

# Name It, Claim It, Frame It?

The Word of Faith Movement:  
Blessing or Blasphemous?

*Joseph R. Nally*

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divine, becoming "as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth."

According to Faith Teachers, Jesus regained His divinity the moment He was reborn in hell. Commenting on Hinn's remarks about Jesus defeating Satan in the underworld,

• **Paul Crouch** adds, "That's when His [Jesus'] divinity returned." (Paul Crouch, Praise-a-Thon program on TBN (November 6, 1990).

• **Hagin** states it, "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 E. Hagin, The Incarnation, The Word of Faith 13, 12 (December 1980):14.

The concept of incarnation makes sense only if a person existed prior to having a physical body. And while the Bible clearly declares Christ to be preexistent, nowhere in Scripture do we find the concept of human preexistence. In fact, human preexistence remains a concept belonging to such pseudo-Christian systems such as Mormonism.

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*Joseph R. Nally, Ph.D., Th.D.*

## Definition

A dear friend of mine, a minister, has recently had a new revelation. He and his wife made only \$45,000 per year as a combined income for a family of four. He had been going through extreme financial difficulties and had been borrowing money from some of his friends. His family had been eating a limited amount of food and he himself was even losing weight. Suddenly, he obtained a loan for a Mercedes 500 E class vehicle in his driveway, a vehicle that normally costs upwards of \$100,000. When I asked him why he had bought such an expensive automobile, he replied, "I am a King's kid and I deserve God's very best." He explained that he had received some biblical teaching that he should proceed down this path, so he could better please God.

The Name It, Claim It, Frame It (NCF), doctrine is not new. It has been in existence since Genesis 4, as we shall observe in the next chapter. This doctrine has its center in certain Scriptures, namely:

Mark 11:22-24 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

This is the CENTER of their doctrine and not the Cross of Jesus Christ. This is where their FOCUS is and not the Glory

of God, this is where the CORE of their teaching stems from and not the Sovereign Will of God.

What is this teaching? First one goes in prayer to God with a desire that he wishes (NAME IT). After he has prayed about what he desires, he goes around confessing that he has already received it, though he has not yet actually received it in the physical realm (CLAIM IT). When it comes then this so-called saint can keep it and praise God that he has received it (FRAME IT). This whole doctrine is applied from a misinterpretation of:

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

The way this cult interprets the term 'Whatsoever' is to mean "whatsoever YOU DESIRE," as the Scripture, to the untrained eye, appears to confirm. But this is taken out of context for verse 22 states to 'Have faith in God.' To 'have faith in God' is also to have faith in GOD'S WILL. One who is truly exhibiting faith in God will pray as Christ taught His disciples to pray:

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

So what does Mark 11 really teach? First, let us learn from these words of Christ the tremendous importance of faith. Faith will empower us to achieve great works, and conquer problems as great and overpowering as throwing a mountain into the sea. It is clear here that a word like this of removing mountains must be taken in a figurative sense. It appears to be a proverbial expression, and to be used as such by Paul:

1 Corinthians 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Moreover it is a promise that must be interpreted with holy and sensible limitations. We have no right to hope that

very image, the very copy of that one.' I said, 'Well now 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've done the same thing, 'cause you're a reborn man too.'" (Kenneth Copeland, Substitution and Identification (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), tape #00-0202, side 2.

• **Benny Hinn**, too, received some "revelation knowledge" on the "rebirth" of Christ in hell: "My, you know, whoosh! The Holy Ghost is just showing me some stuff. I'm getting dizzy! I'm telling you the truth—it's, it's just heavy right now on me...He's [referring to Jesus] in the underworld now. God isn't there, the Holy Ghost isn't there, and the Bible says He was begotten. Do you know what the word begotten means? It means reborn. Do you want another shocker? Have you been begotten? So was He. Don't let anyone deceive you. Jesus was reborn. You say, 'What are you talking about?' ...He was reborn. He had to be reborn...If He was not reborn, I could not be reborn, I would never be reborn. How can I face Jesus and say, "Jesus, You went through everything I've gone through, except the new birth?" (Benny Hinn, Our Position 'In Christ,' Part 1 (Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center, 1991), videotape #TV-254.

