Fruit of the Spirit in one who cannot distinguish between a personal attack, and someone bringing correction in Love?

In Old Testament times, prophecy was taken very seriously. What then was God's command concerning prophecy in Old Testament days?

Deuteronomy 18:20-22

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Recently, it was stated by the “School of the Prophets” in Kansas, USA, that it is not necessary for a ‘prophet’ to be right all the time- a 60-80% rate was quite acceptable. One would wonder to begin with, how there can be a *School* for prophets, when prophecy is clearly a *Gift* from God to begin with.²² But even being correct prophetically is no guarantee that what the rest of what the prophet says is correct, or even of the Lord!²³

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

- 1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,
- 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;
- 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.
- 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God.... So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Understandably, were we to take the commandments literally to day, not only would there be a lot fewer false prophecies, but there would be a lot fewer false prophets. However, because we now live in a time of Grace, and as we are told in the New Testament to honour the Laws of the Land, we as Christians cannot take matters into our own hands. We can, however take the idea behind the command, and *Spiritually* cut the false prophet off from among the people by warning him, and if he does not repent, cut him off from *Fellowship*. If repentance is seen, he is to be welcomed back into fellowship. The reason for cutting him off from the fellowship is simple:

1 Cor 12:7

- 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

In spite of what is so commonly seen today, prophecy is for the edification of the *fellowship*, rarely the individual. Much of the New Testament was written to counter Gnosticism. Gnosticism is the belief in “hidden knowledge” especially or specifically revealed to an individual. While there were many forms of Gnosticism in the Early Church, all can still be seen today in various guises. The only way to test a prophet is by his message. As the Lord said through Isaiah, concerning spirit mediums,

Isa 8:19-20

- 19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?
- 20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

²² 1 Cor 12:8-10

²³ Acts 16:16-18

Therefore, to paraphrase Paul, "By their doctrine shall you know them..."

Very close to this idea of subjectivism is the idea of relativism. Whereas many in the Faith Movement hold to an idea that their congregations are subject to them, many others hold to the idea that everyone is right, no matter the content of their message, as long as they call themselves 'Christian.' The fact that most of the New Testament was written to correct error within the Church appears to escape them. There is a growing call for 'Unity in the Body of the Lord' today, a 'unity of purpose,' not a unity in Truth. While there will always be minor differences in local churches in view of situation, culture, law, etc, the ultimate reference must, as always, be to our Final Authority:- the Word of God. While waiting in the garden, Jesus prayed for His disciples, "Let them be one..." As every other prayer of Jesus was answered, one would then ask then why this particular prayer has not been answered, and if Jesus prayed to His Father, why we here on earth now still have to strive so hard to make this happen. In fact, His prayer was answered in that from His death, both Jews and Gentiles have access to His Grace. Romans 10 says

11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."
12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,
13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

In Acts chapter 4, verse 12, Peter talking to the Sanhedrin [Ruling Council] tells them plainly, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*" From this we also see that salvation is found in *a name*, - the Name of Jesus, not through the ritual of putting up one's hand in a service, or walking to the front of a church, or the particular words or incantations used to pray for forgiveness of sins. Salvation is found in developing a personal relationship with God, made possible through the death of His Son, Jesus. Once more, it is interesting to note that every other religion demands that man make himself better or more acceptable in order to approach God. God however has already sent His son to pay the penalty of our sins. As the maker of the Heavens and the Earth, he lived the life of one of his creations, a man born of a woman, and died in our place, having lived a sinless and blameless life. The Son of God knows our weaknesses, for he was tempted in every way, just as we are. Jesus *gave* his life to take the punishment that we deserved; his life was never taken from him as Copeland and others proclaim. Entering into a relationship with God begins with a conscious act, one in which we acknowledge our own sinfulness, and inability to save ourselves, humbly asking God's forgiveness, as one would a father.

Just as a father would feel hurt and insulted if his child felt they could approach only if certain words were uttered first, or certain rites or ceremonies performed in advance, or requests made only with strong commands, so our Heavenly Father longs for a personal relationship with His children. Perhaps this may shed light on the oft-quoted scripture from Matthew chapter 7:

22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'
23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The imagery and symbolism of Scripture can be very direct at times. The Bible refers to the Church as 'The Bride of Christ.' Just as a bride loses her family name at the marriage, and takes her husband's family name as she becomes part of his family, so we too take Christ's name as Christians, affirming Peter's statement that there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we may be saved. Instead of developing our relationship with God though, all too often we concentrate on developing our own potential, leaving God out of the picture.

