

**A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC
TENETS OF WORD OF FAITH THEOLOGY: PASTORAL
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD**

by

RUSSELL ALEXANDER MORRIS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FEBRUARY 2012

SUPERVISOR: DANIEL T. LIOY, PH.D.

*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the
South African Theological Seminary.*

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Russell Alexander Morris
Burlington, NC, USA
February 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Myriad influences facilitated the completion of this dissertation, far too many to enumerate. I am particularly indebted to the following:

- To my wife, Wanda, for her love, patience and understanding during the time consuming process of this research.
- To my maternal grandmother, Eva MacRae, for her resolute dedication to Christ. I am a product of her sincere faith (cf. II Timothy 1:5).
- To Daniel T. Lioy, Ph.D., for supervising this research. His careful guidance and tenacious resolve for academic excellence were essential components in completing this dissertation.
- To the postgraduate school of South African Theological Seminary for the opportunity to study theology at the doctoral level.
- To the leadership, staff and parishioners of Harvest Hills Church for the time necessary to conduct and complete this research.
- To the following libraries for the use of their facilities and resources:
 - Dixon Pentecostal Research Center (Lee University/Pentecostal Theological Seminary), Cleveland, TN
 - Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC
 - Elon University, Elon, NC
 - Holy Spirit Research Center (ORU), Tulsa, OK
 - Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC
- To Bonnie Davis, retired English teacher and secretary at Harvest Hills Church, for proofreading the entire manuscript.
- To the numerous individuals who have been a source of encouragement throughout my academic journey.

Russell Alexander Morris
Burlington, NC, USA
February 2012

SUMMARY

This research seeks to answer the question, “what are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the ministry context of the Church of God”? To accomplish this task, a practical theological paradigm is utilised.

First, a literature review investigates the current state of scholarship regarding word of faith theology. The literature review reveals several gaps in current scholarship. No substantial inquiry regarding word of faith theology and pastoral ministry in the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) was found, therefore, the need for this research finds validation. Second, a contextual analysis that examines the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) is given. This analysis establishes the classical Pentecostal context within which the research is conducted.

Third, a historical analysis is offered that explores the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology. This allows for the juxtapositional assessment of Church of God teaching and word of faith theology. Fourth, the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique and assess specific tenets of word of faith theology are explored. Fifth, the major implications of word of faith theology for pastoral ministry within the Church of God are suggested. Here, practical recommendations are offered as correctives for the various cited implications.

Finally, a summary of the research findings, recommendations for further study and the contribution of this research to the field of practical theology are offered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background	1
1.2	Problem	3
1.3	Objectives	4
1.4	Purpose/value	5
1.5	Delimitation	6
1.6	Design and methodology	6
1.7	Hypothesis	9
1.8	Summary of chapters 2-6	10

CHAPTER 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

2.1	Introduction	13
2.2	An analytical review of the word of faith movement	14
2.2.1	Primary sources prior to 1980	15
2.2.1.1	Essek William Kenyon	16
2.2.1.2	Kenneth Erwin Hagin	17
2.2.1.3	Kenneth and Gloria Copeland	18
2.2.1.4	Synopsis of primary sources prior to 1980	19
2.2.2	Critical analyses of sources from 1980 to the present	19
2.2.2.1	Charles Farah Jr.	20
2.2.2.2	Gordon Fee	21
2.2.2.3	Daniel R. McConnell	22
2.2.2.4	John MacArthur	23
2.2.2.5	Hank Hanegraaff	24
2.2.2.6	Robert Bowman	25
2.2.2.7	Andrew Perriman	27
2.2.2.8	James Bowers	28

2.2.3	Favourable analyses from 1980 to the present	29
2.2.3.1	William DeArteaga	30
2.2.3.2	Derek Vreeland	31
2.2.3.3	Paul King	32
2.3	Synthesis of the analytical review	33
2.3.1	Two main schools of thought regarding origins	33
2.3.2	Number of analyses from within the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions	34
2.3.3	Juxtaposition of the analyses	34
2.3.4	Areas of emphasis	35
2.3.5	General observations	35
2.4	Relevance to the topic of research	36
2.4.1	Pastoral ministry in the Church of God	36
2.4.2	Gaps in current scholarship	37
2.4.3	Need for further research	38
2.5	Conclusion	39

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS: AN EVALUATION OF THE FAITH TRADITION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

3.1	Introduction	43
3.2	A historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God	44
3.2.1	The historical origins of the Church of God	44
3.2.2	The contemporary perspective of the Church of God	47
3.2.3	The Church of God in the broader Christian community	50
3.2.4	Relevance to this research	53
3.3	An evaluation of specific tenets of biblical theology within the Church of God	54
3.3.1	The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture	55
3.3.2	The basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation	58
3.3.3	Hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective	61
3.3.4	Relevance to this research	65

3.4	An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God	66
3.4.1	The pastoral role as mentor	70
3.4.2	The pastoral role as exegete/educator	73
3.4.3	The pastoral role as shepherd	76
3.4.4	Relevance to this research	79
3.5	An appraisal of four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective	81
3.5.1	The Abrahamic covenant	83
3.5.2	The atonement	86
3.5.3	Faith	91
3.5.4	Prosperity	93
3.5.5	Relevance to this research	97
3.6	Conclusion	99
3.6.1	Aim of this chapter	99
3.6.2	Summary of each section	100
3.6.3	Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda	101
3.6.4	Summary	101

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK FOR WORD OF FAITH THEOLOGY

4.1	Introduction	103
4.2	An assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement	104
4.2.1	Historical origins of the word of faith movement	104
4.2.2	Contextual influences on the word of faith movement	109
4.2.3	Key persons in the development of the word of faith movement	113
4.2.4	Relevance to this research	118
4.3	An analysis of the development of the word of faith message	119
4.3.1	Various sources of the message	119
4.3.2	Scripture with notes: the Dake annotated reference Bible	123
4.3.3	Significance of mass media	127
4.3.4	Relevance to this research	132

4.4	An evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology	133
4.4.1	Kenneth and Gloria Copeland	134
4.4.2	Charles Capps	137
4.4.3	Joel Osteen	139
4.4.4	Joyce Meyer	142
4.4.5	Paula White	144
4.4.6	Benny Hinn	146
4.4.7	Robert Tilton	148
4.4.8	Relevance to this research	150
4.5	An appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a word of faith perspective	151
4.5.1	The Abrahamic covenant	152
4.5.2	The atonement	156
4.5.3	Faith	159
4.5.4	Prosperity	162
4.5.5	Relevance to this research	164
4.6	Conclusion	166
4.6.1	Aim of this chapter	166
4.6.2	Summary of each section	166
4.6.3	Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda	167
4.6.4	Summary	167

CHAPTER 5: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: AN EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC TENETS OF WORD OF FAITH THEOLOGY

5.1	Introduction	168
5.2	An exegetical analysis of Romans 4:17	169
5.2.1	Contextual data	169
5.2.1.1	Author and date	170
5.2.1.2	Main theme and purpose	171

5.2.2	Pericope (Romans 4:13-17)	172
5.2.2.1	Historical and cultural context	172
5.2.2.2	Literary context (Paul's letter to the Romans)	174
5.2.2.2.1	Literary unit (Romans 4)	175
5.2.2.2.2	Literary genre	176
5.2.3	Evaluation of Romans 4:17	176
5.2.3.1	Comparative translation	176
5.2.3.2	Composition (key words and phrases)	178
5.2.3.3	Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?	180
5.2.4	Application of Romans 4:17	180
5.3	An exegetical analysis of III John 2	182
5.3.1	Contextual data	182
5.3.1.1	Author and date	183
5.3.1.2	Main theme and purpose	184
5.3.2	Pericope (III John 1-4)	185
5.3.2.1	Historical and cultural context	186
5.3.2.2	Literary context (Johannine corpus)	187
5.3.2.2.1	Literary unit (III John)	188
5.3.2.2.2	Literary genre	189
5.3.3	Evaluation of III John 2	190
5.3.3.1	Comparative translation	190
5.3.3.2	Composition (key words and phrases)	191
5.3.3.3	Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?	194
5.3.4	Application of III John 2	195
5.4	An exegetical analysis of Mark 11:24	195
5.4.1	Contextual data	196
5.4.1.1	Author and date	197
5.4.1.2	Main theme and purpose	198
5.4.2	Pericope (Mark 11:12-26)	199
5.4.2.1	Historical and cultural context	200
5.4.2.2	Literary context (Mark's gospel)	201
5.4.2.2.1	Literary unity (Mark 11)	202

5.4.2.2.2	Literary genre	203
5.4.3	Evaluation of Mark 11:24	203
5.4.3.1	Comparative translation	204
5.4.3.2	Composition (key words and phrases)	205
5.4.3.3	Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?	207
5.4.4	Application of Mark 11:24	208
5.5	A theological assessment of four biblical tenets	209
5.5.1	The Abrahamic covenant	210
5.5.1.1	Biblical basis	210
5.5.1.2	Theological assessment	211
5.5.1.3	Application for contemporary praxis	213
5.5.2	The atonement	215
5.5.2.1	Biblical basis	216
5.5.2.2	Theological assessment	216
5.5.2.3	Application for contemporary praxis	219
5.5.3	Faith	220
5.5.3.1	Biblical basis	221
5.5.3.2	Theological assessment	222
5.5.3.3	Application for contemporary praxis	224
5.5.4	Prosperity	225
5.5.4.1	Biblical basis	226
5.5.4.2	Theological assessment	227
5.5.4.3	Application for contemporary praxis	229
5.6	Conclusion	230
5.6.1	Aim of this chapter	230
5.6.2	Summary of each section	231
5.6.3	Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda	231
5.6.4	Summary	232

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

6.1	Introduction	233
6.2	An assessment of the scriptural validity of word of faith theology	235
6.2.1	An assessment of hermeneutics	237
6.2.1.1	Context of Scripture	237
6.2.1.2	Linguistic and grammatical data	238
6.2.1.3	Eisegesis	239
6.2.1.4	Ambiguous translations	240
6.2.1.5	Revelation knowledge	241
6.2.2	Pastoral implication	242
6.2.3	Practical recommendation	243
6.3	An assessment of the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching	244
6.3.1	An assessment of four biblical tenets	244
6.3.1.1	The Abrahamic covenant	245
6.3.1.2	The atonement	247
6.3.1.3	Faith	250
6.3.1.4	Prosperity	252
6.3.2	Pastoral implication	255
6.3.3	Practical recommendation	257
6.4	An assessment of the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology	257
6.4.1	An assessment of biblical discipleship	258
6.4.1.1	Media and discipleship	259
6.4.1.2	Faith and discipleship	260
6.4.1.3	Healing and discipleship	261
6.4.1.4	Wealth and discipleship	262
6.4.2	Pastoral implication	263
6.4.3	Practical recommendation	264
6.5	An assessment of the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology	265
6.5.1	An assessment of pastoral authority	266
6.5.1.1	Example of pastoral authority (spiritual leadership)	267

6.5.1.2	Extent of pastoral authority (limitations)	268
6.5.1.3	Ecumenical nature of pastoral authority (fellowship issues)	269
6.5.2	Pastoral implication	270
6.5.3	Practical recommendation	270
6.6	Conclusion	271
6.6.1	Aim of this chapter	271
6.6.2	Review of each section	272
6.6.3	Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda	272
6.6.4	Summary	273
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION		
7.1	Introduction	274
7.2	Summary of research	274
7.3	Recommendations for further study	276
7.4	Contribution of this research to practical theology	278
7.5	Conclusion	279
SOURCES CITED		280

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The modern faith movement is referred to by many names. Those most frequently cited are the Prosperity Gospel, the Word of Faith Movement, the Faith-Formula Movement, the Health and Wealth Gospel and the Positive Confession Movement. Word of faith theology is not confined to a particular faith tradition, but has been assimilated into many Evangelical churches, and even into congregations in the more liberal mainline (Van Biema & Chu 2006). According to Farah (1982:15), the word of faith message is perhaps the most attractive message being preached in the contemporary church. Because of its current popularity, word of faith theology is often modified to suit the particular context of its adherents, producing various hybrid strands of the movement (Anderson 2004:158).

While some assume that the word of faith movement finds its origins in the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, McConnell (1995:xx) argues that this assumption is not historically accurate. Some of its teachings, as well as some of the early proponents of the movement, emerged from Pentecostalism at large; nevertheless, specific tenets of word of faith theology do not align with a classical Pentecostal worldview. McConnell (1995:xx) further argues that the origins of the faith movement are not primarily Pentecostal or Charismatic, but can be traced historically to cultic sources.

Interest in this research originated over the past two decades of pastoral ministry within the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, USA). The Church of God traces its roots to 1886 when a small group of believers, alarmed over the perceived waning of spiritual vitality that characterised many of the

churches of the time, established a new church (Conn 1996). The Church of God was strongly influenced by the doctrines and practices of the 19th century Wesleyan-Holiness traditions (Sims 1995:63). From 1886-1896 the embryonic group was intentional in its commitment to pursuing biblical doctrine and promoting evangelism. During a revival in 1896, approximately one hundred persons were baptized in the Holy Spirit. This event became a catalyst for the church's assimilation of Pentecostal theology.

From these sparse origins, the Church of God has grown to become the oldest continuing Pentecostal denomination in the United States, with international executive offices located in Cleveland, Tennessee, USA. As an international church, the Church of God enjoys a current global membership of 6.8 million, with ministry venues in 181 nations, as well as numerous Bible colleges and seminaries (Roebuck 2011).

During almost two and a half decades of parish ministry in the Church of God, the researcher observed that specific tenets of word of faith theology have a negative influence among parishioners. Also observed is that certain tenets of word of faith theology produce serious pastoral concerns, e.g., the scriptural validity of word of faith theology, the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching, discipleship, pastoral authority and fellowship issues (Bowers 2004b:10-12). These pastoral concerns provide the background and context for this research.

A preliminary literature search revealed that word of faith theology has been the subject of several noteworthy studies, both pro and con. Following is a sampling of the literature currently available. Biblical and theological analyses that critically assess the word of faith movement have been conducted by several researchers (cf. Barron 1987; Farah 1981; Fee 2006; McConnell 1995). These sources provide well-documented academic treatments of the subject. Several have offered a more favourable and equally well-documented view of the movement (cf. DeArteaga 1992; Vreeland 2001).

Numerous volumes are available that critique the movement from an apologetic perspective (cf. Hanegraaff 2009; Hunt 1985; MacArthur 1992). A few offered assessments of the movement from an ethnic perspective (cf. Harrison 2005; Mitchem 2007). While not dealing with the movement as a whole, several academic studies engaged particular doctrinal aspects of word of faith theology (cf. Alexander 2002; Thomas 1998).

The preliminary literature search included online sources, journals, theses/dissertations, books, book reviews, etc. The search revealed that there is indeed a wealth of literature regarding the word of faith movement, its proponents and teachings. However, the preliminary search revealed no specific investigation regarding the pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God. The researcher attempts to address this deficiency in the current body of literature via this research project.

1.2 Problem

Unfortunately, not everyone who claims to speak biblical truth does so. To complicate the matter, when truth is spoken, biblical literacy is often lacking among those who hear it. A recent survey revealed that only 47% of respondents had read the Bible within the previous seven days (Barna 2006:34). Scripture challenges believers with the following directive: “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). Given the influence of word of faith theology on Evangelical churches at large (cf. Van Biema & Chu 2006), there exists a need to examine the pastoral implications of this influence.

This dissertation is governed by the main research question, followed by the related sub-questions (Smith 2008:127). The main research problem is articulated as follows:

- What are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God?

The following five questions emerge from the main research problem:

- What is the current state of scholarship regarding word of faith theology?
- What are the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God?
- What is the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology?
- What are the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology?
- What are the pastoral implications of word of faith theology?

1.3 Objectives

The main objective of this study is:

- To examine the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God.

The following five objectives are derived from the main objective:

- To investigate the current state of scholarship regarding word of faith theology (Chapter 2)

- To examine the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God (Chapter 3)
- To examine the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology (Chapter 4)
- To explore the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology (Chapter 5)
- To understand and address the pastoral implications of word of faith theology (Chapter 6).

1.4 Purpose and value

The main purpose of this research is to engage a biblical and theological analysis of specific tenets of word of faith theology and their pastoral implications within the context of the Church of God.

The value of this research is three-fold. First, doctoral research seeks to contribute new data to the fund of general knowledge (Vyhmerister 2001:185). No major research could be found that: (1) was conducted within the context of the Church of God; and (2) attempted to identify the pastoral implications of word of faith theology within that context. Combining the context and criterion above offers new contextual data for the discipline of practical theology.

Second, it attempts to add to the body of knowledge regarding the word of faith movement. As a Church of God pastor, the researcher is keenly aware that doctrinal influences have both positive and negative implications for parishioners within his faith tradition. From a pastoral perspective, there is inherent value in further examining word of faith theology.

McConnell (1995:193) cites the walking wounded, those who have followed faith theology all too well, and paid dearly for it. Third, this research attempts to provide data regarding the implications of word of faith theology.

1.5 Delimitation

This study has several self-imposed limitations designed to refine the problem by demarcating its boundaries (Smith 2008:141).

The first limitation addresses the scope of the research. This study does not examine every nuance of word of faith theology. Such a task would require time and resources beyond the latitude of the study. Rather, it focuses on several specific tenets of the movement.

The second limitation is historical. There are numerous historical and contemporary proponents of the word of faith theology, far too many for the scope of the study. Rather than an exhaustive examination of the adherents of the movement, the study focuses only on specific persons, historical and contemporary, who have been instrumental in the development and dissemination of word of faith theology.

The third and final limitation is ecclesiastical. This research is conducted within the parameters of the Church of God faith tradition.

1.6 Design and methodology

The writing of a dissertation attempts to answer a single question (Smith 2008:125), therefore, design and methodology are vital to facilitating the process. The research involves a biblical and theological analysis of specific tenets of word of faith theology in order to understand the major pastoral implications of such teaching within the context of the Church of God. Although the study is conducted within the parameters of a specific faith tradition, the research will hopefully be applicable among the broader Evangelical community.

The proposed study resides within the discipline of practical theology in that the research involves the rigorous analysis of a problem, its causes and possible solutions, with the goal of transforming the situation (Cowan 2000). More specifically, the design of the study follows the Loyola Institute of Ministry (LIM) theological research model in which the researcher seeks to: (1) interpret the world as it is (present situation); (2) interpret the world as it should be (preferred scenario); and (3) interpret the contemporary obligations (practical recommendations) (Woodbridge and Song 2007). In order to accomplish this objective the following methodology and chapter sequence are utilised. The dissertation begins with an introduction (Chapter 1), followed by three essential modules (Chapters 2-6), culminating with a conclusion (Chapter 7). Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New International Version (2011).

First, an introduction is given (Chapter 1) in which the following considerations are enumerated: (1) background information; (2) problem statement; (3) objectives; (4) purpose and value; (5) delimitation; (6) design and methodology; (7) hypothesis; and (8) the structure and sequence of the research.

Second, the study assesses the present situation. Module 1 comprises three components (Chapters 2 - 4) that are used to interpret the world as it is: (1) a situation analysis; (2) a contextual analysis; and (3) a historical analysis.