• **Jan Crouch** read Paul Billheimer's commentary on TBN stating, "[I]n order to be made alive unto God and restored to fellowship with His Father, He [Jesus] had to be reborn—for He had become the very essence of sin. Since sin had totally alienated Him from the Father, the only way He could be restored to fellowship with the Father was through a new birth to new life." (Paul Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne*, special edition for TBN (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1988 [orig. 1975]), 83-84. Quoted by Jan Crouch during the "Praise the Lord" program TBN (August 20, 1987). **Reincarnation.** Jesus was reincarnated from demonic to divine and then emerged from hell as an incarnation of God. When you are born again, you too are reincarnated from demonic to

### Jesus' Rebirth in hell.

• **Copeland** explains that, "[I]n hell He [Jesus] suffered for you and for me. The Bible says hell was made for Satan and his angles. It was not made for men. Satan was holding the Son of God there illegally... The trap was set for Satan and Jesus was the bait." (Kenneth Copeland, Walking in the Realm of the Miraculous (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1979), 77. Satan blew it on a technicality, according to Faith theology, because Satan had dragged Jesus into hell illegally. As Copeland puts it, "The Devil forgot to take into consideration that Jesus hadn't sinned Himself but, rather, had merely become sin as a result of the sin of others." (Kenneth Copeland, What Happened from the Cross to the Throne (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotape #02-0017, side 2. Satan and every demon in hell tortured Christ's allegedly "emaciated, poured out, little, wormy spirit" without legal right. (Kenneth Copeland, Believer's Voice of Victory program (April 21, 1991). And this was exactly the opening God had been looking for. Seizing the moment, He spoke His faith-filled words into the bowels of the earth, and suddenly—"[t]hat 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. He began to look like something the devil had never seen before. He was literally being reborn before the devil's very eyes. He began to flex His spiritual muscles... Jesus was born again—the first-born from the dead." (Kenneth Copeland, The Price of it All, Believer's Voice of Victory 19, 9 (September 1991):4-6. Kenneth Copeland called upon revelation knowledge when he said: "The Spirit of God spoke to me and He said, 'Son, realize this. Now follow me in this and 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... like that. I said, 'What?' He said, 'A born-again man defeated Satan, the firstborn of many brethren defeated him.' He said, 'You are the

'whatever' we take into our heads to ask of God will at once be done for us. We must always ask the question, "What is Thy will." We have no justification for assuming that in every difficulty and distress God will at once work a miracle and deliver us from our anxiety, as soon as we make it a subject of prayer.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The things about which we must pray must be things having special reference to God's will and our own providential position. More than anything, we must not think to tell God the time and way in which He must move mountains for us. God is not a genie in a bottle for us to manipulate! This lesson influences us still further by a biblical appeal to exercise faith when we pray (vs. 24). This covenant must of course be taken with a judicious qualification. It assumes that a believer will ask things which are not sinful, and which are in accordance with the will of God:

John 15:7-8 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Even Christ conducted His holy perfect life in this incredible way:

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

When we ask such things, according to God's will, we may confidently believe that our prayer will be answered:

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

The faith here delegated must be defined from that faith which is necessary for salvation. As a general principle all true faith is one and the same, it is invariably trust or belief. But in the purpose and operations of faith there are differences. Justifying faith is the 'given' act of the soul by which a person lays hold on Christ, by God's grace, and has peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2). It has a specific object, the atonement for sin which Jesus made at Calvary. It is a SPECIFIC GRACE given by the Lord. The faith spoken of in this passage here in Mark 11 is a more GENERAL or COMMON GRACE. It is the consequence and companion of justifying faith, but should be distinguished from it. It is somewhat a general trust in God's Sovereignty and love towards believers. Its specific objects are God's promises, God's Word, and the character of God in Christ. This is the sum total of true faith in God (Have faith in God)!

Any church or individual whose center of theology orbits around this sun should be avoided at all costs. Rather our lives should revolve around the 'SON of God and His will.' The Bible speaks of those that should distort the Holy Scriptures:

2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow

Copeland, Jesus—Our Lord of Glory, Believer's Voice of Victory 10, 4 (April 1982):3.