The idea of developing one's potential is often backed up by scriptures such as Philippians 4:13, which says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." In context, Paul is writing about getting his job done- the preaching of the Gospel, not achieving superhuman strength or abilities. Unfortunately, as the distinction between the Gospel of Christ and the New Age blurs, so our perception of Faith and ourselves begins to change and conform to the current worldview as well. As Copeland and others proclaim, we are made in the image of God, therefore we must be as God. How close this is to the New Age concept that God is a Force residing in all things, and therefore God is in all, and all is God. Even secular commentators see the danger in this:

One concept commonly transmitted in these sessions [seminars and workshops on human potential]...is that because man is a deity equal to God he can do no wrong; thus, there is no sin, no reason for guilt in life. [The New York Times, Spiritual Concepts: Drawing a Different Breed of Adherent. Section Y page 8. Sept. 29, 1986.]

Since the late 1940's, concepts from what is now referred to as The New Age have been slowly creeping into the church. The New Age Movement is not a single organisation or entity, but rather a loose collection or association of connected quasi-religions, all based on Eastern Mysticism. Many errors and heresies could have been avoided if people had challenged them scripturally at the time, but most chose to ignore them in the name of 'Unity' and 'Keeping the Peace.' The early 1980's saw a sudden upsurge in New Age Thought in the Church, and perhaps it would be wise to take a quick look at New Age Beliefs before we proceed, so that the reader understands where the church may be heading:

The New Age View of Salvation

"A Buddhist walked up to a Hot-Dog vendor and said "Make me One with everything." - Robin Williams

Salvation in the New Age Movement means, "To be in tune with the divine consciousness," or consciousness of the fact that *we are* divine. Being 'In tune' means to be in harmony with reality and whatever is *perceived* to be true. Since the movement doesn't acknowledge sin or sinfulness, they see no need for a redeemer like Jesus. Thus, salvation to them is simply the realization of our divine nature. "I am not a body; I am free, for I am still as God created me. The Salvation of the world depends on me." Such arrogance is mind-boggling. Their salvation is a form of knowledge, or 'achieving correct thought;' therefore, we need to be saved from ignorance, not sin. This agrees with the Wiccan concept that Lucifer is the guardian of Knowledge. Salvation, in the New Age sense, is self-achieved through understanding your natural godlikeness and goodness, combined with proper knowledge, just as Satan promised Eve, "You too shall be as God, knowing Good and Evil!" It is also disturbingly similar to Madam Blavatsky and Essak Kenyon's propositions.

The New Age view of man is simple:

- *Since all is God, and man is part of all, then man is God.*
This is pantheism. This is an eastern mystical belief system that has crept into mainstream America and the rest of the world. God is not part of creation. He is separate from it and made it. Man is not God; he is a creation. (Isa 44:24; Gen.1:26)
- *Therefore, man is good by nature.*
Man is not good by nature (Eph. 2:3, Rom 3:10).
- *Bad people are reincarnated to atone for their sins, until they become attuned to the divine consciousness.* (Heb 9:27)
- *Man has infinite potential.*

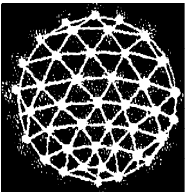
This arrogant conclusion based upon false concepts of grandiose self worth, is a deceptive, self-satisfying indulgence into pride. As Satan wanted to be like God (Isaiah 14:12-17) and encouraged Adam and Eve to be like God also, (Gen. 3:1-5), the New Ager listens to the echo of that Edenic lie and yields to it willingly.

- *Man is one with the universe.* (Gen. 1:26).
- *All religions are correct to a degree, and there is no Absolute Truth.* (John 14:6)

It has been argued that since “we have the Mind of Christ,” we can tap into the Force of God’s Faith, and command the “things which are not” into being. Being made in God’s image, we too have the power to command the Forces as God did in Genesis chapter 1. This dangerous heresy elevates faith to a substance, not ‘trust,’ and forgets entirely the basic statement that it was *God* who spoke the heavens into being, and that we are only His image or likeness, not His substance.

New Age theology actively promotes the "collective unconscious," in which all human beings possess a common psychic structure. It is through the subconscious mind that the "collective unconscious" of humanity creates good or evil. "Evil thought forms" should be replaced by positive thoughts, which release "energy" to shape a new positive consciousness. It is up to us as individuals to visualize, focus, and direct this energy. We are told that sin in our hearts is not the problem, but is "incorrect thinking." We have unlimited potential in our minds to redirect "consciousness." Transformation into the New Age finally occurs when humanity collectively unifies in positive thought. Since the "fourth dimension" creates the third dimension material world, collective positive visualization can create a New Age of love, peace, and harmony.