Studies in practical theology may include either empirical research or a situation analysis (Smith 2008:208). This research utilises the latter. The first component (Chapter 2) of Module 1 utilises a situation analysis in which a review of the relevant scholarship regarding word of faith theology is conducted. The literature review includes online (e.g., online bookstores, Google scholar, TREN, NFR, ProQuest and various databases) and printed sources to access articles, books, journals, theses and dissertations (Smith 2008 217-223). Seminary and university libraries are also employed to access

various sources. The above sources allow the researcher to develop a broad grasp of the subject matter.

The second component (Chapter 3) of Module 1 involves a contextual analysis of the research. First, the origins of the Church of God and its place within the broader Christian community are examined. Second, the research addresses the issue of biblical theology within the Church of God. Third, pastoral ministry within a Church of God context is discussed. Fourth, from a Church of God perspective, an appraisal is given of four specific biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity). These tenets are also examined from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4 and a biblical and theological perspective in Chapter 5.

The third component (Chapter 4) of Module 1 involves an investigation into the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology. First, the origins of word of faith movement are examined, along with key persons instrumental in its development. Second, the researcher traces the historical development of word of faith theology, citing reasons for its current level of popularity (e.g., religious media). Third, a review of several major contemporary proponents of word of faith theology is offered. Fourth, from a word of faith perspective, an appraisal is given of four specific biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity). These tenets are examined further in Chapter 5.

Third, Module 2 (Chapter 5) moves the research forward at this point to address the preferred scenario. Interpreting the world as it should be involves an examination of the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique and evaluate specific tenets of word of faith theology. This aspect of the research involves two components. First, an examination of particular biblical passages establishes a general context and rationale for seeking the preferred scenario. Second, each of the four specific tenets of word of faith theology cited in Chapter's 4 and 5 is evaluated per biblical and theological

norms. The purpose of this component is to reveal possible biblical or theological deficiencies or faulty assumptions within these specific tenets of word of faith theology.

Fourth, in Module 3 (Chapter 6), per the LIM theological research model (Woodbridge and Song 2007), practical recommendations are offered that move the research from the present situation (Chapters 2 - 4) to the preferred scenario (Chapter 5) (Smith 2008:210). Interpreting the contemporary obligations of the research involve analysing and developing the following pastoral concerns cited in the background section (cf. Section 1.1): (1) the scriptural validity of word of faith theology; (2) the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching; (3) discipleship; (4) pastoral authority; and (5) fellowship issues (Bowers 2004b:10-12). This chapter includes reflection on the implications, as well as recommendations for effectively critiquing word of faith theology.

Fifth, and finally, a conclusion is offered (Chapter 7). Here, a summary of the research findings, recommendations for further study, the contribution of the research to the discipline of practical theology, and final conclusions are set forth.

1.7 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative, intelligent guess posited for the purpose of directing one's thinking toward the solution of the problem (Leedy 1993:75). The researcher believes this study reveals that certain tenets of word of faith theology have negative pastoral implications for the Church of God. Subsequently, the need exists to further examine word of faith theology.

1.8 Summary of chapters 2-6

The following summary of Chapters 2-6 highlights the emphasis and details of each chapter. Excluding the introduction in Chapter 1 and the conclusion in Chapter 7, the research contains three primary modules based on the LIM research model (Woodbridge and Song 2007). The first module of the LIM model noted above offers an interpretation of the world as it is. This module involves analyses from three perspectives (cf. situational; contextual; and historical) and is set forth in the three components of Chapters 2-4. The first component is a situation analysis offered in Chapter 2. This involves a literature review of the current state of scholarship regarding the word of faith movement. The analysis includes primary sources, critical evaluations from both inside and outside the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, as well as more favourable treatments of the word of faith movement. The sources are accessed from numerous venues. A synthesis of the various works is then offered in order to integrate the various strands of thought from the assessed literature. The relevance of the literature review to the topic of the research is then discussed, citing several areas of deficiency in the current scholarship. One such area involves specific tenets of word of faith theology and their pastoral implications for the Church of God. The analysis in this chapter reveals that the topic of this research is validated. The analysis also demonstrates the need for further examination of the word of faith movement, specifically in regard to pastoral implications within the Church of God.

Interpreting the world as it is involves not only a situational analysis (i.e., the specific focus of the research), but also a contextual analysis in which the research is conducted. The second component of Module 1 involves the contextual analysis offered in Chapter 3. Here, the faith tradition of the Church of God is examined from several perspectives. First, a historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God is given that examines: (1) the historical origins of the Church of God; (2) the contemporary perspective

of the Church of God; and (3) the Church of God in the broader Christian community. Second, an evaluation of specific tenets of biblical theology within the Church of God examines: (1) the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture; (2) the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation; and (3) hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective. Third, an analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God examines: (1) the pastoral role as mentor; (2) the pastoral role as exegete/educator; and (3) the pastoral role as shepherd. Fourth, an appraisal of four biblical tenets (tenets that are assessed in Chapters 4-6 from different perspectives) from a Church of God perspective is given, namely: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity. Finally, the relevance of these assessments to the research is noted.

The third component of Module 1 involves the historical analysis offered in Chapter 4. Here, a historical analysis is set forth by examining the historical background and contemporary framework of word of faith theology. The subject matter is analysed from several perspectives. First, an assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement is offered that examines: (1) the historical origins of the word of faith movement; (2) the contextual influences on the movement; and (3) an assessment of key persons in the development of the movement. Second, an analysis of the development of the word of faith message is given. Here, the following components are examined: (1) the various sources of the message; (2) Scripture with notes, the Dake's annotated reference Bible; and (3) the significance of mass media. Third, an evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology is given that includes: (1) Kenneth and Gloria Copeland; (2) Charles Capps; (3) Joel Osteen; (4) Joyce Meyer; (5) Paula White; (6) Benny Hinn; and (7) Robert Tilton. Fourth, an appraisal is given of specific biblical tenets from a word of faith perspective: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity. In conclusion, Chapter 4 summarises the relevance of this material to the overall research.

Module 2 (Chapter 5) involves an evaluation of the biblical and theological foundations of particular aspects of word of faith theology. First, an exegetical analysis is offered of three passages central to word of faith theology (cf. Romans 4:17; III John 2; Mark 11:24). Second, each of the four tenets (cf. the Abrahamic covenant, atonement, faith and prosperity) assessed from divergent perspectives in Chapter's 3 and 4 is engaged per: (1) a biblical basis; (2) a theological assessment; (3) application for contemporary praxis; and (4) per its relevance to the research in general. A conclusion is then offered that summarises the content of the chapter.

Module 3 (Chapter 6) assesses the implications of specific tenets of word of faith theology for pastoral ministry in the Church of God. In each section the subject matter is assessed, the implications for pastoral ministry are discussed, followed by practical recommendations for addressing the stated implications. First, an evaluation of the scriptural validity of word of faith theology is offered. Here, specific passages inherent within word of faith theology are evaluated. Second, an appraisal is offered regarding the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching. At this point, four biblical tenets are juxtaposed and appraised. Third, an analysis of the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology is offered. Fourth, an assessment of the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology is offered. Fifth, an assessment of the relationship between fellowship issues and word of faith theology is offered. The chapter then summarises the various implications in terms of their relevance to the overall research agenda.

In Chapter 7, a conclusion of the research is given. After a brief introduction to the chapter, a summary of the research is set forth. This is followed by recommendations for further study, along with the value of the research to the field of practical theology. The chapter ends with concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

The emphasis of this chapter is a review of the most recent, credible and relevant scholarship (Mouton 2001:87) regarding the word of faith movement, with a view toward addressing possible implications for pastoral ministry within the Church of God. As stated in the delimitations of Chapter 1, the scope of this research does not involve a detailed examination of the word of faith movement as a whole. However, in order to contextualize the research, the movement itself warrants a concise examination. Section 2.1 of this chapter introduces the purpose of the literature review. An analysis of the scholarship regarding the word of faith movement is given in Section 2.2 that reviews both critical and favourable research. Observations from Section 2.2 are brought together in a synthesised manner in Section 2.3. The relevance of the literature review to the topic of this research is discussed in Section 2.4, culminating in a succinct recap of the entire chapter in Section 2.5.

The literature included in this review provides a framework in which to avoid duplication of past research, interact with recent findings and identify gaps (Smith 2008:223) regarding word of faith theology and its relationship to pastoral ministry in the Church of God. Primary sources that date prior to 1980 are utilised in later chapters to develop the context of the research. To clearly identify specific aspects of the research and to allow the inclusion of several seminal works, most of the sources cited in this chapter cover the time period from 1980 to the present.

The word of faith movement is the subject of several noteworthy studies. Biblical and theological analyses of various aspects of the movement have

been conducted (cf. Farah 1981; Hunt 1985; McConnell 1995; Barron 1987; MacArthur 1993; Smail, Walker and Wright 1994; Moo 1997; Bowman 2001; Perriman 2003; Fee 2006; Lioy 2007; Bloodsworth 2009; Hanegraaff 2009; et al) that provide well-documented academic treatments, as well as apologetic works. Also included are sources written by Church of God scholars, theologians and pastors that focus specifically on pastoral ministry from a Church of God perspective, (cf. Walker 1965; Fisher 1977; Hughes 1977, 1986; Arrington 1994; McMahan 1994; Bowers 2004a, 2004b, 2005).

The literature accessed for this review includes journals, books, book reviews, theses, dissertations, unpublished papers, articles, as well as various online sources (e.g., online bookstores, Google scholar, TREN, NFR, ProQuest and various databases). The result is a wealth of literature regarding the word of faith movement, its theology and teaching. The intent of this review is to reveal areas of deficiency regarding the pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of pastoral ministry in the Church of God. In so doing, the purpose and value of this research is validated and there is indeed inherent value in a further examination of word of faith theology.

2.2 An analytical review of the word of faith movement

The word of faith movement cannot easily be defined as a denomination, a tradition or even a school of thought, but may be categorized as a broadly based, variegated movement that overlaps both the Charismatic and non-Charismatic spectrums (Sarles 1986:329). While not technically defined as a denomination, the word of faith movement is comprised of specific tenets common to its adherents. A search of the relevant literature revealed numerous critiques, examinations, evaluations and analyses of the word of faith movement, many of which duplicated or built upon other works. For this reason, while the literature review was exhaustive in terms of relevant scholarship, the purpose of this chapter is not to assess all of the accessed

literature. Rather, to avoid cumbersome duplication, the literature most relevant to this research is assessed. Further, in order to bring the literature current for the topic of this research, the review is organised using both a school of thought and chronological approach (Mouton 2001:92).

Very little scholarly research was conducted regarding the word of faith movement prior to 1980 (McConnell 1995:ix). However, from approximately 1980 to the present, a number of analyses, critiques and examinations, both critical and favourable, are offered. This analytical review examines the following works: (1) a sampling of primary sources prior to 1980 in Section 2.2.1; (2) critical analyses covering the time period from 1980 to the present in Section 2.2.2; and (3) favourable analyses covering the time period from 1980 to the present in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.1 Primary sources prior to 1980

As noted in the previous section very little scholarly research was conducted prior to 1980 regarding the word of faith movement, its theology or beliefs. The pre-1980 primary sources utilised in this research comprise, not scholarly academic treatments of the subject matter, but the works (e.g., books, booklets, pamphlets, sermons in print, transcribed audio) of key individuals associated with the development of the movement and the evolution of its theology. This section of the literature review focuses on the works of Essek William Kenyon, Kenneth Erwin Hagin, and Kenneth and Gloria Copeland. These individuals and several others are examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.2.1.1 Essek William Kenyon

According to numerous researchers (cf. MacArthur 1992; Hanegraaff 1993; McConnell 1995; et al) the word of faith movement finds components of its origins in the theology and teachings of Essek William Kenyon (1867-1948). As a young man Kenyon was associated with the Methodist church and later established and pastored several Baptist churches. He remained a Baptist minister until his death. In 1892 he enrolled in the Emerson College of Oratory, an institution known for its propagation of metaphysical, transcendental and New Thought teachings (McConnell 1995:35). New Thought ideology originated with Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866), eventually influencing the development of Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science, the Unity School of Christianity, and various other mind science organisations. Kenyon was not a graduate of Emerson, or any other academic institution, however, several researchers (cf. Matta 1987; Cannon n.d.; Hanegraaff 2009; et al) argue that his association with Emerson greatly influenced the development of his theology.

A review of Kenyon's writings reveals influences beyond the scope of his Methodist and Baptist theological affiliation. For example, in his work, *the two kinds of faith: faith's secrets revealed*, Kenyon (1942:76-84) suggests that in remembering the Abrahamic covenant, David's soldiers became supermen and were shielded from death during their wars. McConnell (1995:21) suggests that Kenyon hoped to create supermen, a master race of Christians no longer bound by external realities. In *Jesus the healer*, Kenyon (1943:90) advances the possibility of believers living in perfect health, free from the limitations of the physical nature. In *new creation realities: a revelation of redemption*, Kenyon (1945:93) proposes that the creative ability as seen in creation is imparted to believers in the present reality.

Even a cursory perusal of Kenyon's works suggests influences beyond orthodox biblical teaching. His theology bears many of the characteristics

cited by Judah (1967:17) of the 19th century mind healing cults, such as: (1) the inner self is described as divine; (2) by the proper application of spiritual law one may obtain health, prosperity, or anything else one may desire; (3) the inner meaning of words are revealed intuitively; and (4) a propagation of healing through mind and spirit. This cursory examination of Kenyon's works strongly suggests his influence on the word of faith movement, an observation noted also in Sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3. Kenyon's influence upon word of faith theology is examined further in Chapter 4.

2.2.1.2 Kenneth Erwin Hagin

Kenneth Erwin Hagin (1917-2003), affectionately known by his followers as "Dad Hagin," was born with a congenital heart condition. While in his late teens, after his vital signs failed three times, he claims to have witnessed the horrors of hell. These experiences led to his conversion in 1933. According to Riss (2003b:687), the following year Hagin was healed from his congenital disease and began ministering as a lay preacher in a multidenominational church comprised primarily of a Southern Baptist constituency. Hagin was baptised in the Holy Spirit in 1937 and began ministering among Pentecostals. In 1949 he began an itinerant ministry as a Bible teacher and over the next fourteen years claims to have had a series of eight visions of Jesus, who in the third vision gave him the gift of discerning of spirits, enabling him to pray more effectively for the healing of the sick (Riss 2003b:687). In 1974 he founded Rhema Bible Training Center, which by 2000 boasted 16,500 graduates.

Through his writings, mass media (cassette tapes) and school, Hagin influenced many within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. Hagin's influence among Pentecostals and Charismatics at large is important because of the implications of his theology, much of which he plagiarised from the writings of E. W. Kenyon. Researchers (cf. McConnell 1995; Hanegraaff

2009; et al) cite extensive and frequent plagiarism from at least eight of Kenyon's books. A sampling of Hagin's works facilitates an understanding not only of the origin of many of his teachings, but also the development of specific aspects of word of faith theology. In *redeemed from poverty, sickness, death* (1963), Hagin argues that poverty and sickness are a curse and that both have been nullified in Christ (cf. Galatians 3:13). In *what faith is* (1975) and *healing belongs to us* (1978) he proposes that physical healing is a gift that one needs only accept to possess. Hagin's book, *how to write your own ticket with God* (1979), describes how to attain one's desires through positive confession and the power of faith. From this terse sampling of Hagin's writings, Kenyon's ideas emerge in popular form.

2.2.1.3 Kenneth and Gloria Copeland

Kenneth Copeland began his ministry by memorising the sermons of Kenneth Hagin (Barron 1987:56-57), consequently assimilating much of Hagin's theology as his own. From humble beginnings in 1967, Kenneth and his wife Gloria began small home studies that eventually grew to meetings in large venues around the world. Via their *believer's voice of victory* media ministry (the influence of religious media at large is given further treatment in Chapter 4) the Copelands fostered a global audience for the dissemination of word of faith theology.

Just as Hagin plagiarised extensively from Kenyon, the Copelands took Hagin's theology to another level. For example, in *the laws of prosperity* (1974) and *God's will is prosperity* (1978), they argue that prosperity is governed by the force of faith, which causes prosperity to function for the believer's benefit. In *healed...to be or not to be* (1979a), physical healing and prosperity are intrinsically connected with the Abrahamic covenant. They further assert that since believers are connected by faith to the Abrahamic covenant, physical healing and prosperity are guaranteed to those who

correctly appropriate a biblical understanding of faith. In *walking in the realm of the miraculous* (1979b), the Copelands posit that Jesus' death on the cross did not complete the atonement, but that Jesus suffered spiritually in hell for three days and was reborn. They (1983:8) further assert that the reason Paul was not healed from his thorn in the flesh is because he asked God to heal him, when in reality he could have healed himself. Indeed, the Copelands have taken the teachings of Hagin (many of which were derived from Kenyon) and assimilated them into their own brand of word of faith theology.

2.2.1.4 Synopsis of primary sources prior to 1980

This brief sampling of pre-1980 primary sources is important to the development of this research in that the literature review identifies four recurring tenets of word of faith theology: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity. Each of these tenets, as understood within the word of faith paradigm, sets forth pastoral implications that are examined further in Chapter's 3-5.

2.2.2 Critical analyses of sources from 1980 to the present

Some of the initial analyses and examinations of the word of faith movement, its teachings and theology, come from those within the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions (cf. Farah 1980, 1981, 1982; McConnell 1995; Fee 1985; Perriman 2003; Bowers 2004b). In addition, several analyses are offered by those who hold different theological positions (cf. MacArthur 1992; Bowman 2001; Hanegraaff 2009).

2.2.2.1 Charles Farah Jr.

One of the very first scholarly analyses comes from Charles Farah Jr., who, since 1967, served as professor of theology and historical studies at Oral Roberts University. In 1980 he authored a book titled, *from the pinnacle of the temple: faith or presumption*. In the book Farah contends that there is a real distinction between faith and presumption, and that much of what passes for faith, i.e., many of the tenets of word of faith theology, is in fact presumption and not the manifestation of a bold biblical faith (Farah 1980:205). Farah addresses many of the excesses within the word of faith movement and appeals for theological balance and integrity.

The same year Farah presents a paper at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies titled *a critical analysis: the roots and fruits of faith-formula theology*, which was published in 1981 in the SPS journal, *Pneuma*. He traces the origins of word of faith theology indirectly to Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875). Farah (1981:5-6) argues that in Finney's theology the sovereignty of God is displaced by the elevation of man, which, when coupled with the "can do" spirit of American expansionism, becomes an important link to specific aspects of word of faith theology. While no scholarly research is found to explicitly corroborate this assertion, such an indirect link is certainly a viable component in the development of word of faith theology.

Farah (1981:6) suggests that the works of E. W. Kenyon are perhaps the most important of all influences on word of faith theology, a supposition corroborated by numerous researchers (cf. McConnell 1995; Ezeigo 1989; MacArthur 1992; Geracie 1993; Hanegraaff 1993; Lie 2000; et al). Farah (1981:7) argues that from Kenyon comes a specific strand of religious humanism that is developed by word of faith theology into a form of a Charismatic humanism. The result is a disproportionate emphasis on the present world, where revelation knowledge becomes the new hermeneutical principle (Farah 1981:13). Such revelation knowledge is realised in a

subjective manner, often negating or even discrediting the need for solid biblical exegesis, then facilitated by such teaching and practices as positive confession, denial of adversity and creative faith (Farah 1981:10-12). The connection with Kenyon's teachings is noted and expanded in the work of other researchers, and also in Chapter 4.