• **Jan Crouch**, the wife of TBN president Paul Crouch, approvingly recited the following words from Paul Billheimer's book during a live communion service aired on TBN: "Because He was "made sin," impregnated with sin, and became the very essence of sin, on the cross He was banished from God's presence as a loathsome thing. He and sin were made synonymous...[I]t was not sufficient for Christ to offer up only His physical life on the cross. His pure human spirit had not "descend" into hell...His spirit must not only descend into hell, but into the lowest hell...The Father turned Him over, not only to the agony and death of Calvary, but to the satanic torturers of His pure spirit as part of the just dessert of the sin of all the race. As long as Christ was "the essence of sin" he was at Satan's mercy in that place of torment...While Christ identified with sin, Satan and the hosts of hell ruled over Him as over any lost sinner. During that seemingly endless age in the nether abyss of death, Satan did with Him as he would, and all hell was "in carnival." (Paul Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne*, special edition for TBN (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1988 [orig. 1975]), 83-84. Quoted by Jan Crouch during the "Praise the Lord" program TBN (August 20, 1987).

**Let take a moment to retrace our steps.** We began this section with Jesus hanging on a cross, where, according to Faith theology, He was recreated from a divine to a demonic being. At this point the Trinity was destroyed and the deity of Christ utterly demolished. According to the Faith teachers, the Lord Jesus' passion on the cross proved insufficient to redeem humankind, so He had to be trapped and hauled down to the very pit of hell by Satan. It is there, while Jesus is tortured and tormented by a smiling Satan and a host of cackling demons, that we pick up the story.

a lamb? That used to bug me. I said, "Why in the world would you want to put a snake up there—the sign of Satan? Why didn't you put a lamb on that pole?" And the Lord said, "Because it was a sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross." He said, "I accepted, in My own spirit, spiritual death; and the light was turned off." (Kenneth Copeland, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotape #02-0017, side 2.

**Redemption in hell.** In the words of one Faith teacher, "Satan conquered Jesus upon the Cross." Proponents of Faith theology say that Jesus endured three days and nights of unimaginable abuse at the hands of Satan and his hordes of demons in hell. This was God's payment to Satan so that He could get back into a universe from which He had been banished.

- According to **Frederick Price**: "Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid your price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God...Satan and all the demons of hell thought that they had Him bound and they threw a net over Jesus and dragged Him down to the very pit of hell itself to serve our sentence." (Frederick K.C. Price, *Ever Increasing Faith* Messenger (June 1980), 7.

- **Kenneth Hagin's** version: "He [Jesus] tasted spiritual death for every man. And His spirit and inner man went to hell in my place. Can't you see that? Physical death wouldn't remove your sins. He's tasted death for every man. He's talking about tasting spiritual death." (Kenneth E. Hagin, *How Jesus Obtained His Name* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.), tape #44H01, side 1.

- **Kenneth Copeland's** version: "When Jesus cried, 'It is finished!' He was not speaking of the plan of redemption. There were still three days and nights to go through before He went to the throne....Jesus' death on the cross was only the beginning of the complete work of redemption." (Kenneth

their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

One of the key elements of the Word of Faith Church, or Word Church, or the NCF Churches (NCFC) is the emphasis on giving. The Scripture above speaks of these types of false prophets making 'merchandise' (getting rich off) of Christians and non-Christians alike. Their emphasis on giving is to Give to Get and not Give to Glorify the Lord (1 Cor. 10:31)! But the Scripture speaks to these teachers of profane things saying:

1 Timothy 6:10-12 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Flee these things! Flee this false doctrine. This is the command of Scripture!

### Depravity

The NCF doctrine proceeds from the heart of Satan and man's lust. The Scriptures tell us:

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

We know that the heart of man is not pure. We know it is lustful, evil, and vile at the very best. Again, the Scripture speaks to this root in man, saying:

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

But, just how deceitful is man's heart? When did man first convince himself of the NCF doctrine? As early as Genesis chapter four. Let us look at some background first.

Man was created with a perfect heart and given the perfect ability to choose between good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). Man then sinned in the Garden, after being tempted by Satan and lost his ability to choose moral good (Gen. 3:1-6). This does not mean that man could do no good at all, but that he could do no spiritual good towards God. His heart became 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.' The fact that he could choose no spiritual good is greatly illustrated by the fact that Adam and Eve hid from God in the Garden after they had sinned (Gen. 3:8). They covered themselves with fig leaves (man's work), but God was not satisfied with man's plan (Gen. 3:7). God made for them coats of skin symbolizing the death of Christ that must atone for their sins. We notice in the text that God made the coats and clothed them (Gen. 3:21). An important point here is that God clothed them with the skins, revealing that God is both the Author (He sacrificed the first animal, symbolizing the death of Christ) and Finisher (He clothed them) of our faith (Heb. 11:2). Salvation is ALL of GRACE and none of man. Man did not even understand that he needed His Sacrifice (coats of skin) until God made it known to him (Eph. 2:8-10).