Recently touted as ‘Vital to the spread of the Gospel,’ many Christians have been talking about re-establishing the ‘Ley-Lines,’ which supposedly covered the Earth before the Flood. According to some, if the Ley-lines can be re-established over the Earth, it will form a ‘lattice’, which will effectively keep the devil out of our towns and homes. This is a purely New Age idea, which has absolutely no Biblical reference, let alone precedent. And if it didn’t keep Satan out before the Flood, what will it accomplish now?



As each Christian cell prays, and ‘redeems their land,’ a ‘point of light’ is formed, we are told. This also creates a sort of supernatural ‘lattice’. Rapidly now, we are told, the Earth Grid is being completed to lock Satan out. The Faith Movement taps into this same Earth Grid Force.

This Earth Grid is seen by the New Age as:

- a) The World Brain of Mother Earth, Gaia.
- b) It is also the ‘collective unconscious’ of the psychiatrists, Freud, Jung²⁴ etc.
- c) The Earth Grid is also called ‘The Feminine Holy Spirit’ or Goddess by New Agers.

Summing up, the Faith Movement is a mere cog in the machine, which is grinding all religious



beliefs into one, to form the coming One World Church which will be easier for Satan to manipulate through the coming False Prophet.

As if to show where this idea came from, in July, 2002, former Beatles guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi said in a message to Americans nervous about new September 11-style attacks that he could kill world terrorism with love -- but he would need US\$1 billion to do it.

²⁴ This was ‘revealed’ to Jung by his personal Spirit guide

Maharishi said that with \$1 billion he could train 40,000 expert meditators, or "Vedic Pandits," who would generate enough good vibes to save the world. The guru has largely shunned the public eye for the last 20 years, but is now determined to drum up support for his concept of "Natural Law -- the Constitution of the Universe."

"I am setting up groups of knowers of this total knowledge of natural law, here, there and everywhere, particularly large groups in India, which is the seed for total knowledge of natural law," Maharishi said.²⁵

"I have confidence that India will be the lighthouse for total knowledge. From there this total knowledge will radiate in the whole family of nations ... that would generate a powerful influence of peace that would spread throughout the whole world and neutralize the stress, the hatred and tensions that fuel terrorism and war today."²⁶

But what is the point of all the work that the Faith Movement are making for themselves? As is often the case, the answer is found in doctrines taught many years ago, and built upon slowly until we see the errors of today. Any structure built on a foundation built out of shape will exaggerate the errors in that foundation, which is why we must be so careful about what we hear and preach.

Much, if not most of what we see today stems from the so-called "Kingdom Now Theology" or "Dominion Theology," as preached by Earl Paulk, Rick Joyner, and John Wimber of the Vineyard Fellowships. Kingdom Now, sometimes also known as Latter Day Rain Movement, basically states that we are to take the cities and countries for God, 'Christianise' the world, then, in essence, 'make the world a better place' for the return of Christ, through a mystical Paradigm Shift, and then we will call back Jesus to Earth when we are ready for Him. In order to do this, we must wage war against anyone opposing The Plan, even if they call themselves Christians. If any Christian opposes them, they are immediately accused of being 'divisive,' or even harbouring a demon, as they find it hard to conceive that anyone cannot understand and 'Catch the Vision.'

Any dissent from their 'established' (false) doctrines is immediately met with howls of outrage for daring to question the word of the 'prophet.' Cindy Jacobs, of the Guatemala Prophecy fame says the following in her book, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*, page 48.

"As intercessors, we have enormous responsibility. God will actually use us to enforce his will in what I call the earth realm. The law of prayer is the highest law in the universe. It can overcome the other laws by sanctioning God's intervention"

In other words, this basically states that God cannot work unless we 'sanction' His work through prayer, or telling God what He, the Almighty must do. She goes on to state:

We are the enforcers of His will in the earth today as we use His name and pray His will through His word... It is critical that intercessors... rise up and enforce God's will in our nation. The Church must go to the war room in prayer to stem the tide of sin and decay that has become our land. We need this desperately. (Page 56)

Where in scripture are we told to enforce God's will? God does not 'enforce' His will in our lives as Christians, why should we as Christians 'enforce' His will on others, especially non-Christians? Notice also that she says we are to "... use His name and pray His will." Jesus' Name is the name by which we are saved; it is not an incantation to ensure success, and not something to be 'used!'