Farah (1987:22) concludes his assessment of the word of faith movement by suggesting that although an increasing number of Charismatics reject the prosperity gospel as originally taught, it continues to hold allurement for many. Its fruit is defined as a diluted brand of Christianity that requires little, offers much and provides a panacea for Christians to get what they want (Farah 1981:18).

Although Farah's research is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, it is indeed one of the points of origin for later research and contributes to the literature by laying a foundation for further examination of the word of faith movement. If, as Farah (1982:15) suggests, the word of faith message is the most attractive message being preached today, it is of particular significance as it relates to the pastoral implications of this research. A message is not correct simply because it is popular, it must be biblically and theologically sound. The researcher is in agreement with Farah's appeal for theological balance and integrity in that he has experienced within the pastorate many of the excesses of word of faith theology.

2.2.2.2 Gordon Fee

Gordon Fee, professor of New Testament at Regent College and an ordained Assemblies of God minister, enters the word of faith dialogue with his 1985 book titled, *the disease of the health and wealth gospels*. In this small but significant publication, updated in 2006 under the same title, Fee addresses the excesses of word of faith theology with specific attention given to the

tenets of material prosperity and perfect health. He argues that such excesses find their origin in what many within the movement consider to be their strength—the interpretation of Scripture (Fee 1985:8). Citing primary sources from the writings of prominent word of faith adherents and aligning them with the biblical text, Fee argues that in word of faith theology one can find a pattern of faulty exegesis. This pattern is further elucidated as each of the four tenets of word of faith covered in this research is analysed.

Fee contributes to the literature and on-going discussion of the movement by highlighting the importance of and need for correct hermeneutics and proper exegesis. His work is especially important to this research in that essential to pastoral ministry is the call to preach and teach. Correct interpretation of the biblical text is imperative, because the ultimate aim of the exegete is to apply one's exegetical understanding of the text to the contemporary church and world (Fee 1983:21). The need for and necessity of proper exegesis is further examined in Chapter 5.

2.2.2.3 Daniel R. McConnell

A seminal publication, one that is cited in most all analyses of the word of faith movement since its completion (cf. MacArthur 1992:351), is by Daniel R. McConnell. Since the historical origins of the word of faith movement were not within the interest of the Farah or Fee critiques (McConnell 1995:ix), McConnell, a graduate assistant at Oral Roberts University, researched and submitted a master's thesis in 1982 to the ORU School of Theology titled, *the Kenyon connection: a theological and historical analysis of the cultic origins of the faith movement*. The thesis was expanded and published in 1988 under the title *a different gospel: a historical and biblical analysis of the modern faith movement*, then updated under the same title in 1995. Two key emphases guide McConnell's research: (1) a historical analysis of the word of faith movement; and (2) a biblical analysis of specific word of faith theologies.

The thesis of McConnell's work is that word of faith theology is not primarily Pentecostal or Charismatic in origin, as some researchers have suggested (cf. Bowman 2001), but finds its origins in the mind science cults of the 19th century (1995:xx). McConnell traces the origins of word of faith theology directly to E. W. Kenyon, a Baptist minister influenced by mind science teaching. Kenyon's alma mater, Emerson College, was a school where both the faculty and much of the student body were heavily involved with the metaphysical cults (McConnell 1995:41). Influenced by this environment, Kenyon began to preach and write extensively regarding healing, positive confession and prosperity, the same doctrines New Thought and Christian Science had propagated for decades (McConnell 1995:20).

Although Kenneth E. Hagin is commonly viewed as the father of the modern faith movement, McConnell makes the case that Kenyon is the true father of the movement because his writings were plagiarized by Hagin, a fact meticulously documented in his research (1995:6-13). Through Hagin, and by extension his Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Kenyon's mind science teachings find a conduit for influencing the development of word of faith theology. McConnell contributes to the word of faith dialogue by offering one of the first scholarly historical analyses of the movement. His research validates Farah's hypothesis of a Kenyon / word of faith connection, and, in so doing, sets forth parameters for further critiquing the movement. McConnell's research underscores the need to ascertain and address the pastoral implications of word of faith theology.

2.2.2.4 John MacArthur

Adding to the word of faith dialogue is the 1992 publication by John MacArthur titled *Charismatic chaos*. Written from a Reformed perspective, MacArthur reinforces the work of previous researchers (cf. Fee 1979; Barron 1987;

McConnell 1982; et al) by suggesting that the origins of the word of faith movement should be viewed primarily not as Christian, but as cultic.

Although MacArthur writes in the volume's epilogue (1992:354) that there are many extremes within the Charismatic movement and that his intention is not to colour all Charismatics the same, the bulk of this volume examines various fringe elements of the Charismatic movement without differentiating them from their more orthodox siblings. In the main MacArthur's research critiques specific components of the Charismatic movement. Little attention is given in differentiating classical Pentecostalism from the Charismatic movement at large, and word of faith theology in specific. This allows for a possible assessment that the similarities are more pronounced than are the distinctions.

MacArthur contributes to the growing consensus that word of faith theology must be evaluated, assessed and examined in terms of its orientation. This is especially true regarding the pastoral implications of the movement. As the movement's teachings grow in popularity, transcend denominational lines and become ingrained within local fellowships, it is increasingly incumbent upon the pastoral role to address the issue. One objective of this research project is to address these pastoral concerns.

2.2.2.5 Hank Hanegraaff

Adding to the debate is a publication by Hank Hanegraaff titled *Christianity in crisis*, published in 1993, and updated in 2009 under the title *Christianity in crisis: 21st century*. Hanegraaff is the president of the Christian Research Institute and editor of the *Christian research journal*. This publication offers a brief analysis of the origins of the movement, delineates key figures within the movement, then spends the bulk of its content evaluating specific tenets of word of faith theology (e.g., faith in faith, men as little gods, atonement

atrocities, wealth and want, sickness and suffering). A recurring theme in this research is the assertion that error begets error. Hanegraaff posits that Kenyon's original deviations from orthodox Christianity are minor compared to those that characterise the later stages of his ministry, and that with each of his successive disciples the errors become more pronounced (2009:x).

A subsequent volume titled *counterfeit revival*, published in 1997, exposes some of the inevitable consequences of certain aspects of word of faith theology. Using the acronym F-L-E-S-H as a means of distinguishing the genuine work of the Holy Spirit from the counterfeit work of the flesh, Hanegraaff examines the issues of fabrications-fantasies-frauds, lying signs, end-time restorationism, scriptural pretexts, and hypnotic exploitation (1997:viii). While some of the issues do indeed have biblical precedent (e.g., end-time events, spiritual experiences), the unrestrained manifestation and potentially dangerous end result are the focus of Hanegraaff's examination. Such activity presents unmistakable implications for pastoral ministry that are examined further in Chapter 6.

These publications provide careful documentation of primary sources and consistent citations regarding the author's assessments. Hanegraaff's research contributes to the literature review by systematising specific tenets of word of faith theology and engaging each from two perspectives: (1) its compatibility with the biblical text; and (2) its correlation with orthodox Christian teaching. Given the myriad New Testament commands to not deviate from the true gospel of Christ, this aspect of Hanegraaff's work facilitates the development of Chapters 4 - 5.

2.2.2.6 Robert Bowman

In 2001, Robert Bowman published a book titled *the word-faith controversy: understanding the health and wealth gospel*. Bowman's emphasis is primarily

three-fold: (1) he examines the roots of the word of faith movement by focusing on its origins; (2) he evaluates the shoots of word of faith movement by analysing its specific teachings; and, (3) he sets forth the end result of the movement's teaching by specifying its fruits.

Regarding the first emphasis, previous research has traced aspects of word of faith theology to the writings of E. W. Kenyon. However, Bowman argues that the roots of the word of faith movement originate primarily in Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, namely, a radical form of Pentecostalism (2001:11). In offering the assessment that word of faith theology is basically Pentecostalism at its worst, Bowman attempts to encourage Pentecostals to pursue a rich, mature, biblically sound Pentecostalism at its best (2001:12). Indeed, certain aspects of word of faith theology can be found within the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions. However, the extent to which the movement takes such teaching is easily found within the metaphysical cults. In the second emphasis, Bowman's assessment finds similarities to those offered by previous researchers (cf. Farah 1981; Fee 1985; McConnell 1995; Hanegraaff 2009), that is, that many of the specific tenets of word of faith theology are the result of faulty exegesis and poor hermeneutics. The result is a system of half-truths that reveal an unbiblical and unrealistic approach to interpreting Scripture (2001:203). This assumption validates previous research, while simultaneously reinforcing the need to evaluate further the pastoral implications of the movement.

The final emphasis has to do with the negative consequences of word of faith theology. Bowman (2001:222-224) delineates the negative consequences of word of faith theology as: (1) division in the church; (2) self-centred spirituality; (3) acceptance of false prophecies; (4) a general lack of discernment; (5) anti-intellectualism; (6) spiritual and doctrinal arrogance and elitism; (7) discouragement of a Christian's faith; (8) testimonies of people dying due to word of faith error; (9) diversion of Christians from sound teaching and growth;

and (10) unnecessary embarrassment to the church. Such consequences produce pastoral implications that need to be addressed.

2.2.2.7 Andrew Perriman

Faith, health & prosperity: a report on word of faith and positive confession theologies was edited and published in 2003 by Andrew Perriman. By setting forth a history of the word of faith movement, then offering an evaluation of its principle teachings, the book concludes with general observations regarding the movement. This publication argues that there are perhaps two skeletons in the word of faith closet—a Pentecostal ancestry and the influence of the metaphysical cults (2003:57-77).

Regarding a Pentecostal ancestry, Perriman argues (2003:57-66) that the American Holiness movement, the revivals of the early 19th century in America, as well as the post-WWII healing revivals, provide a context for the development of specific emphases of word of faith theology. Although certain elements of word of faith theology do not appear in the mainstream of the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions (2003:66), these traditions did encompass, on the fringe parameters, persons who emphasised such radical teachings. While Perriman assesses a few on the fringe of these traditions, when peripheral individuals within a given faith tradition espouse extra-biblical ideas, this is no guarantee that the tradition itself is the origin of such ideology.

In terms of metaphysical cults, Perriman suggests (2003:66-67) that from the array of cults that emerged in 19th century America, the word of faith movement was influenced by the gnostic cults—those fascinated with the powers of the mental and spiritual worlds, ranging from transcendentalism to the occult. The writings of Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866), a mental healer, and those of his students, most notably Mary Baker Eddy who founded the

Christian Science movement, produced a series of New Thought concepts that were prevalent in this time period. Such teaching emphasises the divinity of man and his infinite possibilities through the use of creative power and constructive thinking, i.e., one's material and spiritual circumstances may be changed or altered by the power of the mind (Perriman 2003:68). He further argues that New Thought teachings were the natural predecessors for writers such as Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie, and those closer to the biblical tradition such as Charles Fillmore (whose book *prosperity* greatly influenced the word of faith tenet of prosperity) and Ralph Waldo Trine (who was later to influence E. W. Kenyon) (2003:69).

Perriman's (2003:209) overall assessment of the word of faith movement is that its teachings appear defective in at least three areas: (1) a narrative of salvation history that is at odds with mainstream Evangelicalism; (2) a prescriptive concept of faith that diminishes the relational dimensions of Christian spirituality, thus reducing faith to a mere formula; and (3) material prosperity as a concrete expression of the goodness of God. The publication contributes to the dialogue by validating the non-Christian origins of the movement. Once again the need for exploring the pastoral implications of word of faith theology is clearly authenticated, a task further examined in Chapter 6.

2.2.2.8 James Bowers

Published in 2004 by James Bowers is a brief volume titled *you can have what you say: a pastoral response to the prosperity gospel*. Bowers serves as vice-president for academics at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, and also as executive director for the Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care (both of which are Church of God entities). The book does not offer an exhaustive treatment of the word of faith movement, nor of pastoral ministry within the Church of God, but is written as a primer to address the pastoral

concerns raised by the influence of the movement within the contemporary church.

Bowers argues (2004b:3-6) that prior to the rise of Christian media (e.g., radio, television, and most recently the Internet), most American Christians—Pentecostals included—received their orientation and understanding of the Christian faith and life from direct interpersonal relationships and the community of local congregations. By the 1980's and 1990's, Bowers (2004b:4) suggests that many churched believers were having their faith and practise reshaped by Christian media programmes, many of which were word of faith in orientation. The inevitable result of such a trend is the emergence of various pastoral implications that warrant further examination.

This volume contributes to the word of faith dialogue by focusing on the pastoral concerns and implications of word of faith theology, and more specifically, pastoral implications within the Church of God. The researcher is indebted to Bowers because this brief volume serves as one of the catalysts for the main research problem of this dissertation, i.e., what are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God? After reading the primer and reflecting upon two decades of pastoral ministry in the Church of God, it became evident to the researcher that further inquiry was needed in this particular area. Several implications of word of faith theology are given treatment in Chapter 6, along with practical recommendations to address those implications.

2.2.3 Favourable analyses from 1980 to the present

Although most analyses revealed in the literature review offer a critical examination of the word of faith movement—as noted by the apparent disproportionate number of critical versus favourable analyses in this section—a few are apologetic in nature and offer a more favourable treatment

(cf. DeArteaga 1992; King 2001; Vreeland 2001). The following offer not only favourable analyses, but attempt to bring balance and integrity to the word of faith dialogue.

2.2.3.1 William DeArteaga

In 1992 William DeArteaga entered the dialogue by offering an apologetic assessment of the Charismatic renewal at large in a publication titled *quenching the Spirit: discover the real spirit behind the Charismatic controversy*. The publication was revised in 1996. As MacArthur's (1992) work offers a critique of the Charismatic movement as a whole, more specifically the excesses within the movement, DeArteaga focuses on a defence of the movement as a whole. The entire first chapter of the book focuses on what DeArteaga calls the problem of Pharisaism, which he defines as an attempt to restrict the flow of spiritual experiences, until religion becomes a purely intellectual and theological exercise, and, in so doing, quenches the Spirit (1996:17). The premise is that those who question or challenge aspects of the word of faith movement are guilty of a form of Pharisaism. This is especially true of DeArteaga's critiques of Farah (1981), Hunt (1985), McConnell (1988), MacArthur (1992), and Hanegraaff (1993).

The publication offers an assessment of spiritual awakenings, beginning with the early church and continuing to the present Charismatic renewal. DeArteaga attaches to these periodic renewals the descriptive "messy revival", in that they are often accompanied by numerous excesses and a general lack of wisdom and discernment (1996:29). While it is true that most all great revival movements and spiritual awakenings were accompanied by elements of excess, this does not diminish the need for balance in terms of biblical and theological integrity.

DeArteaga (1996:288) asserts that, except for a few areas of weakness, the Charismatic renewal (including its word of faith component) contains all the evidences of a genuine revival as articulated by Jonathan Edwards (Goen 1972:241-244). However, DeArteaga's work is not limited to the word of faith movement, but engages renewal movements in general. These areas of weakness within the faith component and their ultimate implications for pastoral ministry necessitate the attention of this research.

2.2.3.2 Derek Vreeland

In 2001 Derek Vreeland presented a paper at the 30th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies titled *reconstructing word of faith theology: a defense, analysis and refinement of the theology of the word of faith movement*. In this paper Vreeland immediately positions himself in defence of the word of faith movement. Given the fact that most critiques of the movement are of a critical nature, Vreeland (2001:1) theorises that while many outspoken critics have decried the movement as cultic and its theology as heretical, most word of faith proponents choose not to respond to the critics in an attempt to heed the Pauline directive against quarrelling about words (cf. I Timothy 6:4; II Timothy 2:14).

The paper offers an appeal to redeem the word of faith movement from what Vreeland describes as the heresy junk pile. He attempts to find sufficient orthodoxy in the movement's theology in order to apply correction to various excesses (2001:2). He spends a large portion of the paper addressing critics of the movement (cf. Farah 1981; McConnell 1988; Hanegraaff 1993; et al), then offers a process of refinement designed to facilitate reconstruction of four aspects of word of faith theology. If the vitality of the word of faith movement is to remain, Vreeland (2001:20) argues that second and third generation word of faith leaders must enter a process of restructuring their theology.

Vreeland contributes to the word of faith dialogue by offering not only a defence, but an appeal to critically evaluate the excesses of the movement, to engage them, and bring them into alignment with biblical orthodoxy. Indeed, acknowledgment of such a need is important to the topic of this research in that pastoral implications arise from excess in any area of biblical teaching. Vreeland's work further substantiates the need of this research and contributes to the writing of Chapter 6.

2.2.3.3 Paul King

Paul King, an ordained minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and professor at Oral Roberts University, has contributed to the word of faith dialogue as well. In 2001, King completed a doctor of theology dissertation via the University of South Africa titled *a practical-theological investigation of nineteenth and twentieth century faith theologies*. The dissertation was published in book form in 2008 under the title *only believe: examining the origin and development of classic and contemporary word of faith theologies*. The general structure of King's (2001:8) investigation is fourfold: (1) identify the teaching or practice of the contemporary faith movement regarding a particular issue; (2) state the criticism against the contemporary faith tenet; (3) identify classic faith teaching and practice on the issue; and (4) critically reflect upon the issue, pointing out areas of agreement and disagreement between classic and modern faith teaching, and developing conclusions for a sound practical theology on the issue.

King posits that while word of faith theology does indeed contain elements of error that need to be addressed, in the main, it falls within the boundaries of orthodoxy. Likewise, while acknowledging that critics of word of faith theology have valid points of contention, King suggests that in their attempt to sort truth from error, they too have assumed some extreme positions. The research, according to King (2001:7), seeks to correct the excesses in belief and

practice in the modern faith movement and also to correct the excesses of its critics. While sympathetic to word of faith theology, King engages the dialogue with an appeal for balance. This appeal validates the need for research into the pastoral implications of word of faith theology (Chapter 6).

2.3 Synthesis of the analytical review

Numerous publications were accessed during this review. Those included in this chapter comprise only a sampling of the greater body of literature. Much of the literature accessed is utilised in subsequent chapters. Appraising the relevant scholarship regarding the word of faith movement produces several immediate observations.

2.3.1 Two main schools of thought regarding origins of the movement

In regard to the origins of word of faith theology, two main schools of thought immediately emerge: (1) those who infer that the movement finds its origins in the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions (cf. Bowman 2001; et al); and (2) those who suggest that the movement's origins are cultic (cf. McConnell 1992; et al). Although the bulk of research is in agreement with the latter, in the main, both schools of thought warrant consideration. Certain tenets of the word of faith movement do indeed find precedent in the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, e.g., the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the belief in divine healing and the practise of the gifts of the Spirit, all of which also find precedent within orthodox Christianity. Nevertheless, when these tenets are taken to an extra-biblical extreme, or when modified by the assimilation of non-biblical nuances, the result is a distortion of orthodoxy. The pastoral implications of such extremism are profound, both theologically and in terms of praxis.