After man had sinned God kept His promise of the results of the same, that man would 'surely die' (Gen. 2:16-17). God then cursed Satan, the woman, and man saying:

Genesis 3:14-17 14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring

blasphemy is this?' No, you hear this! He did not take my sin; He became my sin. Sin is the nature of hell. Sin is what made Satan...It was sin that made Satan. Jesus said, "I'll be sin! I'll go to the lowest place! I'll go to the origin of it! I won't just take part in it, I'll be the totality of it!" When Jesus became sin, sir, He took it from A to Z and said, "No more!" Think about this: He became flesh, that flesh might become like Him. He became death, so dying man can live. He became sin, so sinners can be righteous in Him. He became one with the nature of Satan, so all those who had the nature of Satan can partake of the nature of God." (Benny Hinn, Benny Hinn program on TBN (December 15, 1990).

• **Kenneth Hagin** also claims that Jesus Christ took on the nature of Satan, "[s]piritual death means something more than separation from God. Spiritual death also means having Satan's nature...Jesus tasted death—spiritual death—for every man." (Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1981), 31.

• **Fredrick Price** alleges that Jesus Christ was re-created spiritually—not on the cross, but rather in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Somewhere between the time He [Jesus] was nailed to the cross and when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane—somewhere in there—He died spiritually. Personally, I believe it was while He was in the garden." Price, who was reared in a Jehovah's Witness environment mimics the Mormon Apostle James E. Talmage, who taught precisely the same thing in his book *Jesus the Christ*. (Frederick K. C. Price, *Identification #3* (Inglewood, CA: Ever Increasing Faith Ministries, 1980), tape #FP545, side 1.

• **Copeland** says that Jesus became a sign of Satan when He was hanging on the cross: "The righteousness of God was made to be sin. He accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit. And at the moment that He did so, He cried, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" You don't know what happened at the cross. Why do you think Moses, upon instruction of God, raised the serpent upon that pole instead of

(Kenneth Copeland, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotope #02-0017.

• **Benny Hinn** writes, "And let me add this: Had the Holy Spirit not been with Jesus, He would have sinned. That's right, it was the Holy Spirit that was the power that kept Him pure. He was not only sent from heaven, but He was called the Son of Man—and as such He was capable of sinning... Without the Holy Ghost, Jesus would have never have made it... Can you imagine Christ headed for the grave, knowing He would remain there forever, if the Holy Ghost would change His mind about raising Him from the dead?" (Benny Hinn, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 135-36.

• **Copeland** promises, "Here's where we're gonna depart from ordinary church: Now, you see, God is injecting His Word into the earth to produce this Jesus—these faith-filled words that framed the image that's in Him... He can't just walk onto the earth and say, "Let it be!" because He doesn't have the right. He had to sneak it in here around the god of this world that was blockin' every way that he possibly could." (Kenneth Copeland, *The Image of God in You III* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), audiotape #01-1403, side 2. He continues by adding, "God was making promises to Jesus, and Jesus wasn't even there. But, you see, God deals with things that are not yet as though they already were. That's the way He gets them to come to pass." (Kenneth Copeland, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotape #02-0017.

#### **Atonement Atrocities:**

**Recreation on the cross.** On the cross, Jesus was recreated from divine to demonic, taking on the very nature of Satan.

• **Benny Hinn** claimed that the Holy Ghost personally told him: "Ladies and gentlemen, the serpent is a symbol of Satan. Jesus Christ knew the only way He would stop Satan is by becoming one in nature with him. You say, 'What did you say? What

forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

We notice specifically here the curse upon Satan himself, that his head would be bruised by the 'seed of the woman.' Eve of course heard this pronouncement upon Satan and was quite anxious for it to be fulfilled so she could once again be close to God. This would be normal as the true Christian of today waits anxiously for the Lord's return.