²⁵ This sounds remarkably like Madame Blavatsky

²⁶ CNN News, July 4, 2002

Chief of the opposing forces, as seen by proponents of Dominion Theology, are Territorial Spirits, as taken from Daniel chapter 10. We are called upon to tear down strongholds of the Devil, his principalities and powers, forgetting entirely that the Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. Scripture tells us very plainly that God controls all the forces at work, as seen in Colossians chapter one:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Kenneth Hagin began to preach about 25 to 30 years ago that Adam handed over his dominion over the earth to Satan when he sinned, a nod to William Branham's doctrine of 'Serpent Seed'.²⁷ Popular as this doctrine is, it cannot be substantiated, as nowhere in Scripture can this be found. Deuteronomy 10 tells us plainly approximately two thousand years after the fall that, "... the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (vs 14). Psalm 24 also tells us "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Man never lost his dominion over the Earth. The destruction of our environment, the pollution of the atmosphere, the extinction of countless species of animal life are ample testimony to this. In fact, David blesses others with these words in Psalm 115:

15 May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

It has been argued that when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness by showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and claiming they were his to give,²⁸ Jesus did not correct him, thus proving that Satan has dominion. In fact, Satan *does* rule: Jesus plainly told the Pharisees that they were of their father the Devil. Satan rules the world through the hearts and minds of unregenerate man. As a diabolical puppet-master "pulling the strings," he controls man, who *does* have dominion over the earth. In essence, Satan was correct, the *Kingdoms* of the world were his, but not the Earth. The distinction is fine, but must be seen.

Hagin's next logical step in following this doctrine was to propose that the Gospel cannot prevail unless we first take the dominion of the Earth back. This then is the basis for "Spiritual Warfare." The basic idea behind this is that we must take back the land from the Devil before the Gospel can be effectively preached. Many, many people have been taken in by this idea, including nearly all the "Faith" preachers, and especially Paul Yonggi Cho, who has made it a particular concern in his ministry. The following extract from *Religion Today*, August 2000 is particularly interesting.

Spiritual Warfare Modern practices of "spiritual warfare" pose problems, a recent international consultation found some 30 Christian workers, missions' strategists, theologians, and pastors from 11 countries and five continents met in Nairobi, Kenya, Aug. 16-22, 2000 to discuss the topic. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the Association of Evangelicals in Africa organized the conference, according to *idea*, the German evangelical news agency.

...The term "spiritual warfare" offends many non-Christians and seems to contradict Christ's message of love, some conferees said. But Christian workers must not ignore spiritual conflicts since the Bible speaks of struggling "not only against flesh and blood," others said. Participants agreed that there are striking similarities between dramatic spiritual manifestations recorded by the early church and what happens in modern deliverance services and demonic encounters, *idea* reported.

²⁷ Branham taught in the late 1940's that Cain and his descendants were the result of the union between Satan and Eve. Genesis 3:1 and 3:25 tell us plainly that *Adam* knew his wife Eve, and she conceived.

²⁸ Luke 4:5-8

...Those who pray must avoid "Christian magic," the conferees agreed. "Any suggestion that a particular technique or method in spiritual conflict ministry ensures success is a magical, sub-Christian understanding of God's working," they said. The concept of a battle against "territorial spirits" caused the sharpest disagreement, *idea* reported. Some missionaries have stressed a need to pray against demons and evil forces in a certain area before proceeding with evangelism there. Participants agreed that the theory has little precedent, but some said that does not mean it is unbiblical. Others said that Christians should pray to confront evil as a part of any ministry.

I personally found this of particular interest as the first and second parts of this booklet had already been written when I saw the article. It seems that many others too have recognised the link between magick and the Faith Movement.

But how do people justify this idea scripturally, one may wonder with some cause. Taking a text out of context to create a pretext, they liken Joshua's sending the 12 spies into the Promised Land to 'Spiritual Mapping,' or the search for 'Spiritual High Places' over which to cast out the demonic forces, thus completing the Ley-line lattice around the earth. Joshua's battles with the Canaanite giants are taken as a precedent for Spiritual Warfare.

One of the rules of Hermeneutics states that if one aspect of a text is spiritualised, then the *whole* text must be spiritualised. Many people will take 2 Corinthians 10 as a proof-text:

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (NIV)

Unfortunately, they forget that another rule of hermeneutics says that in order to understand a text, the *whole* text must be read, rendering the text thus:

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down **imaginations**, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the **knowledge** of God, and bringing into captivity every **thought** to the obedience of Christ; (KJV)

If then they are referring to a *Spiritual* battle with *Spiritual* forces, it must be a *Spiritual* land that is being fought over, not a *Physical* land. Paul tells us that in verse 5 that we battle *ourselves*- in our minds! The "Old Nature," or flesh, is to be subdued by battling imaginations and arguments that stand against a saving knowledge of the Gospel. How do we fight? By answering the arguments through scripture and Truth- exposing error in thought and in doctrine, through the Shield of Faith, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Taking a look at the passage used in Daniel chapter 10, we see an angel appearing to Daniel to tell him what was to come.

12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.