2.3.2 Number of analyses from within the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions

Numerous critical analyses come from outside the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, however, some of the most significant and seminal critiques come from within these traditions (MacArthur 1992:354). This is noteworthy on several fronts: (1) it suggests that many within these traditions desire to preserve their historical, biblical and theological integrity; (2) it implies that while the word of faith movement does indeed have doctrinal similarities to the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, the doctrinal differences outweigh the former, and therefore warrant disclosure; and (3) it infers that there is an increasing level of biblical and theological academic scholarship emerging from within the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. These observations are important to the delineation and development of pastoral implications for the Church of God.

2.3.3 Juxtaposition of the analyses

It is also interesting to note the number of critical analyses juxtaposed to those more favourable. To avoid cumbersome duplication of literature this review focuses only on eight critical analyses, however, numerous others were accessed (cf. Kim 1989; Neuman 1990; Geracie 1993; McLeod 1994; Sullivan 2000; Wright 2000; Brown 2006; Hladky 2006; Tang 2006; Atkinson 2007; Gongwer 2007; Lioy 2007; Withrow 2007; Bloodsworth 2009; Koch 2009; et al). In response to why so little has been written in defence of the movement, other than the publications of word of faith advocates that promote the movement's teachings, Vreeland (2001:1) posits that word of faith proponents choose not to respond to the critics in an attempt to heed the Pauline warning to not quarrel about words (cf. I Timothy 6:4; II Timothy 2:14). This is an interesting hypothesis because many of the same proponents go to great length (e.g., via their booklets, magazines, media) in questioning

traditional definitions of orthodoxy while promoting their own interpretation of the same. That said, it is not the intent of this research to demean specific individuals connected with the word of faith movement. Rather, the objective is to probe word of faith theology for pastoral implications in order to address them accordingly.

2.3.4 Areas of emphasis

This review produced a number of detailed treatments of various aspects of the word of faith movement. Most all of the research can be placed in one or more of three primary categories relating to the topic: (1) the origins of the word of faith movement; (2) key proponents of the movement; or (3) specific aspects of word of faith theology.

2.3.5 General observations

The body of literature regarding the word of faith movement is embryonic when compared to orthodoxy at large. Although aspects of its origins date back to the early 19th century (cf. Finney; Quimby; et al), the movement as a collective entity is traced to the mid-20th century (cf. Kenyon; Hagin; et al). Aspects of word of faith theology have influenced not only the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, but Evangelical and mainline churches as well (Van Biema & Chu 2006). This influence is not merely regional or continental, but global in its impact, affecting believers, churches, and para-church organisations worldwide. The influence of word of faith theology validates the need for on-going scholarly research.

2.4 Relevance to the topic of research

As set forth in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this chapter, the review covers the most recent, credible and relevant scholarship regarding the word of faith movement. The review suggests that the topic of this research is indeed valid.

2.4.1 Pastoral ministry in the Church of God

The main research problem deals with potential pastoral implications of word of faith theology within a specific context. The context, which is the classical Pentecostal faith tradition of the Church of God, is analysed in detail in Chapter 3. Pastoral ministry in the Church of God is also examined further in Chapter 6.

There is no deficit of scholarship regarding Christian pastoral ministry in general, nor is there a shortage within most denominations, organisations or fellowships regarding the role of the Christian pastor. The pastoral role in the Church of God is modelled after the pastorate as it has been understood within orthodox Christianity. Pastoral ministry in the Church of God falls into two categories: (1) matters of polity; and (2) matters of spiritual life and faith—both of which relate to the unity of the church and the spiritual well-being of the parishioners of the church (Gause 1973:20).

The aspect of polity involves oversight and administration in the local church. It is the second category that is significant to this research—matters of spiritual life and faith. The pastoral position within the Church of God is one of trust where the pastor is called upon to be a teacher, to guide and feed parishioners in spiritual issues, to be watchful regarding apostasy, and to protect from doctrinal error (Gause 1973:23). The Church of God recognises the local church as the foundation of all ministry activity (Minutes 2010:41);

with the role of the pastor as a spiritual shepherd whose primary responsibilities are prayer and ministry of the word of God.

2.4.2 Gaps in current scholarship

First, the literature appraised in the review focuses primarily on one of the following components: (1) the origins of the word of faith movement; (2) key proponents of the movement; (3) specific aspects of word of faith theology, both historical and in praxis; and (4) rebuttal of opposing views. Much attention is given to historical aspects of the movement and the theologies of its practitioners. The analyses set forth various positions regarding the word of faith movement, ranging from enthusiastically embracing its theology, to defending it while simultaneously calling for balance, to looking upon the movement with caution, to descriptives of unmitigated heresy. Although many of the analyses were written from within the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, only a fractional amount was written from within the context of the Church of God. This reveals a gap in current scholarship within the context of this research.

Second, little, if any, significant research was found regarding pastoral implications in general. Although some of the research was conducted by persons serving in the pastorate (cf. MacArthur 1992; Vreeland 2001), no significant research was found that focused specifically on the pastoral implications of word of faith theology. Since the parish is the primary context for preaching, teaching and fleshing out the Christian life and since the pastoral role is often that of interpretive guide to parishioners (Smith 2010), a focus on the pastoral role in general is of particular importance. The literature review reveals a gap in the current scholarship relative to the pastoral role in general and its relationship to word of faith theology.

Third, no substantial inquiry regarding pastoral ministry within the specific context of the Church of God was found. Only a cursory treatment, the primer written by Bowers (2004b), addressed the specific context of this research. While the primer draws attention to several implications for Church of God pastors specifically, it offers only a limited delineation of those implications. Here too is a gap in the current scholarship that needs to be addressed.

Fourth, a number of excellent and well-documented analyses (cf. McConnell 1995; Bowman 2001; et al) offer biblical and theological assessments of the word of faith movement. However, very little research was found that critiqued specific tenets of word of faith theology relative to effectively addressing the pastoral implications of those tenets. These gaps in the current scholarship establish a niche for further research.

2.4.3 Need for further research

Although various biblical and theological analyses of the word of faith movement have been conducted, the body of literature offering specific biblical and theological analyses of particular tenets of word of faith theology, especially in regard to their pastoral implications, is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. As a relatively modern entity, research in specific areas of the word of faith movement is limited. Clearly, the need exists to further examine the movement per the context of this research.

The main research problem proposed in Chapter 1 is articulated as follows: What are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God? Five sub-questions are derived from the main research problem. These questions follow a logical and systematic sequence in seeking a solution to the research problem. Since the current research in this area is far from exhaustive and the gaps noted in Section 2.4.2 reveal the

need for further inquiry, the topic of this research finds validation, and the need for further examination in this area of word of faith theology is confirmed.

2.5 Conclusion

As noted in Section 2.1, the purpose of this chapter was to access, assess and review the most recent, credible and relevant scholarship regarding the word of faith movement. A secondary purpose was to establish the validity of, as well as the need for, this particular research project. Specifically, the aim involved finding possible areas of deficiency regarding the pastoral implications of the word of faith movement. If areas of deficiency were indeed found, the value of this research to the current body of literature would be validated. Subsequently, the need for further examination within the context of this research—the Church of God—would be corroborated.

The literature review revealed numerous works (e.g., books, book reviews, booklets, theses, dissertations, papers, journal articles, printed and online sources) related to the topic. The publications were engaged chronologically in order to bring the research current with this particular research project. The analytical review began with a cursory examination of primary sources prior to 1980. This was done with two objectives in mind: (1) to offer a brief treatment of material that is utilised and expanded in later chapters; and (2) to briefly note the origins and evolution of certain aspects of the word of faith movement. The review then included eleven of the accessed works for assessment. Only eleven were chosen in order to avoid the unnecessary repetition of comparable material. Of the eleven works, eight critically assessed the word of faith movement, while three offered a favourable assessment. The assessed works focused primarily on the historical origins and development of the word of faith movement, some of its key proponents, as well as a treatment of specific teachings within the movement.

A synthesis was offered in Section 2.3 that highlighted five primary observations derived from the works examined in Section 2.2. First, two main schools of thought regarding the movement were immediately noticeable: (1) those who trace the movement's origins to Pentecostalism at large; and (2) those who view the origins as cultic. Second, it was interesting to note the number of critical analyses from within the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions. The importance of this observation highlights what appears to be a growing trend among Pentecostals and Charismatics to critique aberrant segments of the movement. Third, an analogy was drawn between the critical analyses as juxtaposed to the more favourable treatments. Fourth, attention was given to the areas emphasised by the various works assessed. Fifth, and finally, general observations were noted regarding the embryonic status of word of faith research and its on-going development.

The relevance of the topic of research was discussed in Section 2.4. A brief definition of pastoral ministry in the Church of God was given, along with the importance of the pastoral role in regard to disseminating biblical truth. Gaps in current scholarship were noted in four primary areas: (1) very little scholarly research has been conducted within the Church of God regarding the word of faith movement; (2) limited research was found regarding pastoral implications in general; (3) no significant scholarship was found regarding pastoral implications within the Church of God; and (4) limited research was found that effectively addressed pastoral implications of word of faith theology.

The need for further research was then addressed, as the body of literature offering specific biblical and theological analyses of particular tenets of word of faith theology, especially in regard to pastoral implications, is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. Therefore, the topic of this research finds validation, and the need for further examination in this area of word of faith theology is substantiated.

The literature review offered in this chapter sets forth the direction and content of the upcoming chapters. First, it facilitates the development of Chapter 3 in revealing the dearth of material regarding the specific context of the research. Very little scholarship was found relating to the Church of God and the word of faith movement. Chapter 3 involves a contextual analysis that focuses on the origins of the Church of God and its place within the broader Christian community. Second, the research addresses the issue of biblical theology within the Church of God. Third, pastoral ministry within a Church of God context is discussed. Fourth, from a Church of God perspective, an appraisal is given of four specific biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity), tenets that are examined from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4.

Second, the literature review lays a scholarly foundation for the content of Chapter 4, which involves an investigation of the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology. First, the origins of word of faith theology are examined, along with key persons instrumental in its development. Second, the researcher traces the historical development of word of faith theology, citing reasons for its current level of popularity (e.g., religious media). Third, a review of the major contemporary proponents within the movement is offered. Fourth, from a word of faith perspective, an appraisal is given of the four specific tenets covered in this research (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity).

Third, the literature review offers insight into the completion of Chapter 5 by facilitating an examination of the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique and evaluate specific tenets of word of faith theology. This aspect of the research involves two components. First, an examination of particular biblical passages establishes a general context and rationale for seeking the preferred scenario. Second, each of the four specific tenets of word of faith theology cited in Chapter 4 is evaluated per biblical and theological norms.

Fourth, the literature review assists in the process of offering practical recommendations in Chapter 6, moving the research from the present situation (Chapters 2 - 4) to the preferred scenario (Chapter 5) (Smith 2008:210). Interpreting the contemporary obligations of the research involve analysing and developing the following pastoral concerns cited in the background section: the scriptural validity of word of faith theology, the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching, discipleship, pastoral authority and fellowship issues (Bowers 2004b:10-12).

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS: AN EVALUATION OF THE FAITH TRADITION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

3.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, the LIM theological research model is utilised for this study. The first component of Module 1, interpreting the world as it is (the present situation) comprises the situation analysis conducted in Chapter 2. To move the research forward, Chapter 3 now focuses on the second component of Module 1. This chapter also incorporates one of the limitations of the research in that it resides within the parameters of the Church of God faith tradition. The main research problem of this project is articulated as follows: what are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the Church of God? The second sub-question designed to address the research problem is: what are the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God?

This chapter engages the second sub-question by offering a contextual analysis of the faith tradition of the Church of God. First, the origins of the Church of God and its place within the broader Christian community are assessed. Second, the issue of biblical theology within the Church of God is evaluated. Third, an analysis of the pastoral role within a Church of God context is offered. Fourth, from a Church of God perspective, an appraisal is given of four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity), tenets that are analysed from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, and in terms of their biblical and theological foundations in Chapter 5. This chapter is relevant to the overall research agenda in that it provides the contextual analysis required by the LIM theological research model.

3.2 A historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God

Although it is anticipated that this research will have application for the broader Evangelical community, the context of the research relates primarily to the faith tradition of the Church of God. In order to position the research within its intended context, a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God is offered. In this section the following topics are examined: (1) the historical origins of the Church of God; (2) the contemporary perspective of the Church of God; (3) the Church of God in the broader Christian community; and (4) the relevance of this section to the topic of research.

3.2.1 The historical origins of the Church of God

The religious climate of 19th century America sets the context for the historical origins of the Church of God. Prior to the Church of God experiencing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, its roots were set in the Holiness revivals of the 19th century (Minutes 1976:109). A century earlier, many who were weary of creeds, permissiveness, and the formal worship of the times, had embraced Methodism as a nearly irresistible alternative (Sims 1995:77). Almost a century after Methodism was introduced to America evangelistic fervour among its adherents began to diminish. Various Holiness groups committed to the theological emphases of Wesley began to emerge and form separate religious organizations (Kuiper 1987:470-471). According to Sims (1995:63), the core beliefs of the Church of God were influenced by the doctrines and practices of the 19th century Wesleyan and Holiness traditions. The roots of the Church of God are set in the holiness protest to the modernism and liberalism that inundated many of the established churches during the last half of the 19th century (Conn 1979:27). In this regard, the Church of God is the result of both historical and contextual influences.

The Church of God was birthed as the result of discontent over the perceived waning spiritual vitality which characterised the churches of the south-eastern United States, particularly the less populous mountain region of eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina (Crews 1990:5). From 1884-1886 Richard G. Spurling Sr., along with a small group of colleagues, promoted revival and renewal among the Baptist churches of the region (Conn 1996:9). After two years of fruitless labour, it became evident that a new course of action was needed. Spurling and his colleagues organised a new fellowship called the Christian Union on August 19, 1886. The primary objective of the Christian Union was a renewed emphasis on biblical doctrine and the pursuit of New Testament evangelism. From 1886-1896 the embryonic group remained intentional in its commitment to pursue biblical doctrine, promote evangelism and prepare for spiritual renewal (Conn 1996:29). The new fellowship changed its name from Christian Union to the Holiness Church on May 15, 1902. The name Christian Union described an ideal, while the name Holiness Church defined a doctrine, but neither offered a scriptural designation for a Bible-centred church (Conn 1996:87). At its second general assembly on January 11, 1907, the name Church of God (cf. I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1) was chosen as the official name of the organisation.

This same time period gave birth to a number of small denominations that believed in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as it had occurred on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 (Latourette 1953:1260). During a revival in 1896 approximately one hundred persons were baptised in the Holy Spirit, an event that became a major catalyst for the Church of God's accommodation of Pentecostal theology. Subsequently, early in its history the Pentecostal character of the Church of God became evident. Mead (2001:265) contends that Pentecostalism is a modern Christian movement which emerged from the Holiness movement. This is perhaps true if Pentecostalism is viewed exclusively as a modern Christian movement. However, the basic tenets of Pentecostalism have been practiced and propagated by some within the Christian community throughout church history. While a review of the

centuries that followed the founding of the church indicates periods of spiritual darkness, the Holy Spirit did not cease to baptise believers, empower them to speak in tongues and prophesy, provide miraculous healings, and enable them to illuminate their communities (Lombard and Daffe 2005:114).

Pentecostalism is neither isolated nor detached from classical forms of orthodox Christianity, but is directly related to the end-time fulfilment of what God began in the apostolic church (Sims 1995:23). The term Pentecostal is here defined as an association with the events that occurred in Acts 2, as well as the spiritual dynamics recorded throughout the book of Acts. Historical sources reinforce the position that the gifts of the Spirit never left the church (Thigpen 1992:22). Further, the apostolic dynamic of the early church is just as valid two thousand years after the Acts 2 experience as it was twenty years after the first outpouring of the Spirit (Bruner 1970:25). Known at first simply as Pentecostalism, the term classical Pentecostalism was adopted around 1960 to distinguish it from the neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement (Synan 2003:553). Theologically, the Church of God is distinctly a classical Pentecostal church, along with the Assemblies of God, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the Church of God in Christ.

The neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement had both a positive and negative impact on the Church of God. Crews (1990:159) observes that the movement helped to widen the social acceptance of the Pentecostal message of the Church of God, given that many adherents of the Charismatic movement were from more affluent and middle upper classes. This position asserts that because of the social standing of many Charismatics, the Church of God (and other classical Pentecostals) infiltrated the higher stratum of American society more expeditiously. Consistent themes within the Charismatic movement are understood as: (1) a focus on Jesus; (2) praise; (3) love of the Bible; (4) God speaks today; (5) evangelism; (6) an awareness of evil; (7) spiritual gifts; (8) eschatological expectation; and (9) spiritual power (Hocken 2003:515-515). Indeed, while these tenets enjoy an element of

scriptural validation, as well as similarities to a classical Pentecostal worldview, they are often interpreted in quite different terms. This issue in particular is discussed later in the dissertation, as the pastoral implications of word of faith theology are considered.

3.2.2 The contemporary perspective of the Church of God

From the sparse origins cited in Section 3.2.1, the Church of God has grown to become the oldest continuing Pentecostal denomination in the United States, with international executive offices located in Cleveland, Tennessee, USA. As an international church, the Church of God has a current global membership of over 6.8 million, with ministry venues in 181 nations of the world, as well as operating numerous Bible colleges and seminaries.

The Church of God has maintained its historical emphasis on holiness in the life of the believer. The following denominational directive reaffirms its commitment to biblical holiness and highlights its contemporary perspective on this issue:

- (1) Whereas holiness defines our character, and that this character must be passed on in order to influence the next generation; and
- (2) Whereas the scriptures compel us to live holy lives conformed to the image and character of a holy God; and
- (3) Whereas the Church of God is firmly rooted in both the Pentecostal and Holiness movements; and
- (4) Whereas the Church of God is historically, doctrinally, and practically a Holiness church;
- (5) Be it therefore resolved that we accept holiness as the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and humbly recognise the scriptural mandate to be a holy people; and

- (6) Be it further resolved that we thankfully praise the Lord for His holiness and His call for us to be holy; and
- (7) Be it further resolved that we joyfully and decisively affirm our holiness character as a people of God; and
- (8) Be it further resolved that we reaffirm our commitment to holiness; and
- (9) Be it further resolved that we continually remind our ministers and laity of the importance of love in the preaching, teaching, and practise of holiness, so that our God-given character of holiness flows out of a spirit of compassion rather than a spirit of legalism; and
- (10) Be it finally resolved that we call upon all Church of God educational programs to intentionally develop and maintain a curriculum that emphasizes the biblical call to holiness, our history as a church rooted in the Holiness movement, and the on-going necessity to live a life pleasing to God in an increasingly sinful and secular world (Holiness 2002, adapted).

From a theological perspective, the Church of God is founded upon the principles of Christ as revealed in the Word of God. It has its foundation of faith and practice in the Scripture. Committed to maintain its historical and theological origins, the Church of God is positioned within a contemporary context as being:

- (1) Christian

The Church of God is a determinedly Christian church. It is built upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The doctrines and practises of the church are based upon His teachings.

- (2) Protestant

While not a follower of any specific leader of the Protestant Reformation, the Church of God is founded upon the principles

of Protestantism, standing firmly for justification by faith, the priesthood of believers and the authority of the Bible.