Eve desired this promise fulfilled and had her first son, the first known of her seeds. She called his name Cain, saying, 'I have gotten a man from the LORD,' (Gen. 4:1). Eve considered that Cain was from God in fulfillment of the promise of the curse upon the serpent. This is apparent from the context because she also had another son named Abel, whom she expressly did not bless as being from the Lord. In actuality Abel's name in Hebrew means, '*breath, vapor, or, transitoriness.*' In other words Abel was just another child, just a breath, just a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow. According to Eve Abel was not a special child, at least not as special as 'the seed' that should crush the serpents head, Cain (per Eve). I can hear Cain's name being called everyday, "Cain your name means, 'I have gotten a man from the LORD,' and you shall fulfill that promise of Genesis 3." We see here than the first two premises of the NCF doctrine, specifically the NAME IT and CLAIM IT portions. Eve had of course heard from God the words that her 'seed' would bruise the head of the serpent, but she did not spiritually discern them. After a period of time this would of course build up pride in an individual. "I am a special son aren't I," Cain could say. Cain became prideful, as Genesis 4 clearly points out, not bringing an appropriate sacrifice for his sins to the Lord. Eve and Cain



both failed to realize that although God had spoken the truth concerning 'the seed,' that He was still Sovereign and He had a perfect seed (Christ) and not Cain selected to fulfill His Word, for it never returns void:

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Did Eve ever FRAME her will? Did Eve ever get 'whatsoever' she desired? What was the result? The only thing that Eve framed was a cross to bury her son Abel. The Scripture is very clear that Eve's desire of Cain to be the chosen one was not only false hope and a lie, but he became a murderer of his brother Abel (Gen. 4:2-10). Did Eve learn her lesson concerning the NCF doctrine? Yes, she did. Upon God's revelation of the truth she named her son Seth, meaning, 'For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel,' (Gen. 4:25). Notice the words, 'For God... hath appointed' and 'another seed.' Eve determined that God indeed was SOVEREIGN and HIS Will and not hers, His time and not hers, His only begotten Son and not hers would be the Seed of Seeds that would take away the sins of God's elect.

I must ask myself a question here. Do I wish to be apart of a doctrine which causes death? Do I wish to be apart of a doctrine that is false?

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

This doctrine will lead to the death of your faith, your finances, your family, and your friends. It is an EVIL of all EVILS, a teaching that perverts the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is 'another gospel' and not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What did Paul say about this type of gospel?

(Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), audiotape #01-1403, side 1.

• **Copeland** goes on to say, "The Bible says that God gave this earth to the sons of men...and when [Adam] turned and gave that dominion to Satan, look where it left God. If left Him on the outside looking in...He had no legal right to do anything about it, did He?...He had injected Himself illegally into the earth—what Satan had intended for Him to do was to fall for it—pull off an illegal act and turn the light off in God, and subordinate God to himself...He intended to get God into such a trap that He couldn't get out." (Kenneth Copeland, What Happened from the Cross to the Throne (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotape #02-0017.

**The demotion of Christ.** The Faith movement compromises the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

• Consider this statement by **Kenneth Copeland**: "[Adam] was the copy, looked just like [God]. If you stood Adam upside God, they look just exactly alike. If you stood Jesus and Adam side-by-side, they would look and sound exactly alike." (Kenneth Copeland, Authority of the Believer IV (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1987), audiotape #01-0304, side 1.

• Jesus Christ supposedly told **Copeland** in the following prophecy: "Don't be disturbed when people put you down and speak harshly and roughly of you. They spoke that way of Me, should they not speak that way of you? The more you get to be like Me, the more they're going to think that way of you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah." (Kenneth Copeland, Take Time to Pray, Believer's Voice of Victory 15, 2 (February 1987): 9.

• **Copeland** asserts, "What [why] does God have to pay the price for this thing? He has to have a man that is like that first one. It's got to be a man. He's got to be all man. He cannot be a God and come storming in here will attributes and dignities that are not common to man. He can't do that. It's not legal."

also said, "Adam committed high treason; and at that point, all the dominion and authority God had given to him was handed over to Satan. Suddenly, God was on the outside looking in....After Adam's fall, God found Himself in a peculiar position....God needed an avenue back into the earth....God laid out His proposition and Abram accepted it. It gave God access to the earth and gave man access to God.. Technically, if God ever broke the Covenant, He would have to destroy Himself." (Kenneth Copeland, Our Covenant with God (Fort Worth, TX: KCP Publications, 1987), 8-11 passim).