13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Perhaps the point is missed by many that the angel came to tell Daniel what was to come, not what *might* be. Another point is that the angel said nothing more about the Prince of Persia, and did not chastise Daniel for not binding the ‘territorial spirit.’ Colossians 2:15 says

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

This then is the true state of the ‘principalities and powers’ as scripture tells us, not as ‘The Great Men’ teach. All kingdoms and authorities are subject to Him anyway, instituted by God’s Will.²⁹ Do we really want to stand against God’s Will, or is that part of Satan’s plan to waste our time?

If these doctrines had been dealt with at the time by those with voices to speak, the Church would be very different today, however, as much as it may hurt the Lord our God, he foresaw it from the beginning, as Paul tells Timothy in his second letter, chapter 4, verse 3

3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Paul had already written to Timothy in his previous letter, chapter 4,

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

Paul Crouch, one of the ‘Great Names,’ said on Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) some time back that today we are living in the most successful time the Church has ever seen, as we receive new revelation and enter into a new prosperity. He suggests that the apostles, Paul, Peter and others will ‘line up to shake *our* hands in heaven.’ “Angels will fetch our TV dinners...” he stated to Benny Hinn on TBN. How this arrogance can be justified is hard to imagine.

Jesus, on the other hand stated, “Take heed that no man deceives you...” Whenever He was asked about the Last Days, Jesus always warned of deception first. The Book of Revelation speaks of the Laodicean church, the last church of the ages. Many scholars point out that the seven churches in Revelation mirror the seven distinct periods of church history from the first century. Laodicea is the last of these churches, and one of which Jesus has nothing good to say. “You say, ‘*I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.*’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked,” He says. Is this the state of the Church today? Alas, Jesus’ words as always appear to be profoundly prophetic. No wonder He asked aloud if on His return He would even find faith on the Earth. Satan’s master plan is to get people’s eyes off of God and onto themselves through ‘Self Realisation’ and Self Esteem, concepts modern Wiccans thoroughly approve of as they try to attain their own godhood. Is this all a plot of Satan’s to get our eyes off of God and back to our self-centred selves, while trying to impress by our own works the God who created the Heavens and the Earth through the power of His Word?

Before I go further, Scripture does tell us in Ephesians that we have works to do, but not in order to ‘earn’ us Salvation, - that has been done already by Jesus on the Cross. Ephesians 2 tells us

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

²⁹ Romans 13:1; Eph 3:10; Col 1:16; 1 Pet 3:22

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

These works then are rather demonstrations of our Salvation, and faith is trusting God to help us, strengthen us, and give us wisdom to do what He requires, as-and-when He asks.

In order to do the works which God has [already] prepared for us to, we do not resort to methods, formulas or rituals other than standing upon what the scripture says about the situation or circumstance, and applying it to our lives.

On a par with using methods, formulas and incantations to achieve desired results in the spiritual realm, is the use of talismans or charms. The use of 'Holy Objects,' and faith in God are mutually exclusive. If one truly trusts God, then one accepts that God is in control of the situation, and controls and allows all circumstances. Many from the 'Older, Larger' churches and denominations, particularly the orthodox churches use talismans to ward off evil, a mixture of paganism and early Christianity which has survived down to the modern day. Things such as a St. Christopher amulet or a Scapular have no Biblical basis, and again lead people away from a personal trusting relationship with God to faith in the item itself, or indeed, faith in Faith. In fact, the use of certain rituals of appeasement to the Saints again bypasses God, as Scripture tells us in Galatians, Acts, Hebrews, etc. where it is called 'Necromancy.' The issue of *where* you put your faith becomes The Big Question,- even Bram Stoker acknowledged the fact in his book *Dracula*, who was afraid of crucifixes, but only if the bearer actually believed in them.

Today, we see many attributing magical [magickal] powers to inanimate objects, such as crosses, bibles, icons, (pictures) and even the emblems of communion. While demons may hate all that the Cross symbolises to them, a cross is still only a cross; - two pieces of wood. A Bible is still only a book, even if the words printed within contain the Word of God.

The subject of the emblems of communion is a deep and potentially disputable one, but suffice to say, Jesus said "Do this in *remembrance* of me..." The emblems have no inherent power, and are not the literal body and blood of the Lord, as is taught by some. Where is the dividing line between alchemy and transubstantiation? Aleister Crowley devoted an entire chapter in his book *Magick in Theory and Practice* to the subject of the demonic Eucharist. The purpose, he asserts is more than a reminder of the meaning of the 'elements,' but rather an attempt to absorb the powers represented by the 'elements.' Much of the content of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the similarities in the perceived aims of both transubstantiation and alchemy, however, a look at the Bible will show that it is a 'Memorial Meal,' celebrating the establishment of a New Covenant- and the Fulfilment of The Law.