(3) Foundational

The Church of God subscribes to the following five foundational Christian doctrines: (1) the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible; (2) the virgin birth and complete deity of Christ; (3) the atoning sacrifice of Christ's death for the sins of the world; (4) the literal resurrection of the body; and (5) Christ's second coming in bodily form to earth.

(4) Evangelical

Evangelical is the term used to describe those who affirm the primary doctrines revealed in the Scriptures. The Church of God is aligned with the basic statement of faith of the National Association of Evangelicals, the largest association of its kind in the USA.

(5) Pentecostal

In 1896, many members of the Church of God experienced a spiritual outpouring they identified as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because it was so similar to the experience of the early Christians on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), it came to be called a Pentecostal experience, an enrichment of the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit that empowered believers to be effective witnesses of Christ.

(6) Charismatic

The gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*) appeared early in the life and ministry of the Church of God. The gifts can be divided into three categories: the gifts of revelation, the gifts of power and the gifts of utterance or inspiration. The Holy Spirit bestows these gifts, and those who accept the validity of these gifts are called Charismatic. This does not necessarily denote a connection with all aspects of the Charismatic movement at large.

(7) Evangelistic

From its inception the Church of God has been a revival movement. Evangelism has been in the forefront of all its activities. The church has maintained an aggressive effort to take the message of Christ throughout the world.

(8) Organized

Because the magnitude of the Great Commission requires a united effort, the Church of God is centrally organised. This united endeavour is efficiently served by guidance, support, resources and leadership from a common centre. Centralised church government is administration from the international, state or territorial and local levels that facilitates the fulfilment of the mission of the church. Benefits of centralised government include the following: uniformity of doctrine and practise; principles that bind together local churches in the same manner; membership commitments in all churches; expansion and extension of fellowship; accountability; cooperative decision-making; and united efforts in evangelism and world outreach (Church of God is, adapted).

The contemporary perspective of the Church of God is that of engaging the present, anticipating the future, while maintaining the historical and theological emphases of its origin.

3.2.3 The Church of God in the broader Christian community

The Church of God also recognises its place within the broader Christian community, committing itself to the principle of interdependence, while acknowledging its interconnectedness and dependence on all members of the body of Christ. This commitment is demonstrated by:

- (1) Reaching out to others in the body of Christ for collaboration, resource sharing, networking and learning opportunities;
- (2) Encouraging local churches to build relationships with like-minded and like-hearted churches in their communities to work together to reach the lost;
- (3) Involving clergy in the processes of mentoring, coaching and consulting on the local, state, regional, national and international levels to increase the level of trust and support among ministers;
- (4) Engaging in dialogue and partnership with local, national and international organisations who seek to fulfil the Great Commission of Christ (Mission and vision, adapted).

Self-identity is an important aspect of any faith tradition. The Church of God and its position within the broader parameters of the Christian faith may be understood from four specific aspects of self-identification: (1) position regarding isolationism; (2) juxtaposition to Evangelicalism; (3) balance regarding the supernatural; and (4) reformation perspective (Vest 1994:24-25).

First, in its early days the Church of God assumed a posture of isolationism in regard to the broader Christian community. This was not by choice, but primarily the result of rejection by those churches the early leaders sought to reform. The church often encouraged its adherents to be separate by withdrawing not only from other churches, but from society at large (Crews 1990:151). This tendency was also observed within Holiness groups at large (Archer 2009:17-18). An isolationist posture allowed a modicum of protection from the persecution often experienced from ecclesiastical siblings. However, inherent within an isolationist self-identity is the possibility of cultivating cultish tendencies. Ministers and laity were soon encouraged to affiliate with and participate in civic organisations, mainstream social movements, politics, etc., lest the church lose its potential to impact the culture (Hughes 1966:9). The Church of God ultimately moved beyond isolationism and assumed her

present status of engaging the world as one segment of the broader Christian community.

Second, the Church of God is perceived by some as merely a subgroup of Evangelicalism. Since the two groups are more similar than they are different, some have posited that Pentecostalism adds nothing to Evangelicalism important enough to warrant critical dialogue (Vest 1994:24; Viola and Barna 2008:72). Indeed, there are many similarities between the two; yet the Church of God resides within the broader Christian community as a reformation movement seeking to bring unity among its ecclesiastical peers around the realities of the Holy Spirit (Vest 1994:29). The Church of God finds spiritual and theological solidarity with fellow Evangelicals, which serves to enhance its self-identity as a vital part of conservative Christianity, and in so doing, is able to see its roots traced throughout the history of the church (Sims 1995:131).

Third, because of its propensity toward the miraculous, some have perceived the Church of God in terms of the excesses of those on the fringe of Pentecostalism at large. Indeed, by rejecting a cessationist interpretation of Scripture, the Church of God understood the events recorded in Acts as being applicable for every generation. However, the proclivity among some to embrace and promote fanatical excess in this area caused the church to distance itself from those elements and to promote a more balanced position by denouncing those who sought to commercialise or sensationalise the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Church of God executive council minutes 1953:23-24). The self-identity of the Church of God is here understood as believing in the miraculous, while not manipulating or exploiting it (Vest 1996:30).

Fourth, the Church of God understands its place within the broader Christian community as that of a people of reformation. This involves a deepening relationship with God through the power of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by a mandate of sharing this with others in the body of Christ (Vest 1996:25). From inception, the Church of God understood the spirit of the Protestant

Reformation to be recurrent, with each successive generation searching the Scripture, aided by the ever present reality of the Holy Spirit (Vest 1996:30). As a people of reformation, the place of the Church of God within the broader Christian community may well be defined by what Mackay (1969:88-89), a former president of Princeton Theological Seminary, calls a “matured Pentecostalism”. As a classical Pentecostal church, the Church of God identifies with a matured Pentecostalism via the following: (1) maintaining a Bible-centred theology; (2) acknowledging its role in the universal body of Christ; (3) providing opportunities for critical dialogue; (4) accepting Pentecostalism as an authentic expression of the Christian faith through its mission, hermeneutics and praxis; (5) committing to the kind of reflection and self-evaluation that engenders positive change; (6) consistently relying upon the sovereignty of God; and (7) intentionally discerning the will of God in the present age (Vest 1996:35-36, adapted).

3.2.4 Relevance to this research

The purpose of Section 3.2 has been to offer a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God. The following topics were examined: (1) the historical origins of the Church of God; (2) the contemporary perspective of the Church of God; and (3) the place of the Church of God in the broader Christian community.

This section is relevant to this research, first, in that it provides a context for the study as whole. Assessing the pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God necessitates an understanding of the denomination, its historical origins and contemporary theological perspective. This motif is further examined in Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. This section also offers parameters for the purpose of assessing specific tenets of word of faith theology as they relate to pastoral implications within the Church of God.

Second, Section 3.2 provides one component, along with Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, that assists in establishing parameters by which to assess the dissimilarities between the Church of God and the word of faith movement. Indeed, as there are similarities between the theology and praxis of the Church of God and its sibling Christian faith traditions (e.g., Baptist, Methodist, Reformed), similarities exist between the Church of God and the word of faith movement. However, there are also numerous dissimilarities. It is here that this research finds one aspect of its impetus. This study does not examine all dissimilarities, but focuses primarily on the four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity) evaluated in Chapters 3-5. A contemporary Church of God understanding of these tenets, juxtaposed to a basic word of faith interpretation, creates pastoral implications that need to be addressed. The implications will crystallise throughout the research.

Third, this section is relevant to the research, in that understanding the place of the Church of God within the broader Christian community facilitates doctrinal and theological uniqueness. It also provides a foundation for pastoral identity and self-awareness.

3.3 An evaluation of specific tenets of biblical theology within the Church of God

The origin of the Church of God is well over a century old. As noted in Section 3.2, the Church of God has endeavoured to maintain the basic principles upon which it was founded, namely, the Wesleyan Holiness paradigm and a commitment to classical Pentecostal theology. As is the case in the evolution of many Christian movements (e.g., Methodist, Baptist), biblical theology within a given tradition is often modified and perfected in terms of setting forth a scholarly justification of its particular tenets. During the past one hundred and twenty-five years, denominational leaders and adherents have sought to

codify the Church of God's position on various tenets of both theology and praxis. The following tenets are evaluated in order to further define the Church of God's position on specific issues of biblical theology that relate to the topic of this research: (1) the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture; (2) the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation; and (3) hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective. The relevance of Section 3.3 to this research will then be discussed.

3.3.1 The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture

Prior to 1910 the Church of God had no official systematic statement of its beliefs, theology or praxis. This does not mean that the Church of God did not have specific beliefs, theology or praxis; rather, as did other Pentecostals, it had its own concerns alongside the debates that were mostly going on elsewhere within the Evangelical community (Thomas 1996:14). From its inception the Church of God placed great emphasis on the importance of Scripture. At its 1910 General Assembly the denomination set forth a list of beliefs, along with accompanying biblical references, for the purpose of facilitating ministerial candidates in the process of credentialing (Minutes 1910:37-38). Although it was not intended as a formal codification of Church of God teachings, this document became the instrument that helped formalise and codify the denomination's theology and praxis (Conn 1996:137). The document was comprised of twenty-five doctrinal teachings prefaced with an opening statement that read, "The Church of God stands for the whole Bible rightly divided, with the New Testament as the only rule for government and discipline" (Conn 1996:138). Of critical importance is the fact that the New Testament was understood as the only rule for government and discipline.

During its 42nd General Assembly the Church of God set forth an official creedal statement in what is known as the Church of God Declaration of Faith. This document lists fourteen doctrinal tenets, the first of which reads, "we

believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible" (Minutes 1948:31). Regarding specific aspects of theology and praxis, the General Assembly has at times searched the Scriptures in order to interpret its meaning, but always with the intention of basing the denomination's teachings strictly upon the Bible (Gause 1973:224).

The Bible is the voice of God speaking to humankind across the centuries. For this reason, the Church of God has viewed the Bible as the primary witness of God (Arrington 1992:51). Several reasons are given as to the source of the Church of God's early high view of Scripture. First, many of its initial adherents came from fundamentalist backgrounds and simply brought their high view of Scripture with them. Fundamentalism as a movement placed extreme importance on the primacy of Scripture. Second, by experiencing the direct ministry of the Holy Spirit through Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts and other manifestations, it was easy to believe that the same Spirit could inspire human beings to produce the Bible (Thomas 1996:14).

In order to understand the Church of God's position regarding this tenet of biblical theology, inspiration and inerrancy are now defined. The denomination has from its beginning held the Bible to be God's Word, that is, the Bible is a revelation of God (Slay 1996:19). Revelation is what God has said and done in making truth known; it is inspiration that guarantees and preserves such revealed truth (Arrington 1992:52). From a classical Pentecostal perspective, inspiration is understood as the inscriptionation (writing down) of God's revelation (Higgins, Dusing and Tallman 1994:39). Since the Church of God believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, this too warrants definition. In verbal inspiration the words of Scripture are derived from an infallible, supernatural superintendence of the human faculties of the writers whereby the Holy Spirit guaranteed the accuracy and completeness of all that was written (Higgins, et al 1994:42). Internal evidence reveals that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (NASB) (II Peter 1:21; cf. II Timothy 3:16).

Due to the direct influence of the Holy Spirit the writers' choice of words expressed the truth God intended to convey (Arrington 1992:59).

As the inspired Word of God the Church of God holds that the Bible is a reliable revelation of God. This has to do with such terms as inerrancy or infallibility. To say the Bible is inerrant or infallible implies that it is completely reliable. More specifically, Scripture is inerrant or infallible in the original autographs or as originally given to the writers (Arrington 1992:58). This moves beyond a particular version or translation of the Bible and posits several ideas: (1) the Bible can be inerrant and still speak in the ordinary languages of everyday speech; (2) the Bible can be inerrant and still include loose or free quotations; and (3) the Bible can be inerrant and have unusual and uncommon grammatical constructions (Grudem 1994:91-92). Inerrancy regarding the Bible has historically been the view of orthodox Christianity, from the early church fathers, to the Protestant reformers, to modern Evangelicals and classical Pentecostals (Higgins, et al 1994:43-44).

The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture as espoused by the Church of God, as well as its position of holding the New Testament as the only rule for government and discipline, are of particular importance. These positions have facilitated the Church of God in avoiding many of the pitfalls of Judaism and other beliefs which have plagued some groups that based their theology and praxis upon the Old Testament (Hughes 1989:20). As it relates to this research, the proclivity of the word of faith movement to attach specific Old Testament passages (cf. the Abrahamic covenant, material prosperity, etc.) to New Testament promises is vital in understanding specific pastoral implications for the Church of God. Further discussion is given to this aspect of the denomination's perspective when examining the four biblical tenets in Section 3.5 of this chapter, as well as, in Chapters 4-5.

3.3.2 The basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation

While not a follower of any specific leader of the Protestant Reformation, the Church of God was founded upon the principles of Protestantism, standing firmly for justification by faith, the priesthood of believers and the authority of the Bible. The biblical theology of the Church of God finds its origin and development in the context of the Protestant Reformation. The church of the Reformation period found itself in the throes of a great struggle to survive, however, in doing so it discovered a neglected dimension of spiritual living (Hargrave 1966:100; Carroll 1966:92). In a similar manner, the founders of the Church of God drew an analogy between the pre-Reformation church climate and the spiritual climate of the late 1800's (Conn 1996:11). Within this context the birthing of the Church of God was motivated, primarily, by a desire to restore primitive Christianity (Clark 1949:100).

The self-identity of the Church of God is understood as an extension of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformers set forth several tenets that are fundamental to understanding biblical theology from a Church of God perspective: (1) the authority of Scripture; (2) the priesthood of all believers; (3) justification by faith alone; and (4) a reconstructed doctrine of the church. These tenets are briefly appraised in order to further establish dissimilarities between the Church of God and specific tenets of the word of faith movement.

First, prior to the Reformation, Scripture had been subordinated to tradition. As a result, the Protestant Reformers lifted up the concept of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), which implied: (1) the authority of Scripture is set above the church or any other alleged authority; (2) the so-called Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphy are not included in the Old Testament canon; and (3) the Scripture carries its own self-authentication and clarity (Sims 1995:157-160). This overarching authority of Scripture is also affirmed by the Church of God (Arrington 1992:31). Like its myriad siblings within Protestant Christianity, the Church of God recognises the authority for humanity to be the Scripture,

rather than a person, human reason, or even the church (Higgins, et al 1994:42). It is not merely one source of authority; it is the only source of authority. It is the final authority for the theology, doctrine, faith and praxis of the Church of God (Arrington 1992:30; Hughes 1989:11). The authority of Scripture is not dependent upon any person's acknowledgment of that authority; it is the authority of God himself (Higgins, et al 1994:43). This is vitally important in understanding the basic tenets (Abrahamic covenant, atonement, faith and prosperity) evaluated in this chapter in Section 3.5, and also in Chapters 4-5. Subjective, experiential, extra-biblical or cultural interpretations of the Bible are faulty and inadequate. The authority of Scripture is crucial in developing and maintaining orthodoxy in doctrine and praxis.

Second, Protestantism declares that every believer has free and open access to God through Jesus Christ, namely, the priesthood of all believers (Hughes 1989:10). Rising in opposition to the pre-Reformation idea of priests serving in a mediatorial role between believers and God, the Reformers emphasised the biblical privilege of every Christian to enjoy direct access to God through Jesus. Such a position brought several implications. First, it negated the medieval distinction between the sacred and secular (Sims 1995:166). While individual callings were indeed understood, no specific calling or vocation was without its own merits. The intent of the Reformers was not to demean or diminish the office of the minister; it was to elevate to their proper place the callings of ordinary people (Brown 1965:102-103). Second, it placed greater responsibility upon all Christians to serve one another (Hughes 1989:10). In so doing, the church becomes a place, literally a fellowship, of serving servants of Christ. God has called all believers in Christ out of sin and from the world to have communion with him and live as a nurturing community, sharing in the mission of Jesus (Arrington 1994:171). As members of the body, each believer is responsible to others in matters of faith and praxis.

Third, the pre-Reformation idea of justification was that one could be set right with God via deeds that were pleasing to him, e.g., becoming a monk, embarking on a pilgrimage, fasting, specific prayers or self-mortification (Sims 1995:168). The Reformers concluded that salvation is not by works but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; therefore, the cardinal principle of the Reformation that stands above all others is the doctrine of justification by faith alone (Hughes 1989:9-10). Justification involves humankind's relation to God. The justified person has been accepted by God, acquitted of all sinful guilt, and is therefore regenerated (Slay 1996:59). No biblical doctrine emphasises more the work of God than justification (Arrington 1993:211). The practical implications of justification by faith alone are significant: (1) the doctrine offers genuine hope to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God; and (2) the doctrine gives confidence that believers will never be required to pay the penalty for sins that have already been forgiven by Christ (Grudem 1994:737). The Church of God lifts up a biblical theology solidly based upon this tenet of the Reformation.

Fourth, the late medieval Roman Church was hierarchical in structure, a pyramid of power that was believed to mirror heavenly realities (Sims 1995:171). Such a system had so constricted its members that the Roman Church was viewed as the sole dispenser of God's grace and the place where Christ's presence was celebrated (Sims 1995:171). The Roman Church understood the presence of Christ to be via the institutional church. Revolting against such dogma and restrictions, the Reformers introduced a reconstructed doctrine of the church in which the presence of Christ was realised through the Word. Luther argued (1896:42) that "wherever you see this Word preached, believed, confessed, and acted on, there do not doubt that there must be a true holy catholic church". Seeking to restore the primacy of Christ over the church, the Reformers emphasised the gospel of Christ as being central to the life of the church. This emphasis placed great significance upon the preaching of Scripture, full participation in the sacraments and personal responsibility via the priesthood of all believers. Like its Protestant

siblings, the Church of God values its doctrinal distinctives. However, there is also the realisation that these distinctives draw their real significance from the fact that they are grounded in the affirmations of Scripture that were lifted up by the Protestant Reformers (Sims 1995:180).

The basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation provide validation and impetus to the biblical theology of the Church of God. In all matters of theology, doctrine, belief and praxis, Scripture reigns supreme as the paradigm for truth.

3.3.3 Hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective

Although the Church of God has no official expanded definition regarding specific elements of biblical hermeneutics, specific creedal statements, as well as scholarship within the denomination, provide guidelines for approaching hermeneutics. Two creedal statements comprise the denomination's perspective regarding the interpretation of Scripture. First, the Church of God Declaration of Faith states, "we believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible" (Minutes 1948:31). Belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible sets up the importance of Scripture as the primary source of doctrine, faith, belief and praxis. This high view of Scripture is imperative in offering a solid foundation for biblical hermeneutics. The biblical text is fundamental to any and all matters of truth.

Second, the Church of God stands for the whole Bible rightly divided, with the New Testament as the only rule for government and discipline (Minutes 1930:23). Positing the New Testament as the basis for living under the New Covenant sets forth a hermeneutical approach that is reflected in the doctrine and praxis of the denomination. Taken from the KJV rendering of II Timothy 2:15 the phrase, "rightly divided," suggests correctly interpreting the biblical text. Later translations render the phrase "accurately handling" (NASB), "correctly explaining" (NLT), or "correctly analysing" (AMP). This

denominational directive, while free from expanded and technical definitions, sets forth from its assimilation at the 1930 general assembly of the Church of God, the intent of the church to pursue an adequate hermeneutic, that is, to correctly interpret the biblical text.