**The deification of Satan.** Satan is deified as the God this world and is positioned with so much power that he could manage to "turn the light off in God."

• **Benny Hinn** said, "God came from heaven, became a man, made man into little gods, went back to heaven as a man. He faces the Father as a man. I face devils as the son of God..Quit your nonsense! What else are you? If you say, I am, you're saying I'm a part of Him, right? Is he God? Are you His offspring? Are you His children? You can't be human! You can't! You can't! God didn't give birth to flesh.... You said, "Well, that's heresy." No, that's your crazy brain saying that." (Benny Hinn, Our Position in Christ #2—The Word Made Flesh (Orlando: Orlando Christian Center, 1991), videotape #255.

• **Kenneth Copeland** is willing to give ownership of the earth to Satan: "God's on the outside looking in. He doesn't have any legal entree into the earth. The thing don't belong to Him. You see how sassy the Devil was in the presence of God in the book of Job? God said, Where have you been? Wasn't any of God's business. He [Satan] didn't even have to answer if he didn't want to ..God didn't argue with him a bit! You see, this is the position that God's been in....Might say, 'Well, if God's running things He's doing a lousy job of it." He hadn't been running 'em, except when He's just got, you know, a little bit of a chance." (Kenneth Copeland, Image of God in You III

Galatians 1:6-9 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

### Doctrine (Neo-Gnosticism)[2]

Many times in the history of the church there have been winds and waves of heretical teachings passing through and Christians have been alert enough to spot the errors. Other times, the Church has not been quite so discerning and the result has been reaping a whirlwind of counterfeit beliefs and practices. Such is the case of gnostic elements in the "word-faith," "word of faith" (WOF), or "positive confession" movement.

All too often Christians have spoken out against the blatant and excessive abuses of the so-called "name it and claim it" or "health and wealth" gospels of the WOF movement without realizing there are far more serious teachings of the movement which need to be addressed. Why do many Christians fail to spot the real doctrines of the WOF? Perhaps one reason is the camouflaging of Gnostic beliefs with Christian terminology.

The term Gnosticism derives from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge." A person designates as "gnostic" is one who exalts knowledge above any spiritual, moral, or intellectual value. Knowledge becomes the tool for controlling life. As a first century heresy, Gnosticism taught that there is "secret knowledge" or "gnosis" and that these esoteric secrets are obtainable only to an elite group of Gnostic priests.

The elite group in the WOF movement claims to receive "revelation knowledge" (apart from the scriptures). They say they are the "Lord's Anointed" (Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth

Copeland, Charles Capps, Frederick Price, Benny Hinn, Robert Tilton, Oral Roberts, etc.) and impart these revelations to others who sit under their teachings.

Cerinthus, an early Gnostic heretic, tried to merge Christian doctrine regarding Christ with more mystical concepts. He taught a distinction between the man and the "Christ spirit" which descended upon Him at His baptism and later departed at His crucifixion. This information is well documented in Ireneaus' monumental work, "Against Heresies." This doctrine is repeated within the WOF teachings as the leaders of the movement claims that Christ died spiritually and thus gave up His divinity and was born again in His resurrection.

Judith Matra documents in her book, "The Born Again Jesus of the Word of Faith Teaching," that many doctrines of the WOF movement were lifted directly from the writings of 19th century Mind Science cults such as Christian Science and New Thought.

How could this early Gnostic teaching get into the modern day WOF movement? D.R. McConnell in his penetrating book, "A Different Gospel" has documented that the real father of the WOF movement is E.W. Kenyon, who died in 1948. McConnell shows that Kenyon was heavily influenced by the Mind Science cults.

In the second chapter of his book, McConnell records this statement from John Kennington, once a follower of E.W. Kenyon, "At one time, I was a blind follower of Kenyon... Now with the passing of a little time and with a little more understanding, I have come to realize that E.W. Kenyon has simply 'baptized' many concepts from Christian Science. In so doing, he became a source for a form of 'Pentecostal Christian Science,' even though Kenyon himself was not a Pentecostal" (McConnell, "A Different Gospel," p.15).