This attributing of 'magical' powers to mere symbols is literally 'hocus-pocus'. The Old Catholic Mass has a priest incanting the words "This is My Body" over the wafer. In mediaeval times, communion (Eucharist) was seen by the Catholic Church as a universal panacea for all ills, and the Latin words "Hoc Est Corpus" became corrupted to 'Hocus-Pocus"- a meaningless incantation.

I fear that many of the words used in church today are also a meaningless incantation or mumbo-jumbo. Jesus' words, "Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it"³⁰ has been removed from its' context of asking as one under authority, to a formula for getting what you want from God. While it is good to remember that all we ask should be in Jesus Name that God should be Glorified, sadly it has become an incantation in its' own right, with the unspoken thought that God *must* grant

³⁰ John 14:13

anything we ask using His Son's name. Ephesians 3 verse 12 tells us "In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence." This is the essence of approaching God 'in Jesus Name,' knowing that it was Jesus who brought us the forgiveness of sins, and took the righteous judgement we so richly deserve, thereby allowing us access to God.

Access to the Father is of course a Christian's right. The Lord's Prayer begins with the words, "Our Father..." It is interesting to note that when Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer, he did not say to them, "Pray these words," rather, he said "Pray in this manner" in order to remind us of *what* to pray for. The words themselves are of course irrelevant; rather God knows our heart. Although thousands of people throughout the world repeat the words faithfully every day, many as a form of punishment along with "Hail Marys,"³¹ it is perhaps no coincidence that The Lord's Prayer is found in the same passage as Jesus' words, from Matthew 6:7-8

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

The words used are not as important as the attitude behind them. Using particular words, or even someone else's words to get what one wants is by-passing the Father-child relationship, and God's Will by using a formula to achieve success. In the preface of the book, *The Prayer of Jabez*, the author writes, "I want to teach you to pray a daring prayer that God always answers." God is never forced to answer anyone- He is Sovereign. Perhaps significantly, the book is subtitled, *How to get God to bless your life*. However, the author goes on to say, "Pray the Jabez prayer every morning ... re-read this little book once each week during the next month, asking God to show you important insights you may have missed." (Pages 86-87) The use of such ritualistic incantations may well be described as 'Hocus-Pocus,' but more significantly, the emphasis is subtly removed from reading *scripture* to see important insights, to reading this book. The author goes on to state: "How do I know that it will significantly impact you? Because of my experience and the testimony of...others..." Experience as we will see later is very subjective. The subject of Jabez and his prayer occupy two verses of the entire Bible. Perhaps that puts it into perspective.

Fasting of course is another 'method' seen to influence God. Many different types of Fast have been put forward to achieve different objectives, from a 'Daniel Fast', (Types of food) to an 'Esther fast' (No Food at all). The question of course must remain, "*What is a Fast?*" Unfortunately, it is seen by many as a subtle form of "Hunger Strike" until such time as we get what we want out of God. Isaiah chapter 58 gives perhaps the best idea of true Fasting, unfortunately, it is too long to reproduce here. In essence, for those who take the time to read it, it will be seen that when Fasting, it is best to go about your daily routine without drawing attention to the fact, taking time to humble one's own self, and perhaps more importantly, spending time *listening to God* rather than telling Him what you want. Fasting therefore is not a method for success, but rather an outward sign that one means business with God, and is prepared to spend time praying rather than eating, or the money saved on where it is needed. It is interesting to note that the next verses in the next chapter (Remembering that there are no chapters in the original) go on to say,

Isaiah 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that *he will not* hear.

³¹ "Hail Mary.... *mother of God*." Is this not blasphemy?

1 Pet 4:17 tells us that judgement begins with the House of the Lord. If this is so, then it is fitting that we take the time to humble ourselves, and repent of wrong-doing and wrong attitudes before asking for favours from the Lord. In fact, in most cases where Fasting is mentioned, it is either in the context of repentance, or waiting to hear from God. As David said in the Psalm 51,

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

It may be of benefit to note also that Daniel, who fasted and prayed on behalf of the people, *had the right to do so* by virtue of the fact that he was descended from Jewish Nobility, and was a member of the Babylonian court. Daniel was praying for *his own people* within Babylon, not the whole of Babylon.

The True Church

We don't change the message, the message changes us. (Attributed to C.S. Lewis)

So, what then is True faith? The following extract from an audiotape by Joni Eareckson Tada amply demonstrates faith in God, not faith for *things*, - a faith that resists the urge to dictate to God, and accept His Wisdom in all situations. For those who don't know her story, Joni was paralysed from the neck down in a diving accident when she was 17 years old.