The hermeneutical approach of the Church of God aligns with that of its classical Pentecostal siblings. Pentecostals have understood that the Scriptures can be interpreted properly only through the agency of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26; 16:13) (Arrington 1988:376). This does not imply an individualistic subjectivism in which Scripture is interpreted solely via each individual. Rather, since the Holy Spirit was specifically involved in the process of inspiration (cf. II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16), his agency is also necessary for correctly interpreting the Scripture. Although Pentecostals are frequently praised for recapturing for the church its joyful radiance, missionary enthusiasm and life in the Spirit, they are often noted for less than wonderful hermeneutics (Fee 1994:83). Historically, many Pentecostals have approached hermeneutics from the following perspectives: (1) their attitude toward Scripture has at times included a general disregard for scientific exegesis and carefully thought out hermeneutics; and (2) in general, experience has often preceded sound hermeneutics (Fee 1994:86-87). It has been suggested that Pentecostals conduct no penetrating discussions on how biblical principles translate into behaviour (Hollenweger 1997:311).

The above assessment has perhaps been true for many within the Church of God. In the denomination's gestation period there was little emphasis on academic scholarship relating to biblical interpretation. Of course, the above assessment does not imply that all Pentecostals, or all within the Church of God, utilised less than wonderful hermeneutics, nevertheless, this is indeed true of many, especially at the popular level. However, as the Church of God evolved, the proliferation of Pentecostal scholarship within the denomination's colleges and seminaries brought a greater emphasis on the importance of biblical hermeneutics. This is also true for those serving in parish ministry

within the Church of God. In recent decades, due to the increase of academic opportunities, many within the pastorate have had access to graduate and post-graduate education. This, too, has increased the importance of an adequate hermeneutical approach from a Church of God perspective. As will be noted in later chapters, a lack of emphasis on solid hermeneutics leads to extra-biblical and even non-biblical interpretations of Scripture. Such interpretations inevitably produce implications for pastoral ministry within the Church of God. For this reason, it is of particular importance to set forth a Church of God perspective regarding a sound hermeneutical approach.

Several Church of God academicians have researched and written regarding hermeneutics from a Pentecostal perspective. Following is a sampling of scholarly work in the area of hermeneutics.

French L. Arrington (1988:378) (Th.M., Columbia Theological Seminary; Ph.D., St. Louis University), professor emeritus of New Testament Greek and exegesis at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary (the premier seminary of the Church of God), posits that biblical interpretation is shaped by the theological presuppositions the interpreter brings to the process. For classical Pentecostals three periods are noted. First, there is a period of definition in which the first Pentecostals, who had emerged primarily from the Keswick and Wesleyan movements, sought to enunciate their own theological distinctives. Second, there is a period of definition, in which the early Pentecostals assumed theological presuppositions in their own right, namely, (1) that Spirit baptism is a work of grace distinct from and subsequent to the initial experience of salvation; and (2) that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Spirit. Third, is a period of reflection, in which much effort has been expended to re-evaluate the interpretive foundation of Pentecostal theology (Arrington 1988:378-379). Arrington's research is important for Church of God pastors who seek to maintain a biblical perspective in matters of theology and praxis.

John Christopher Thomas (2000:119) (Th.M., Princeton Theological Seminary; Ph.D. University of Sheffield), professor of biblical studies at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, emphasises a hermeneutical approach with three crucial elements for interpreting Scripture. First, the role of the believing community is emphasised. The community is seen as a forum for serious discussions about God and Scripture, while also providing balance, accountability and support. Second, the role of the Holy Spirit is accentuated. Explicit dependence upon the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process is seen as a safeguard against subjectivism, for the role of the community also enters the process. Third, the role of Scripture is seen as foundational. A Pentecostal hermeneutic is unwilling to embrace theological and ethical positions that are unable to find support in the biblical text (Thomas 2000:119-120).

Kenneth J. Archer (2009:212) (Ph.D., University of St. Andrews), associate professor of theology at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, offers a contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutical strategy that remains faithful to the ethos of the Pentecostal community, and yet sensitive to current academic methodological perspectives of biblical interpretation. This strategy highlights, first, the contribution of the biblical text, because at its core, biblical hermeneutics is concerned with interpreting the Bible (Archer 2009:215). Second, the strategy focuses on the contribution of the Pentecostal community. The community is seen as the place to hear the Word of God. In this way the interpreter of Scripture is an extension and participant of the community, not an isolated individual involved in mere subjective interpretation (Archer 2009:223). The strategy, third, emphasises the contribution of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Spirit is to lead and guide the community in understanding the present meaningfulness of Scripture (Archer 2009:247).

The above sampling of hermeneutical perspectives highlights for the parish minister in the Church of God three crucial aspects regarding biblical interpretation: (1) the paramount nature of Scripture; (2) the necessity of the

Holy Spirit; and (3) the importance of the believing community. Critical to the process is not only to know what God said to people long ago in the biblical text, but what the Spirit is saying to the churches in contemporary times (Pinnock 2009:158).

3.3.4 Relevance to this research

Section 3.3 has offered an evaluation of specific tenets of biblical theology from the perspective of the Church of God. The researcher has not attempted to engage an exhaustive analysis of biblical theology, nor has there been an exhaustive analysis of the three individual tenets examined. The purpose has been to offer a Church of God perspective on specific tenets of biblical theology that are relevant to this research. In so doing, the researcher will be able to adequately analyse, compare, and contrast the four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity) evaluated throughout this dissertation.

The Church of God's stance on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture discussed in Section 3.3.1 is relevant to this research for several reasons. First, a high view of Scripture is necessary if orthodoxy is the objective. Second, when analysing, comparing and contrasting two or more belief systems, it is necessary to have a substantive and authoritative foundation upon which to posit one's perspective. Third, the Church of God's position regarding inspiration allows for a confident realisation in the reliability of God's revelation to humankind. Fourth, when faith, doctrine, belief and praxis originate in Scripture, it diminishes the probability of a subjective approach to the text.

The brief assessment in Section 3.3.2 of the Church of God's relationship to the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation (i.e., the authority of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers, justification by faith alone, and a reconstructed

doctrine of the church) is also relevant to this research. Recognition and assimilation of these tenets place the Church of God in close proximity to the ideas of the Reformers, and in so doing affirms the orthodox position of the denomination. This is of particular importance as the four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity) are evaluated from both Church of God and word of faith positions.

The cursory treatment in Section 3.3.3 of hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective is of crucial importance to this research. As the thesis develops, the researcher will demonstrate that the tridactic hermeneutical approach offered by Church of God scholars (cf. the role of Scripture, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the role of the believing community), coupled with the denomination's high view of inspiration and inerrancy of the biblical text, will set forth acceptable parameters by which to assess the four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity) evaluated in Chapters 3-6. This hermeneutical approach will also serve as a paradigm by which to discern various tenets of word of faith theology.

In Section 3.2 a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God was offered, including the denomination's historical origins and contemporary status in the broader Christian community. In Section 3.3 an evaluation of several specific tenets of biblical theology from a Church of God perspective was given. An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God is now offered in Section 3.4.

3.4 An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God

There exists no dearth of scholarly, as well as popular, material examining the role of the Christian pastor. Much has been written regarding the biblical basis for the office (both pro and con), the historical development of the office, as well as the contemporary challenges and responsibilities of the pastoral role

(cf. Oden 1983; Armstrong 2001; Purves 2001; MacArthur 2005; et al). The contemporary pastoral role is described as a renaissance calling, a role in which one employs a number of skills and interests to serve God and others (Cedar 1991:17). Specific to the pastoral role is providing for the spiritual needs of parishioners, primary of which is instruction in living the Christian life (Nelson 1981:91-92).

The objective of this analysis is not to offer an exhaustive treatment of the subject, nor to examine the pastoral role at large. The aim of this concise analysis is to establish the parameters in which the research is conducted and for whom the results of the research are intended. While the research does have application for the broader Christian community, its primary focus pertains to those persons serving in the pastorate within the Church of God. Within the broader Christian community and its various interpretations of the pastoral role, the Church of God emphasises the following components of pastoral ministry: (1) the consistent practice of spiritual disciplines; (2) maintenance of physical, emotional, familial and financial health; (3) ministry and leadership covenant with other pastors and believers; (4) effective preaching and teaching; (5) compassionate care, discipleship and spiritual direction for parishioners; (6) effective leadership and administration of the local church ministry; and (7) multiplication of ministry by mentoring and coaching in a shared journey of mutual development (Pastoral excellence, adapted).

Several characteristics inform the process of defining the pastoral role within the Church of God (Pastoral excellence, adapted). First, the pastoral role is informed by a “know-be-do” Pentecostal spirituality. Church of God pastors anticipate that what they know will be integrated into who they are and expressed in what they do. Second, the pastoral role is informed by current pastoral practise and wisdom. Pentecostals have historically reflected the dual influences of primitivism and pragmatism (Wacker 2001:10-14). Said differently, Pentecostals have been intentional in seeking to recover a New

Testament paradigm for the practise of faith and ministry. Because of this, there is a need to reflect on the types of pastoral practises that need to be developed and maintained (cf. Anderson 2001; Wolf and Bass 2002). Third, the pastoral role is informed by the contemporary missional needs of the Pentecostal movement. To avoid assimilation of contemporary fads and potentially unfaithful practises, Church of God pastors are encouraged to engage in a supportive context, in order to theologise about the challenges and practises of pastoral ministry (Pastoral excellence).

An extensive survey was conducted in 2002 by the Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary (formerly known as the Church of God Theological Seminary). The survey instrument, the U. S. Congregational Life Survey (Woolever and Bruce 2002:7-8), was modified to incorporate data regarding Church of God pastors (Bell 2004:13-14). Lilly Endowment Inc. (Indianapolis, Indiana, USA) provided the funding for the project. The project, which comprised the most comprehensive research on pastoral ministry ever conducted in the Church of God, provided a reality-based perspective on pastoral ministry in the denomination, along with an assessment of its God-given mission and vision (Bell 2004:13-14). The scope of this dissertation does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of survey results, however, at least two areas are relative to this research.

First, the survey revealed the following levels of theological training among Church of God pastors: (1) 16% had no formal theological training; (2) 9% had some theological training; (3) 41% had a denominational certificate of theological training; (4) 18% had a Bible college degree; (5) 11% had graduate level theological degrees; (6) 3% had earned a doctor of ministry degree; and (6) 2% had earned either a doctor of philosophy or doctor of theology degree (Bell 2004:21). The data suggest the need for further theological education at all academic levels, in order for Church of God pastors to remain relevant and to be adequately equipped theologically. This does not imply that theological training is the sole criterion for effective

pastoral ministry. However, adequate theological training will equip the Church of God pastor with the research skills, tools and resources needed for matters of doctrine, faith, theology and praxis. This is crucial in terms of the ability to correctly interpret Scripture in order to adequately assess word of faith theology.

Second, the survey revealed several factors regarding the amount of time utilised by Church of God pastors for specific pastoral activities such as preaching and teaching. Given the long history within the Church of God regarding biblical preaching, the data reveal that less time is given to this pastoral duty among Church of God pastors than by their Protestant counterparts. This suggests that Church of God pastors need to find ways to reaffirm the significance of preaching to their identity and mission (Johns 2002:54). The amount of time given by Church of God pastors to the ministry of teaching, also less than their Protestant counterparts, suggests several possibilities: (1) many pastors may not consider themselves to be qualified to effectively teach; (2) the Church of God's historical emphasis on worship may well have devalued the need for teaching; and (3) the limited engagement with teaching ministry may reflect the denominational ethos of the Church of God (Johns 2002:55). Whatever the specific reason(s), the survey results suggest the need for an intentional focus and emphasis on the teaching ministry of the Church of God pastor. This, too, is crucial in order to adequately assess word of faith theology.

To further define the pastoral role from a Church of God perspective, the following specific analyses are offered: (1) the pastoral role as mentor in Section 3.4.1; (2) the pastoral role as exegete/educator in Section 3.4.2; and (3) the pastoral role as shepherd in Section 3.4.3. The relevance of these analyses to this research will then be discussed in Section 3.4.4.

3.4.1 The pastoral role as mentor

Pastoral ministry in the Church of God emphasises the role of mentoring. A mentor is defined as a “wise and trusted counsellor or teacher” or an “influential senior sponsor or supporter” (Dictionary.com). Mentoring implies the personal integrity necessary for the task. In the Church of God, the pastoral role as mentor involves, but is not limited to, the following criteria: (1) the pastor is to be a mature Christian; (2) the pastor is to live a disciplined life; (3) the pastor is to model parenting; (4) the pastor is to possess emotional stability, that is, a healthy personality; (5) the pastor is to possess a sense of divine calling; and (6) the pastor is to possess a commitment to the Church of God, its doctrine, polity, theology and praxis (Walker 1965:78-82, amended).

First, becoming a mature Christian requires spiritual growth. Since there is no deficit of persons who struggle with living an exemplary Christian life, the pastoral role is designed to prepare God’s people to become mature for the purpose of attaining the measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:10-13). To achieve this objective, the pastor serves as both a model and a mentor. Mentoring, by its very nature, involves influence. The pastor is in a strategic position to influence his environment. To do so requires maturity on the part of the pastor. The biblical directive in I Timothy 3:6, “he [the pastor] must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil”, affirms the need for maturity in the mentoring role.

Second, mentoring in the pastoral role requires that one set an example in terms of speech, behaviour, love, faith and purity (cf. I Timothy 4:12). The personal life of the pastor is to be characterised by a sincere faith, a good conscience, a godly lifestyle, and purity of heart (Morris 2009:3). For those who embrace a Wesleyan Holiness theological orientation, empowerment for ministry cannot be separated from character or virtue, consequently, a commitment to discipleship and personal holiness is both a prerequisite and a

continuing condition of the Spirit-filled life (pastoral excellence). The pastor must “have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap” (I Timothy 3:7). Therefore, the one serving in the mentoring role must live one’s sermons convincingly before one’s parishioners in order to influence them for Christ (Walker 1965:79).

Third, while not implying perfection in such a task, mentoring in the pastoral role does call for the successful management of one’s house. In this relationship, the pastor lives under the biblical directive of I Timothy 3:5, that “if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church”? In this role, the pastor depends more upon affectionate management in one’s own relationship to one’s children than upon pulling ministerial rank, and, in this manner, cares for the church with a healing carefulness (Oates 1982:81). This filial relationship is further observed in the pastor’s tender care in matters of faith, doctrine, theology and praxis.

Fourth, effective and successful mentoring requires the emotional stability needed for the pastoral role. This begins with possessing the mind of Christ (cf. I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5). In general, the New Testament writers view mental and emotional stability in terms of self-control, which necessitates the cultivation of the following ingredients (Walker 1965:80-81): (1) a healthy self-awareness in which one learns one’s strengths and weaknesses with the capacity to admit that one is fallible, subject to err, and in need of counsel; (2) an optimism in which one recognises the potential of every person and does not despair in the slow process of spiritual growth; (3) an objectivity in which one sees the present reality as it is, not as one wants it to be; (4) a level of empathy that allows one to see through the eyes of others and sense the other persons privations before deplored one’s own; and (5) the inner integrity to accept full responsibility for one’s thoughts, decisions, and actions. Cultivating the above ingredients allows the pastor to serve more effectively in the mentoring role.

Fifth, effective mentoring requires a sense of divine calling. God has ordained special ministries that require the dedication of one's entire life and that separate one unto God (cf. II Timothy 2:4) (Hughes 1977:26). Recognition of this divine call is perhaps the pastor's most compelling safeguard against mere professionalism in the task of mentoring. While not an exhaustive list, the following attitudes should be reflected in the life and ministry of the mentoring pastor: (1) one functions compellingly out of necessity in the spirit of I Corinthians 9:16, "for when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel"; (2) one functions willingly in terms of the directive of I Corinthians 9:17, "If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me"; and (3) one functions sacrificially according to the biblical directive of Acts 20:24, "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Walker 1965:81-82, adapted).

Sixth, Church of God ministers are affiliated with the denomination because they believe it to be founded on biblical principles. Faithfulness on the part of the pastor to the doctrine, polity, theology and praxis of the Church of God is imperative for its perpetuation (Shaal 1977:95). Long has the maxim been used, "as the pastor goes, so goes the church". With the assimilation of word of faith theology by some constituents in the Church of God, especially via Christian media (e.g., television, radio) (an issue discussed further in Chapter 4), the pastoral role is critical to understanding, translating and informing parishioners of the implications of such teaching. Effective mentoring necessitates a commitment to the Church of God—that is, the belief that the doctrine, polity, theology and praxis of the denomination find their origin in Scripture and; therefore, warrant such a commitment.

The criteria noted above are necessary in the role of the mentoring pastor in order to effectively engage and influence one's parishioners. This is especially true in regard to the issues addressed in this research.

3.4.2 The pastoral role as exegete/educator

From its inception, the Christian Church has used the ministry of preaching and teaching as a means of personal and corporate instruction (Erickson 1995:1056). Those given the responsibility of preaching and teaching engage and enhance the community of faith by emphasising the following objectives: (1) warning of sin; (2) exhorting to do what is right; (3) caring for spiritual needs; (4) protecting from false teachers; and (5) equipping for local church ministry (Barackman 1998:424). The fourth objective is especially relevant to this research, i.e., the guarding and protecting from false teachers, and in particular, protecting from false and non-biblical doctrine and teaching. Here, the Church of God pastor, as do all pastors operating from a biblical perspective, assumes a specific responsibility. In I Timothy 5:17, it is clear that certain elders (often rendered pastors) are equipped for the ministry of preaching and teaching, thus enabling them to correctly interpret Scripture for the purpose of instructing parishioners in biblical truth. This ministry is further validated in Acts 13:1 and I Corinthians 12:28, where it affirms that the purpose is to teach doctrine and expound Scripture, so that parishioners may be rooted in truth (Arrington 1994:195). In this regard, the pastoral role from a Church of God perspective is understood as one of exegete and educator.

Preaching and teaching have a crucial role in the life of the church, for it is here that parishioners—those who have been evangelised and saved—are taught by example and precept the truths of Scripture (Arrington 1994:195). In Ephesians 4:11, the designation of “pastors and teachers” may also be translated as “pastor-teacher” or “teaching pastors”. The ability to correctly interpret Scripture, i.e., to exegete the biblical text using solid hermeneutical

principles, then to educate one's parishioners based on one's findings, is critical to the pastoral role. However, the exegete/educator needs more than academic competency alone. One who serves in the crucial role of a teaching pastor assumes several necessary ingredients for the task: (1) assimilation of particular personal qualities; (2) adequate preparation for the task; (3) personal development for service; and (4) the pursuit of theological training (Walker 1977:42-49, adapted).

First, the role of exegete/educator necessitates the assimilation of particular personal qualities in order to effectively fulfil the task. The Church of God pastor should be assured of the call of God in this area. As stated in Section 3.4.1, there is a level of emotional stability required for the task. This is necessary in order to guard the exegete/educator, according to the directive of Ephesians 4:14, that one should no longer be "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming". The exegete/educator should develop effective study habits, skills for reading and comprehension, utilise effective time management, etc., all of which are necessary to effectively fulfil the role.