Today, Kenneth Hagin is viewed as being the father and founder of WOF. However, McConnell documents that Hagin actually plagiarized Kenyon, getting most of his teaching from Kenyon's published works. (Ibid., p.6)

• Says **Benny Hinn**, "I could almost visibly see the Lord, and I could tell you what He was wearing." **Jan Crouch**, giddy about Hinn's statement, asks, "Was that the Holy Spirit?" Acknowledging that he may get in trouble, Hinn resolutely answers "yes." (Benny Hinn and Jan Crouch, Praise the Lord program on TBN (October 3, 1991).

• **Hinn** made the following statement, "Man, I feel revelation knowledge already coming on me here. Life your hands. Something new is going to happen here today. I felt it just as I waled down here. Holy Spirit, take over in the name of Jesus... God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a person; and He is a triune being by Himself separate from the Son and the Holy Ghost. Say, what did you say? Hear it, hear it, hear it. See, God the Father is a person, God the Son is a person, God the Holy Ghost is a person. But each one of them is a triune being by Himself. If I can shock you—and maybe I should—there's nine of them. Huh, what did you say? Let me explain: God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a person with his own personal spirit, with his own personal soul, and his own personal spirit-body. You say, Huh, I never heard that. Well you think you're in this church to hear things you've heard for the last 50 years?" (Benny Hinn, Benny Hinn program on TBN (October 3, 1991).

• Two years after his initial "revelation," **Hinn** once again voiced virtually the same statement. As he puts it, "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—three separate individuals, one in essence, one in work—and, may I add, each one of them possess His own spirit-body. You don't like it?" (Benny Hinn, Praise the Lord program on TBN (October 23, 1992).

• **Kenneth Copeland** said, "I was shocked when I found out who the biggest failure in the Bible actually is... The biggest one in the whole Bible is God... Now, the reason you don't think of God as a failure is He never said He's a failure. And you're not a failure till you say you're one." (Kenneth Copeland, Praise-a-Thon program on TBN (April 1988). He

you do everything that subject does. In other words, that subject, if it does something you cannot do, you don't have dominion over it. I'll prove it further. Adam not only flew, he flew to space. He was—with one thought he would be on the moon." (Benny Hinn, Praise the Lord program on TBN (December 26, 1991).

**The demotion of God.** The Faith movement not only deifies man but also demotes God to the beck and call of His creation.

• **Kenneth Copeland** claims that God is "A being that is very uncanny the way He's very much like you and me. A being that stands somewhere around 6'-2", 6'-3", that weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple of hundred pounds, little better, [and] has a [hand] span of nine inches across." (Kenneth Copeland, Spirit, Soul and Body I (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1985), audiotape #01-0601, side 1.

• **Jerry Savelle** elaborates on Copeland's teachings when he says: "He is measured out heaven with a nine-inch span... The distance between my thumb and my finger is not quite nine inches. So, I know He's bigger than me, thank God. Amen? But He's not some great, big, old thing that couldn't come through the door there and, you know, when He sat down, would fill every seat in the house. I don't serve the Glob." (Jerry Savelle, Framing Your World with the Word of God, Part 2 (Fort Worth, TX: Jerry Savelle Evangelistic Association, Inc., n.d.), audiotape #SS-36, side 1.

• **Morris Cerullo** says, "As I lay there on the floor in this condition, my spirit was taken out of my body and the next thing I knew, I was in the heavens... Suddenly, in front of this tremendous multitude of people, the glory of God appeared. The Form that I saw was about the height of a man six feet tall, maybe a little taller, and twice as broad as a human body with no distinguishing features such as eyes, nose, or mouth." (Morris Cerullo, The Miracle Book (San Diego, CA: Cerullo Word Evangelism, Inc., 1984), x-xi.

Greg Durand of Logos Outreach, another counter-cult ministry, in their publication, Outreach Expositor, ties Gnosticism and WOF together. He says, "Like all forms of Gnostic philosophy, the Faith movement downplays the significance of the physical realm... To those in the WOF man is a spirit, has a soul and lives in a body" (Vol.5, No.2, p.16).

Durand goes on to say, "To those entrenched in the WOF, the real man is supposedly a spirit creature that exists in God's Class...the body is seen as merely the tabernacle in which the spirit man temporarily resides" (Ibid., p.16)."