...Years later, I began to get my spiritual act together with the Lord Jesus and I realized He was using my affliction, my paralysis to push me up against a spiritual wall with my back, getting me to seriously consider His lordship in my life - years later - in fact, just last year my husband Ken and I had a chance to visit Jerusalem, and we chose to do the Old City on a hot, dry, dusty day, midday, when we knew no tour buses would be around and we'd have the place pretty much to ourselves. And Ken was pushing me in my wheelchair down the cobblestone streets and we arrived at the sheepgate, made a left hand turn, and there, a couple of hundred yards down the path, it opened up into this grand old ruins of - my goodness, it's the pool of Bethesda. "Ken," I said, "would you look at this!" And although you could not make out the colonnades because the ruins were crumbling and tumbling, and there's no water in the pool yet, the place was empty, and as I leaned against the guardrail with my elbow, Ken hopped the guardrail to jog down to the bottom of the pool to see if there was any water in one of the cisterns.

And while he was gone and the wind was warm and dry and the sun was hot, tears began cascading down my cheeks as I looked over this pool of Bethesda and I said, "Oh, Lord Jesus, how good of You to wait 30 years, almost as many years as that man laid on his straw mat. You waited this long to bring me to this place, a place where I imagined myself so many years ago, and I'm so grateful that You did not pass me by, because a 'no' answer to a request for healing has meant purged sin from my life, and it strengthened my commitment to you, Lord Jesus. It has forced me to depend on Your Grace. It has bound me with other believers. It has produced discernment. It has disciplined my mind. It has taught me to spend my time wisely. It has given me a hope of heaven. Lord Jesus, You were so good in *not* healing me. And I know there are many people listening now who wish to be free of their circumstances - they are looking for an escape hatch, or maybe a quick fix for their affliction, and they think they might find it in a divorce, or they are pondering maybe with the idea of suicide. Or they're thinking that they'll find it in pills or medication,

or a healing service. But the 32 years that I've been in this wheelchair and being at the Pool of Bethesda last year, has taught me that suffering is that good sheepdog, always snapping at my heels and driving me into the arms of the Shepherd. For that, I am so grateful. I am so grateful.

I freely confess that were I in her position, I very much doubt whether I would be able to say the same as she. As Joni points out, many are looking for a 'quick fix' out of a situation. Even the Apostle Paul prayed for his 'thorn in the flesh' to be removed, but was told that God's grace would be sufficient for him. There are times when God specifically uses circumstances and events to bring us to Him. It has been said that sometimes the only way God can get us on our knees is to whip the rug out from under our feet. This is apparently true in many cases. Unfortunately, many, if not most, choose not to see beyond the present, and forgetting eternity, concentrate solely on the present. Matthew 5: 29 records Jesus saying,

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Compared to Eternity, 'now' is a drop in the proverbial ocean, but admittedly, it *is* very difficult to get our eyes off of the present, with all its needs and wants. This perhaps is one of the reasons why it is best to trust God with what we really need in this life, as opposed to the things we want.

But what then about the Old Testament? Did God not give the people of Israel laws and rules to live by? Obviously, this question was bound to come up sooner or later. The best explanation as usual is to be found in The Book itself. Paul states in Romans 3,

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart [separate] from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Galatians 3: says,

24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Paul is trying to explain here that it is not the Law that saves, but rather through following the Law, we become aware that we cannot follow the Law by nature, and are forced to acknowledge our inability to do so. At that point, we become aware of our need for a saviour when we realise the judgement for not 'being holy as our Father is Holy,' is eternal separation from God. In the same way, it is not following rules and methods which make us acceptable to God, rather the rules and methods teach us more about what *is* acceptable to God. All the rituals of the Old Testament Levitical Priesthood teach us something about God, and ultimately point to Jesus, our High Priest. The books of Romans and Galatians were both written specifically to explain this.

But what about the various rules and regulations we have in our own church? Paul very wisely says in first Corinthians 14:26, 'God is not a God of disorder, but of peace.' Many churches have their own rules for the orderly day-to-day (or weekly) running of the meetings, which may or may not have their own merit, but these are not the subject of this discourse. Those 'rules and regulations' govern the running of the church, and have little to do with communicating with God on a personal level, i.e. they are not 'methods of worship.' Some people do, on the other hand have methods they feel draw them nearer to God in prayer, methods like the mnemonic 'A.C.T.S.' which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. A mnemonic is a word or phrase that acts as an aid to the memory. As we have seen, when Jesus gave the world what has become known as The Lord's Prayer, he did not say, "Pray these words," He said, "Pray in this manner..." emphasising the attitude behind the prayer. A mnemonic such as ACTS reminds people to pray firstly in a manner of Adoration for who God is, Confession of our sins and failings to Him, Thanksgiving for answered prayer and His many mercies, and finally, Supplication for our needs. If used simply as a guide to the memory to remember *what* to pray for, then it is not wrong. If on the other hand we begin to believe that we cannot pray unless we pray according to the 'formula,' then we have lost the idea of God's sovereign Grace and mercy.