Second, the role of exegete/educator requires adequate preparation for the task. This is fundamental to the role and is to be differentiated from academic preparation. Four major areas are of concern at this point: (1) one needs to have a thorough general knowledge of the meta-narrative of Scripture, separate and apart from an academic approach, in order to have a solid foundation upon which to pursue more in-depth study; (2) one needs to understand the many facets of human behaviour in order to effectively engage human needs; (3) one needs to develop adequate communication skills, in order to effectively present biblical truth to one's parishioners; and (4) one needs to develop a sensitivity to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the process of preparation (Walker 1977:45-46, adapted).

Third, the successful exegete/educator should be intentional in on-going personal development. This involves the development of one's relationship with God. Here, several ingredients are fundamental to the process of personal development. One should designate quality time for prayer, study, reading, reflection, introspection and praise. Proper care should be given one's physical body via adequate sleep, rest, diet, etc. Refraining from behaviour, lifestyles and habits that are detrimental to the pursuit of a godly life is of vital importance as well.

Fourth, the life-long pursuit of theological training is necessary to effectively fulfil the role of exegete/educator. The Church of God pastor should take advantage of every opportunity to enhance theological understanding. The rising educational level of parishioners, in general, mandates on-going training on the part of the exegete/educator. There is no need to be enrolled in academic degree programs throughout the course of one's life; however, theological training in terms of continuing education should be the norm. Those called to the ministry of exegete/educator should expect to invest their lives in the study of biblical theology for the purpose of facilitating doctrine, faith, theology and praxis. The opportunities, at this point, are more numerous than in any preceding period of church history. The Church of God, in seeking to ensure the relevancy of its pastors in contemporary society, "encourages, even prods, its pastors to take advantage of consistent, practical training opportunities provided by the church, as well as training resources for self-enhancement" (Bell 2004:22). Such a posture encourages solid biblical exegesis that translates into sound interpretation of Scripture, and, ultimately, into the ability to adequately assess any doctrine or teaching that may have negative pastoral implications.

Although academic competency is not the sole ingredient in matters of truth, the importance of adequate theological training, solid hermeneutical skills, and the ability to interpret and assimilate one's findings in the life of the church must not be underestimated. Church history, even Church of God

history, is replete with instances which show that inadequate interpretations of Scripture produced faulty beliefs and practices. For this reason, the Church of God should establish a minimum educational requirement that is flexible enough for those seeking ministerial credentials who will never have the opportunity for formal theological training (Bowers 2004a:22). Such a requirement should include, at the very minimum, an introduction to core elements of systematic theology, historical theology, biblical studies and hermeneutics. Adequate assessment of word of faith theology mandates for the Church of God pastor the task of exegete/educator.

3.4.3 The pastoral role as shepherd

In assessing word of faith theology, or in the process of aligning any teaching with Scripture, the question of “why?” enters the equation. Why should a Church of God pastor address the subject? What is so important about the subject that warrants consideration? It is here that the pastoral role of shepherd becomes integral to the process of ascertaining the pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God. The literal role of the shepherd in biblical times, as well as a contemporary context, is twofold: (1) to nourish the flock; and (2) to protect the flock. This aspect of the pastoral role is essential in discovering and effectively engaging negative pastoral implications.

The pastoral role has its basis in the life and ministry of Christ, who is the supreme example of those who serve the church as pastors (Arrington 1994:193). The shepherding aspect of the pastoral role finds biblical precedent in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Hebrew text, the word רֹאשׁ (*ra' ah*) is not etymologically rooted in identity with the sheep, but comes from a term identified with feeding (McMahan 1994:23). Consequently, the shepherd was known as “the one who feeds”. Although myriad Old Testament references are available (cf. Psalm 23; Jeremiah 23:2; Micah 5:4),

Ezekiel offers an excellent treatment of the shepherding dynamic as it relates to spiritual leadership. Several principles and applications regarding shepherding are offered in Ezekiel 34: (1) God's displeasure is pronounced upon shepherds who feed themselves while neglecting the flock; (2) details are offered in terms of how the shepherd neglects the flock; (3) God's personal intervention for the neglected flock is revealed; and (4) God's work of protection through discernment of danger is established (McMahan 1994:25-34, adapted). The analogy between the Old Testament shepherd and contemporary pastoral ministry is obvious.

The New Testament motif of shepherding finds its origin in the Good Shepherd narrative (cf. John 10). Here, Christ is referenced as a true shepherd, having the ultimate good of the sheep as his sole intention. The sheep are threatened by those who would attempt to lead them, which is a much greater threat than any external peril or lack of food, because the sheep depend on the shepherd for leadership, nourishment and protection (McMahan 1994:38). The pastoral role involves a particular concern for the spiritual lives of parishioners, for they exercise special oversight of the souls of the redeemed for the purpose of nourishment and protection (Williams 1992:179). In fulfilling this aspect of the pastoral role, the shepherd must guard against persons and false teaching that would lead parishioners into error. Aberrant teaching may actually arise from within the church; it may seem viable, even true, yet when assessed via Scripture it is deceptive and destructive (Williams 1992:180).

Although the pastoral responsibilities of preaching and teaching are discussed in Section 3.4.2, one objective of the shepherding role is to protect or guard parishioners from doctrinal and theological error. This is accomplished by the consistent preaching and teaching of biblical truth. The tender care that nourishes also serves as a protectant. As biblical truth is disseminated on a consistent basis, parishioners become strong in faith and understanding, ultimately learning to discern truth for themselves. This is important for several

reasons: (1) doctrine is not merely an abstract concept but has immediate impact in the lives of believers, that is, one's belief affects one's behaviour; (2) the goal of doctrine is not merely to become philosophically informed, rather, doctrine is to become a teaching and guiding tool for living the Christian life; (3) doctrine is not, in the main, about identifying a particular group of people, its purpose is to build up the body of Christ; and (4) doctrine in the early church was about ensuring the continuity of the same practices and faith implemented by Christ. Because of the above concerns, the Church of God pastor should be concerned about constantly teaching and implementing doctrine into the lives of parishioners (McMahan 1994:133).

Citing the shepherding motif in both the Old and New Testaments, and also throughout the history of the church, the Church of God pastor is informed by this model in fulfilling the pastoral role. Inherent within the shepherding model is the concept of providing tender and loving care, of nourishing parishioners with ample provision in order to facilitate the pursuit of maturity.

Critical to the process of this dynamic is the aspect of pastoral care. Many who espouse word of faith theology refute the reality of human suffering, physical sickness, disease, pain, lack of any kind—or, at the very least, are taught to reject the symptoms of such realities. This aspect of word of faith theology has been assimilated into the praxis of some within the Church of God. As a result, several pastoral implications emerge that necessitate the shepherding role: (1) the Church of God pastor should understand that Scripture places great importance on ministering to those who are physically ill, experiencing lack, pain, and similar life realities (cf. Matthew 25:34-45); (2) the role and motivation of the pastor in the process of pastoral care is critical to rendering spiritual nourishment and the protection of a shepherd; (3) patiently utilising the component of tender care at this point is of extreme importance, as the parishioner's concept of God is being challenged; and (4) engaging the parishioner with biblical truth, compassionate care, and faithful service facilitates a clearer understanding of the present reality.

Indeed, the shepherding component of the pastoral role is necessary for effective engagement of word of faith theology among Church of God parishioners. While the mentoring component is seen most readily in the pastor's example and model, and the exegete/educator component is most readily observed via the pastor's preaching and teaching ministry, the shepherding component is most readily experienced during critical life situations. Perhaps, here, the parishioner is being prepared in the crucible of life to experience new understanding and enlightenment regarding God's truth. The Church of God pastor can be instrumental, at this point, in offering guidance, wisdom, and understanding.

3.4.4 Relevance to this research

The objective of Section 3.4 has not been to offer an exhaustive treatment of the subject or to examine the pastoral role at large. The aim of this concise analysis has been to establish the parameters in which the research is conducted and for whom the results of the research are intended. While the research has application for the broader Christian community, its primary focus relates to pastoral ministry within the Church of God. One of the five objectives of this dissertation is to understand and address the pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God. To obtain this objective assumes, at minimum, a cursory understanding of the pastoral role within the Church of God, which bears many similarities to those of its Pentecostal and Evangelical siblings. Assessing the pastoral role from a Church of God perspective is relevant to this research for several reasons. By evaluating specific aspects of the pastoral role, the magnitude of the pastoral implications set forth in this research is emphasised. The analyses highlight the need for persons serving in the pastoral role to have adequate parameters by which to discern word of faith theology. In Section 3.4.1 an analysis of the pastoral role as mentor was offered. Section 3.4.2 offered an assessment of

the pastoral role as exegete/educator. In Section 3.4.3 an evaluation of the pastoral role as shepherd was offered.

The evaluation offered in Section 3.4.1 is relevant to this research for several reasons. First, Christian maturity requires spiritual growth. One way this is accomplished is by effective mentoring. The Church of God pastor has both a mandate and an opportunity to facilitate this process. Second, the lifestyle and behaviour of the pastor is critical for effective mentoring. The pastor's good reputation enhances the mentoring relationship. Third, the pastor's filial relationships inform the mentoring task by emphasising the aspect of tender care. Fourth, the emotional stability of the pastor is critical for effectively mentoring parishioners. Fifth, acknowledgement of a divine call is also crucial in the mentoring process, for it is here that purpose and continuity are sustained. Sixth, the mentoring role of the Church of God pastor assumes a commitment to the doctrine, polity, theology and praxis of the denomination. The mentoring role is essential in successfully addressing the pastoral implications of word of faith theology.

Section 3.4.2 is relevant to this research in that the pastoral role of exegete/educator is a vital component in the process of engaging the pastoral implications of word of faith theology. First, the role assumes personal qualities germane for the task, e.g., effective study habits, reading and comprehension skills and effective time management. Second, adequate preparation for the task involves a general thorough knowledge of Scripture, the elements of human behaviour, effective communication skills, as well as, sensitivity to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Third, this aspect of the pastoral role involves pursuit of physical, spiritual and emotional health in the life of the pastor. Fourth, the role requires on-going theological training for the purpose of solid exegesis, the objective of which is to effectively address inadequacies in matters of doctrine and teaching. Various aspects of word of faith set forth implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God. Solid exegesis and education are necessary in order to address those implications.

The evaluation offered in Section 3.4.3 is relative to this research, in that it establishes the motive for the pastoral engagement of word of faith theology. The pastoral role is primarily one of shepherding, which constitutes the element of providing spiritual nourishment for parishioners. The shepherding role also provides spiritual protection for parishioners. The dynamics of nourishment and protection are critically important, as it relates to faulty or non-biblical theology, doctrine or praxis—issues that are destructive to the spiritual life of parishioners. For this reason, the cursory assessment offered in this section is critical to this research.

In Section 3.2 a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God was offered, including the denomination’s historical origins and contemporary status in the broader Christian community. In Section 3.3 an evaluation of several specific tenets of biblical theology from a Church of God perspective was given. An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God was offered in Section 3.4. An appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective is offered in Section 3.5.

3.5 An appraisal of four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective

Section 3.5 offers an appraisal of four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective. As noted in Chapter 1, this research contains several self-imposed limitations designed to refine the problem being addressed. The first limitation addresses the scope of the research. This research is not intended to offer an exhaustive examination of word of faith theology. Such a task would require time and resources beyond the boundaries set forth in the initial research proposal. Several researchers (cf. McConnell 1988; MacArthur 1992; Hanegraaff 1993; Bowman 2001; etc.) have already addressed word of faith theology as a whole, therefore, to replicate their research would be redundant in terms of making a valid contribution to the body of literature in

this discipline. This research focuses primarily on four biblical tenets that are addressed in this section from a Church of God perspective, in Chapter 4 from a word of faith perspective, and in Chapter 5 from a biblical and theological perspective.

In this section, the following topics are appraised: (1) the Abrahamic covenant in Section 3.5.1; (2) the atonement in Section 3.5.2; (3) faith in Section 3.5.3; and (4) prosperity in Section 3.5.4. These four biblical tenets have been selected because of their emphasis in word of faith theology. Throughout the broad spectrum of word of faith theology, these four tenets continually surface as common denominators, recurring themes that interconnect as building blocks for the theological system of the word of faith movement. Each tenet has also been observed by the researcher as being a source for faulty theology and praxis among some Church of God parishioners. Because of the recurring nature of these tenets within word of faith theology, and because the researcher has experienced distortions of these tenets among some Church of God parishioners, an analysis of each is warranted within the parameters of this research. Analysing these four biblical tenets, first, from a Church of God perspective (Chapter 3), then, from a word of faith perspective (Chapter 4), and, finally, from a biblical and theological perspective (Chapter 5), will facilitate an understanding of the pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God.

As cited in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter, the Church of God aligns theologically, doctrinally, and in terms of praxis with classical Pentecostalism, as well as with Evangelical Christianity at large. The following appraisals draw from: (1) Church of God doctrine and scholarship; (2) classical Pentecostal scholarship; and (3) Evangelical scholarship.

3.5.1 The Abrahamic covenant

An appraisal of the Abrahamic covenant is important because of the prominence it holds in particular aspects of word of faith theology. The Abrahamic covenant will be assessed from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, then from a biblical and theological perspective in Chapter 5. In order to differentiate between the various perspectives within this research (i.e., Church of God and word of faith), an appraisal of the Abrahamic covenant from a Church of God perspective is now offered.

In the main, a sequence of divine promises (covenants) forms the unifying factor for all events described in the Bible involving God and humankind (Karleen 1994). The major covenants noted in Scripture are: (1) the edenic covenant in Genesis 2:16; (2) the Adamic covenant in Genesis 3:15; (3) the Noahic covenant in Genesis 9:16; (4) the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:2; (5) the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 19:5; (6) the Palestinian covenant in Deuteronomy 30:3; (7) the Davidic covenant in II Samuel 7:16; and (8) the new covenant in Hebrews 8:8. Prior to the Abrahamic covenant God's involvement with humankind was primarily in general terms. Beginning with the Abrahamic covenant, one man—Abraham—becomes the central figure through whom God chooses to initiate the redemptive process.

The Abrahamic covenant is paramount to a proper understanding of the kingdom concept and is foundational to Old Testament theology for at least three reasons (Enns 1989:51): (1) the Abrahamic covenant described in Genesis 12:1–3 is an unconditional covenant; (2) the Abrahamic covenant is a literal covenant in which the promises should be understood literally. The land that is promised should be understood in its literal or normal interpretation, not merely as a figurative analogy of heaven; and (3) the Abrahamic covenant is an everlasting covenant. The promises that God made to Israel via this covenant are understood as eternal.

The Abrahamic covenant involves several salient features. First, there is the promise of land (cf. Genesis 12:1), in which Abraham is called from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan (cf. Genesis 11:31), a physical location that would be given to him by God. Second, there is the promise of descendants (cf. Genesis 12:2), in which God pledges to make a great nation from Abraham, although at the time of the covenant Abraham is seventy-five years of age and has no children. Third, there is the promise of blessing (cf. Genesis 12:3), in which God tells Abraham that through his posterity all the families of the earth will be blessed. The promised blessing, which is amplified in the new covenant (cf. Hebrews 8:6-13), focuses primarily on spiritual blessing and redemption (Enns 1989:52).

From its embryonic development, the Church of God embraced a specific position regarding biblical interpretation: “the Church of God stands for the whole Bible rightly divided. The New Testament is the only rule for government and discipline” (Minutes 2010:22). This has required the General Assembly of the church to periodically search the Scriptures in order to interpret the true and proper teaching of the church on various subjects, but always with the purpose of basing that teaching strictly upon the Bible (Gause 73:224). Since the New Testament is understood as the model for doctrine and praxis, this becomes foundational for a Church of God perspective regarding the Abrahamic covenant. This perspective aligns with the classical Pentecostal and Evangelical perspectives of the subject.

The Abrahamic covenant, as noted earlier in this section, is comprised of a series of unconditional promises given to Abraham. Specific components of the covenant extend solely to Abraham’s biological posterity (cf. the promise of a geographical location; the development of a great nation). One aspect of the covenant extends to humankind as a whole, namely, the promise that via Abraham “all peoples on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). This particular aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is critical to correctly understanding the dissimilarity between a Church of God perspective and a word of faith

perspective. Although it will be assessed further in Chapter 4, much of word of faith theology highlights this specific aspect of the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., that all peoples on earth will be blessed) as having reference to material or financial blessing. This aspect of word of faith theology is closely related to the tenet of prosperity, which is assessed separately from the Abrahamic covenant. However, residing within the Abrahamic covenant, according to word of faith proponents, is the biblical support and validation for material entitlements (Copeland 1974:51).

A Church of God perspective regarding this aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is somewhat dissimilar. Indeed, one aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is that all people on earth are promised blessing via Abraham. However, how is the term blessing defined? Does this reference to blessing imply, infer or guarantee material entitlement to all recipients of the new covenant? From a Church of God perspective the answer is in the negative. Living under the new covenant implies that one is a spiritual descendant of Abraham. This promise of blessing has reference to the spiritual blessing of redemption. From Abraham's posterity came David, then Christ, through whose vicarious suffering, redemption was provided for all humankind. From the Abrahamic covenant God dealt primarily with the Jewish people; however, through Christ the spiritual blessing of redemption was extended to all Gentile people. Through faith, the same faith utilised by Abraham (cf. Hebrews 11:8-19), all people on earth were offered the provisions of the new covenant.

Understanding the blessing component of the Abrahamic covenant from a redemptive perspective, as opposed to a promise of guaranteed material entitlement, is further validated in several New Testament passages. First, the Galatians 3:7-9 passage clearly defines the blessing component of the Abrahamic covenant as that of being justified by faith, a clear reference to the spiritual dynamic of covenant relationship. Second, the Galatians 3:11-14 passage connects the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant with Christ's redemptive work and ultimate fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit

(Simmons 1999:993). Third, the Romans 11:17-24 passage reveals that new covenant recipients owe a debt of gratitude to Jews via the blessing promise of the Abrahamic covenant, that is, the blessing inference opens for the Gentiles privileges once exclusive to the covenant people (Johnson 1999:765).

In summary, a Church of God perspective recognises the scriptural validity of the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant establishes the fundamental premise of God's choice of Abraham, and ultimately his biological posterity, as the primary means of redemptive grace. Fulfilment of this covenant is first seen in Abraham, then through his posterity, and ultimately through Christ's revelation of the new covenant (cf. Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25). The blessing component of the Abrahamic covenant is understood primarily as being fulfilled in redemptive terms, not a guarantee of material entitlement or financial prosperity.

3.5.2 The atonement

The second biblical tenet to be appraised is the atonement. Here, as in the discussion of the Abrahamic covenant in Section 3.5.1, an appraisal of the atonement is important because of its significance in specific aspects of word of faith theology, particularly the relationship between the atonement and divine healing. Divine healing is here differentiated from faith healing in that the former emphasises a direct work of Christ in the body of the recipient, while the latter emphasises the mental attitude or faith of the recipient (Conn 1996:89). The atonement will be appraised from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, then, from a biblical and theological perspective in Chapter 5. In order to differentiate between the perspectives related to this research (i.e., Church of God juxtaposed to word of faith), an appraisal of the atonement from a Church of God perspective is now offered.