The Faith teachers believe that only through the Spirit can one receive direct communication with God, or "Revelation Knowledge" as it is called. On the other hand, the soul or mind of a person, is viewed as bound by "Sense Knowledge," and therefore completely incapable of understanding spiritual matters. (K. Hagin, "Man on Three Dimensions," Faith Library, 1991, pp. 5-8).

A dualistic rivalry is created between spirit and matter, wherein logical thought processes, as well as physical senses, are to be rejected in favor of the intuitive impressions of one's heart or spirit. In Paul Crouch's words, "The man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument" (Trinity Broadcast Network, 23 October 1992).

Kenneth Hagin states it this way, "One almost has to bypass the brain and operate from the inner man, which is our heart or spirit" ("Right and Wrong Thinking," Rhema, 1986, p.27). Hagin seems to be unappreciative of the human mind as the gift of God and quite valuable for objective reasoning of truth and error.

The Lord tells us that as Christians we are to be "transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Romans 12:2); to think in accordance with who we are positionally in Christ, not to reject them as unreliable sources of information (see I Cor.2:16). In Isa. 1:18, God makes an appeal to man's ability to reason.

In accordance with Scripture, let us with our minds, using the reasoning ability God gives us to discern truth from error

empowered by the Holy Spirit, look to see if this "Revelation Knowledge" the WOF leaders say they are receiving is from God and aligns with His truth or not? [2]

[1] William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M. A. Peloubet, *Smith's Bible dictionary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.

[2] E-Mail - author unknown, *The Doctrine of the Faith Movement*.

### Appendix\*

**The deification of man.** In Faith theology man was created as an exact duplicate of God, including size and shape.

- **Kenneth Hagin** asserts, "Man... was created on terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority... God has 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 M. Hagin, Zoe: The God-Kind of Life (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc., 1989), 35-36, 41).

- **Kenneth Copeland** declares that "God's reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself... He was not a little like God. He was not almost like God. He was not subordinate to God even." (Kenneth Copeland, Following the Faith of Abraham I (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), tape #01-3001, side 1).

- Televangelist **John Avanzini** claims that the Spirit of God "declared in the earth today what the eternal purpose of God has been through the ages... that He is duplicating Himself on earth." (John Avanzini with Morris Cerullo, The Endtime Manifestation of the Sons of God, (San Diego: Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, n.d.), audiotape 1, side 2).

- **Morris Cerullo** bellows, "Did you know that from the beginning of time the whole purpose of God was to reproduce Himself?... Who are you? Come on, who are you? Come on,

say it: 'Sons of God!' Come on, say it! And what does work inside us, brother, is that manifestation of the expression of all that God is and all that God has. And when we stand up here, brother, you're not looking at Morris Cerullo; you're looking at God. You're looking at Jesus." (Morris Cerullo, The Endtime Manifestation of the Sons of God, (San Diego: Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, n.d.), audiotape 1, sides 1 & 2).

The Faith teachings have now become so blasphemous and bizarre that even cultists are denying them. For example, Mormon scholar and author Stephen E. Robinson, referring to the Faith teachers, says: "Now, in fact, the Latter-day Saints would not agree with the doctrine of deification as understood by most of these evangelists, for in the LDS view we receive the full divine inheritance only through the atonement of Christ and only after a glorious resurrection." (Stephen E. Robinson, Are Mormons Christians? (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1991), 63).

- When **Kenneth Copeland** proclaims, "You don't have a god in you, you are one," and **Benny Hinn** pronounces, "I am a 'little messiah' walking on earth," we can only conclude that they are teaching rank heresy. (Kenneth Copeland, The Force of Love (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1987), audiotape #02-0028, side 1.) and (Benny Hinn, Praise-a-Thon program on TBN (November 6, 1990).

#### Faith teachers are polytheists.

- TBN president **Paul Crouch** put it, "I am a little god! Critics, be gone!" (Paul Crouch, Praise the Lord program on TBN (July 7, 1986).

- According to **Benny Hinn**, "Adam was a super being when God created him. I don't know whether people know this, but he was the first Superman that really ever lived. First of all, the Scriptures declare clearly that he had dominion over the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea—which means he used to fly. Of course, how can he have dominion over the birds and not be able to do what they do? The word "dominion" in the Hebrew clearly declares that if you have dominion over a subject, that