Who Cares, and Why Bother?

If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!

While speaking to many people about the Faith Movement, many people have said, "But if you pray that way, it works!" We are told in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2,

9 Even him, [The Lawless One] whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
11 And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The reality is that many in the Faith movement, as well as those on the 'Established' churches may be sincere, and have much to teach that does not disagree with the Word of God, but the fact remains that there is error mixed in there, which because of it's packaging, is readily accepted. To me, it is like a wonderful wholesome meal with all the trimmings. The only problem is that as a final touch, the chef sprinkled rat poison over the plate. Would you still eat it? But it is 99% wholesome! Even rat poison by itself is 98% good food! Hagin is reported as saying, "If you don't like it, eat the meat and spit out the bone!" The reply is, "Why feed us bones to begin with?" It is the 1-2% that does the damage.

But to all those who do not seek God's Truth, or seek an *experience*, an experience and delusion will be found. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and may grant wishes or minor miracles as are in his power to do so in order to deceive us into thinking that our 'method' or 'formula' is correct, thus we concentrate on the gift, and the means to the gift, rather than the Giver. But because "It Works" does not mean it is from God. In fact, the Creed of Experience is very important to Nature Religions and Wiccans in general.

On initiation into their coven, many witches or Wiccans undergo a 'Spiritual Experience' in order to determine their suitability to different branches of their 'Craft;' their type of experience leading them into the type of worship that will be expected of them later. Unfortunately, for some, the

divide between their psychic or spiritual experience often begins to blur, and they find it hard to distinguish between their experience and reality, i.e. between what they saw and felt, and what really happened. Is this same 'experience' occurring in our churches? What really happens in these "revival" meetings in Toronto and Brownsville, where people have to be told what they did and said afterwards?

"But the experience was so real!" they say. Agreed, it may have felt real, but that does not mean that it was true. Almost everyone can identify with the 'experience' of falling as one 'drops off' to sleep. It is a very real sensation, but not fact. Satan uses this distinction to his advantage as many people find it difficult to discern between the 'event' and their interpretation of that event.

In closing, let's take another look at the issues surrounding the Faith Movement, and the use of Methods, Formulas, Rituals, Incantations and 'other forms of witchcraft.'

To summarise,

1. It is based on wrong theology.
2. It relies heavily on 'Personal Revelation,' also known as Gnosticism.
3. It negates the Will of God.
4. It makes man a god in his own eyes.
5. It emphasises the 'How' to do something rather than the 'Why' we do it.
6. It places faith in objects or formulas, rather than God.
7. It denies reality.
8. It equates Lucifer with Jesus.
9. It equates Nature with God.
10. It removes the emphasis on a personal relationship with God.
11. It is an 'Act of the Flesh'

Matthew 7:16 tells us we will know them by their fruits. Like the 'experiences' we have, because something works, does not mean it is of God. Also, because someone is 'effective' or has a large ministry, does not mean they are 'moving in the Spirit' either. But how do we tell, and should we make judgements on them to begin with? The answer is an unequivocal 'yes!' Paul says in Romans 16 verse 17,

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Galatians 1 says,

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

Paul wrote to Timothy, in his first letter, chapter 4;

6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

The 'Established Doctrine' is not the doctrine of a particular church or denomination, but the Word of God. The Word of God must be, and remain our authority, not our culture/experience/pulse-rate. Scripture, like God's Will is absolute, and transcends our understanding or background.

While many passionately believe there must be Unity in the Church for the sake of Unity, this is not held up by Scripture. In fact, Paul himself wrote to the Corinthians, just before the passage from where our Unity comes from, (the Communion)

19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.

In the Old Testament, God likened Ezekiel to a watchman on the wall of a city. If the people failed to respond to a warning cry, then that was not the watchman's fault, but if the watchman failed to warn the city of danger, then the blood of the city would be upon the head of that watchman. In chapters 3 and 33, God tells him to warn the people, even if they do not listen. Understandably, no-one likes being woken up in the early hours of the morning, but if this is your wake-up call, then please, do not ignore it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to make plain from the start that most of the work which has gone into this document is the work of others. Nearly all of the information on the 'Great Names' in the Word of Faith Movement is available off of the Internet, and so I am indebted to Way Of Life Literature, for use of the Online Database and the Christian Research Institute (apart from that which was taken directly from the web-pages of the subjects themselves).

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the work of John Baker, whose booklet "*One Little Slip*" provides an excellent investigation into Spiritual Warfare, and where the ideas behind it came from, and to Tony Cunha, for the front page.

My thanks also to those who have "proof-red" this document, and provided valuable correction.

All scriptures quoted are from either the King James Version or the New International Version unless otherwise stated.