The purpose of this cursory treatment is not to offer an exhaustive assessment of the various theories of the atonement (cf. moral influence theory; governmental theory; ransom theory; satisfaction theory), nor to debate the extent of the atonement (cf. limited atonement; universal atonement). Such an assessment is beyond the scope (and word count) of this research. Further biblical and theological assessment of the atonement is offered in Chapter 5. The aim of this section is to set forth a brief understanding of the atonement from a Church of God perspective, specifically, in relation to the issue of divine healing.

Several biblical passages lend support to the relationship between divine healing and the atonement. First, Isaiah 53:5 states, “he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed”. Second, Matthew 8:16-17 states, “many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases’”. Third, I Peter 2:24 states, “he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed”. Inclusion of these biblical references helps to establish a biblical foundation for a Church of God perspective on divine healing in the atonement.

A classical Pentecostal understanding of the atonement, and, more specifically, that divine healing is one of the provisions of the atonement, finds its origins in the Holiness movement of the 19th century. Virtually all Holiness groups held that divine healing was a provision of the atonement that needed to be recovered and restored in the contemporary church of that time (Sims 1995:80). In the atonement one comes to a crucial point in the Christian faith, a point of transition, for it is here that systematic theology has direct application in one’s life (Erickson 1995:781). The full scope of this application,

however, is the subject of much debate and is beyond the scope of this research.

One of the most significant convictions characterising Church of God doctrine and praxis in the 20th century is the belief in divine healing (Higgins, Dusing and Tallman 1994:195). Like its classical Pentecostal siblings (cf. Assemblies of God; International Pentecostal Holiness Church; The Foursquare Church; and the Church of God in Christ), the Church of God has historically accepted the position that divine healing is one of the provisions in the atonement of Christ. The creedal statements of the major classical Pentecostal denominations validate the above assertion. The Church of God Declaration of Faith affirms that, “we believe...divine healing is provided for all in the atonement” (Minutes 2010:21). Similarly, the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths affirms that “divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers” (Our 16 fundamental truths). Likewise, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church’s Articles of Faith affirms that, “we believe in divine healing as in the atonement” (Articles of faith). The creedal statement of The Foursquare Church affirms that “we believe that Jesus Christ heals people who are sick; he is still willing and able to heal...in response to faith” (What we believe). The Church of God in Christ Statement of Faith affirms that, “we believe that healing by faith in God has scriptural support and ordained authority” (Our statement of faith).

Instances of divine healings have been documented throughout the history of the Church of God (cf. Cross 1962; Hughes 1989; Slay 1996). At no period in its history has the Church of God wavered in its stance regarding the prospect of divine healing (Hughes 1989:28). In its embryonic phase, some within the Church of God held extreme views regarding the topic of divine healing, for example: (1) that all sickness is demonic in origin; (2) that physicians and medicine are non-biblical approaches to physical healing and are to be avoided; (3) that the presence of sickness in the Christian’s life is indicative of

the presence of sin; and (4) that trusting Jesus for healing implies trusting him only, anything less exemplifies a lack of faith (Sims 1995:83). As the Church of God evolved in its approach to biblical hermeneutics, scholarly research and solid exegesis facilitated a greater understanding of human sickness, suffering, and divine healing (Conn 1996:473), which inevitably produced a more balanced position.

Critical to a contemporary Church of God perspective on divine healing is an understanding of its creedal statement regarding the subject. It is at this point that Church of God and word of faith perspectives are greatly dissimilar. The creedal statement lifts up several concerns that warrant consideration. First, the statement reads, “divine healing is provided for all in the atonement” (Minutes 2010:21). The question that immediately surfaces is: does this statement imply that all Christians will be healed, instantaneously upon request, of all physical, mental or emotional maladies, each and every time without fail? In the early days of the movement some did indeed hold this view (although it was never a reality). However, contemporary Church of God scholarship responds to this question with a resounding no. Kimberly Ervin Alexander (2006:113; 229) (Ph.D., St. John’s College), associate professor of historical theology at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, argues for the capacity to hold in tension God’s will to heal and his will not to heal, to trust Jesus as healer, yet knowing that not all will be healed. Corroborating this position is French L. Arrington (2003:83) (Th.M., Columbia Theological Seminary; Ph.D., St. Louis University), professor emeritus of New Testament Greek and exegesis at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, who posits that neither Scripture nor experience support the claim that healing occurs in every situation. Arrington (1993:266) further states that while it is appropriate to pray for the well-being of those who trust in Christ, Scripture does not teach that the Christian lifestyle will result in perfect health.

Second, and also critical to a contemporary Church of God perspective on divine healing, is the phrase “provided for all”. The question that emerges at

this point is, do the words “provided for”, or said differently, “provision for”, imply a guarantee of healing? Is divine healing somehow automatic if one follows certain criteria? Here, too, the answer is no. Arrington (1993:266; 2003:83) argues that real faith in Christ is no guarantee of perfect health in this life, nor that provision for healing means that everyone will be healed this side of eternity.

Third, and equally as important to a contemporary Church of God perspective on divine healing is the term “all” (in the phrase “provided for all”). Does the term “all” imply that the application of divine healing is identical in each and every case? Is the implication that all Christians will be recipients of the same type of healing? As in the previous questions, here too, the answer is no, for God heals in many different ways: (1) instant or progressive healing; (2) private or public healing; (3) healing following prayer; (4) healing following medical treatment; (5) healing as a result of lifestyle changes. (Arrington 2003:83).

In summary, the Church of God recognises the scriptural validity of divine healing. Based on several biblical references (cf. Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; I Peter 2:24), divine healing finds its origin in the atonement of Christ. A contemporary Church of God perspective on divine healing is: (1) God healed individuals throughout human history and does, indeed, heal in the present time; (2) Christians have the privilege and responsibility to pray for healing, both for themselves and others; (3) divine healing is not relegated to adherence to criteria of human origin; (4) God heals in many different ways; (5) provision of divine healing does not equate to a guarantee of divine healing, that is, not everyone is healed in this life; (6) when healing does not occur, God gives the grace to successfully persevere; and (7) ultimate healing is received in the life to come.

3.5.3 Faith

The third biblical tenet to be appraised is the concept of faith. Here, as in the discussions of the Abrahamic covenant in Section 3.5.1 and the atonement in Section 3.5.2, an appraisal of faith is important because of its significance in specific aspects of word of faith theology, particularly the relationship between faith and the appropriation of biblical promises. The concept of faith will be appraised from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, then, from a biblical and theological perspective in Chapter 5. In order to differentiate between the perspectives related to this research (i.e., Church of God juxtaposed to word of faith), an appraisal of the concept of faith from a Church of God perspective is now offered. The purpose here is not to offer an exhaustive treatment of the biblical concept of faith. Further biblical and theological assessment of the subject will be offered in Chapter 5.

In much of word of faith theology, the biblical concept of faith is reduced to a formula, a set of principles, which, when applied, guarantees specific remuneration. Many, if not most, of the suggested principles (this will be appraised further in Chapter 4) are the result of faulty exegesis, and at times, blatant misrepresentation of the biblical text. An example is the concept of the hundred-fold return (cf. Mark 4:7-9). Word of faith proponent, John Avanzini (1989:15) teaches that it is impossible to give to God in true biblical faith without expecting to receive something in return...every offering given in obedience and faith will be multiplied back one hundredfold. This example, taken from Jesus' parable of the sower in Mark 4, is used by Avanzini (and myriad others) as a biblical basis to suggest that when one gives an offering in faith, one will receive one hundred times that amount in return. Such teaching does not define biblical faith? The aim of this section is to set forth a brief understanding of faith from a Church of God perspective, particularly the relationship between faith and the appropriation of biblical promises.

Articles 5 and 6 of the Church of God Declaration of Faith emphasise the importance of the biblical concept of faith. Article 5 states, “we believe that justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ” (Minutes 2010:21). Article 6 states, “we believe in sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word; and by the Holy Ghost” (Minutes 2010:21). While the importance of faith is set forth in these articles, no attempt is made to expand, clarify or broadly define the concept of faith. The primary usage in the creedal statements is spiritual in essence. While faith is necessary in all matters relating to God and life (cf. Hebrews 11:6), the Church of God has historically understood faith in terms of the covenant relationship. In defining faith, the Church of God aligns with its classical Pentecostal and Evangelical siblings.

Biblical faith is primarily soteriological in nature. The basis of salvation was apparently the same in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, it has always been appropriated by faith (cf. Galatians 3:6-9; Hebrews 11) (Erickson 1995:172). Christian faith is always and essentially faith in Christ, for it is here that faith finds expression through relationship with God. Faith is defined most succinctly as “belief” or “to believe”, and is, therefore, not merely a passive mental assent to factual data, rather, it is the active, positive response of one’s total being to follow Christ (Higgins, Dusing, Tallman 1994:6; 110-111). Indeed, faith is required at all levels of Christian living, and is applicable to theology, doctrine, belief and praxis. However, at all levels, belief finds its essence, not in faith itself, but in God who gives faith. Biblical faith cannot be condensed into a neatly packaged formula or set of principles for the purpose of personal aggrandisement or material gain. By its nature, biblical faith is designed to enhance the covenant relationship and communion with God.

Several observations are important for understanding biblical faith (Packer 1989:400). First, faith involves right belief about God. Throughout the Bible, trust in God rests on the belief of what he has revealed about his character and purposes. Second, faith rests on divine testimony. This testimony is not

mere subjective experience, but based on the testimony of the God who cannot lie. Third, faith is a supernatural, divine gift (cf. John 6:44-45), which makes God the author of all saving faith, even all faith of any capacity. Williams (1988:48) asserts that faith is not merely wishful thinking, but the result of God's responding to the searching heart. Nor is faith simply sight, but the conviction of things not seen (cf. Hebrews 11:1), the “things” of God—his reality, his purpose, and his deeds. The focus of faith is ever on God, the source of all good things (cf. James 1:17).

In summary, the Church of God recognises faith as a biblical concept, soteriologically essential, and indispensable for effectively living the Christian life. A contemporary Church of God perspective regarding biblical faith encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: (1) faith finds its origin in God himself; (2) faith is made available to all people primarily for the purpose of salvation; (3) without faith it is impossible to please God; (4) faith is not defined by a subjective belief in faith itself, that is, faith in faith; (5) faith cannot be reduced to a subjective formula; (6) the object of true biblical faith is God and his eternal promises; and (7) the goal of biblical faith is not mere material remuneration, but a life that is pleasing to God.

3.5.4 Prosperity

The fourth and final biblical tenet to be appraised is the concept of prosperity. As the discussions in Section 3.5.1 regarding the Abrahamic covenant, Section 3.5.2 regarding the atonement, and Section 3.5.3 regarding faith are important to this research, an appraisal of the biblical concept of prosperity is also relevant. This is especially true because of the disproportionate emphasis on prosperity (material prosperity in particular) in much of word of faith theology. The concept of prosperity will be appraised from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, then from a biblical and theological perspective in Chapter 5. In order to differentiate between the perspectives related to this

research, an appraisal of the concept of prosperity from a Church of God perspective is now offered. The aim of this section is not to offer an exhaustive treatment of the biblical concept of prosperity. Further biblical and theological assessment of prosperity will be offered in Chapter 5.

From its early history, the position of the Church of God regarding holiness placed it in opposition to much of secular culture. As the American industrial revolution continued to impact the culture at large, the Church of God—like the Populists of that time period—believed that the trend toward profit in ordering social values would destroy Christian morality (Crews 1990:12). The perception was that persons were no longer valued for their moral character and individual contribution, but according to their accumulation of money and material possessions. There was great disdain for what many viewed as a “gospel of wealth,” which was considered anti-Christian and regarded as the basis of all that was wrong with society and the institutional church (Crews 1990:12). One early Church of God leader lamented the fact that far too many Church of God constituents loved honour and money, a trait that would lead to personal degradation and sin (Spurling 1920:24). Many early Church of God constituents demonstrated animosity toward middle-class Christianity, believing that as urban, middle-class churches grew in number and affluence, close, personal relationships often disappeared (Crews 1990:13).

As American society evolved from the Great Depression era, and especially in the post-World War II period, the Church of God began to embrace middle-class Christianity. Many of the amenities that were unavailable in the early decades of the movement now became the norm. Prior to World War II, the Church of God emphasised the need to “be separate” by withdrawing from the affairs of society, however, by the 1960’s the denomination altered this stance and began to encourage participation in societal concerns (Crews 1990:151). As American culture continued to flourish economically, some began to emphasise material blessing and prosperity as the privilege, even the right, of

Christians who understood the dynamics of attaining such blessings (cf. Kenneth Hagin).

Several biblical passages, in general, are used to validate prosperity teaching. First, III John 2 states, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (KJV). This verse, comprised of general introductory remarks in a letter from John to Gaius, has become a proof text for prosperity theology. The KJV rendering of the Greek term *εύοδόω* as “prosper” (later translations render the term as “all is well” or “doing fine”) is used by proponents of prosperity teaching to imply that “above all things”, God’s will for every Christian is material prosperity. Despite the claims sometimes made for III John 2, there is no evidence that the Johannine community advocated a theology of prosperity (Thomas 1998:129).

Second, since, according to prosperity teaching, faith is the key that opens the door, Hebrews 11:1 is central to this theology. The passage states, “now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (KJV). The KJV rendering of the Greek term *ὑπόστασις* as “substance” (later translations render the term as “assurance” or “confidence”) is often used by the proponents of prosperity teaching to imply material substance. Third, Mark 10:29-30, states “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age”. This passage is used in prosperity teaching to suggest that believers are guaranteed a one hundredfold remuneration, not only in spiritual blessings but also in material or monetary blessings. This brief sampling of biblical passages used to validate prosperity teaching is but a portion of the whole, as others will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Propagation of prosperity theology has escalated exponentially since the 1960’s via several methodologies (this will be assessed further in Chapter 4), and its popularity continues among many to the present time. Because of the

broad trans-denominational acceptance of prosperity theology, it is important to offer a Church of God perspective on the subject. Three documents comprise the teachings of the Church of God: (1) the Church of God Declaration of Faith, which is the denomination's primary creedal statement; (2) the Doctrinal Commitments, an expanded form of the Declaration of Faith that includes biblical references; and (3) the Practical Commitments, a document that translates the biblical and doctrinal components in terms of praxis. Several statements from the Practical Commitments document engage the issue of prosperity. First, "through prayer we express our trust in Jehovah God, the giver of all good things, and acknowledge Him for our needs and for the needs of others" (Minutes 2010:25). Second, "we are to provide for the financial needs of the church by tithes and offerings (Minutes 2010:25-26). Third, "the living of a godly and sober life requires the wise and frugal use of...money...The wise use of money is an essential part of the Christian's economy of life" (Minutes 2010:26). Fourth, "a Christian must...refrain from any activity (such as gambling)...which dominates and enslaves the spirit that has been made free in Christ" (Minutes 2010:30).

While not exhaustive, the above sampling of statements from the Practical Commitments document helps set forth a Church of God perspective regarding prosperity. In summary, the Church of God recognises the biblical concept of prosperity (as *εὐοδόω* in its primary usage implies) as "success in a matter" or "completion of a journey". A contemporary Church of God perspective regarding prosperity encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: (1) God promises to provide for his people; (2) the focus of the Christian is first and foremost spiritual in nature; (3) the motive for giving is not remuneration; (4) modesty, not excess, should govern the Christian's life and lifestyle; (5) inordinate attention to material possessions is contrary to the teachings of Christ; (6) Christian integrity mandates the wise and frugal assessment of all things material; and (7) Christians who possess great material wealth have a greater responsibility to invest in the kingdom.

3.5.5 Relevance to this research

Section 3.2 offered a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God, including the denomination's historical origins and contemporary status in the broader Christian community. In Section 3.3 an evaluation of several specific tenets of biblical theology from a Church of God perspective was given. An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God was offered in Section 3.4. An appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective was offered in Section 3.5. The purpose of this section has not been to offer a comprehensive treatment of Church of God theology, doctrine, or praxis. Nor has it been to offer an exhaustive treatment of the four biblical tenets assessed. Rather, the aim of this cursory treatment has been to assess four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective. The specific tenets were chosen for several reasons: (1) because of their significance in word of faith theology; (2) because of their similarity in general to certain aspects of Church of God teaching; (3) because of their dissimilarity in specific to those same aspects of Church of God teaching; and (4) because from each tenet emerges implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

One of the five objectives of this dissertation is to examine the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God. Section 3.5 has addressed that objective by assessing four biblical tenets. This section has also contributed to the overall emphasis of the research by offering foundational material for assessing word of faith theology from a biblical and theological perspective (Chapter 5). Each section appraised the subject matter from a Church of God perspective. In Section 3.5.1 an appraisal was offered of the Abrahamic covenant. Section 3.5.2 offered an appraisal of the atonement. Section 3.5.3 offered an appraisal of the biblical concept of faith. Section 3.5.4 offered an appraisal of prosperity. Each of the four tenets is strategically interconnected in word of faith theology, however, each warrants appraisal on its own merits.

Section 3.5.1 offers several reasons why an appraisal of the Abrahamic covenant from a Church of God perspective is relevant to this research. First, the Abrahamic covenant is prominent in much of word of faith theology. Specific aspects of word of faith theology originate from a faulty understanding of this particular covenant. A Church of God perspective on the subject, along with a word of faith perspective (assessed in Chapter 4), will facilitate an understanding of the pastoral implications offered in Chapter 6. Second, the appraisal aids in establishing the importance of a correct interpretation of Old Testament covenants and their relationship (if any) to persons living under the new covenant. Third, the appraisal establishes the scriptural validity of the Abrahamic covenant via God's choice of a human agent through whom to reveal his redemptive grace. Fourth, the appraisal is relevant to this research in that it highlights the focus of the Abrahamic covenant in redemptive terms, not a guarantee of material entitlement.

Section 3.5.2 is relevant to this research in that it offers several reasons why an appraisal of the atonement of Christ from a Church of God perspective is important. First, here, as in the previous section, the prominence of the atonement in certain aspects of word of faith theology requires an examination of the topic. Second, the appraisal is important because it examines the relationship between the atonement and divine healing. Third, the appraisal is important because it aids in recognising a Church of God perspective in juxtaposition to its classical Pentecostal siblings. Fourth, the appraisal is important in that it emphasises the Church of God's commitment to a belief in divine healing, as well as, an overview of the extent of such healing.

In Section 3.5.3, the appraisal of faith from a Church of God perspective is relevant to this research for several reasons. First, given the magnitude of the subject in word of faith theology, the appraisal in this section is necessary for the comparison of perspectives offered in Chapter 6. Second, the appraisal stresses that from a Church of God perspective biblical faith in its essence is

soteriological in nature. Third, the appraisal accentuates biblical faith as a belief in the person of God and his promises as revealed in Scripture. Fourth, the appraisal stresses that faith cannot be reduced to formula, nor is the Christian's belief to focus on faith itself, but on God who is the source of faith.

Section 3.5.4 offers a Church of God perspective on the biblical concept of prosperity. This appraisal is relevant to this research for several reasons. First, given the emphasis in word of faith theology on the subject of prosperity, the appraisal is necessary in order to contrast Church of God and word of faith perspectives in Chapter 6. Second, the appraisal sets forth a Church of God perspective regarding several key biblical passages used in word of faith theology to validate an emphasis on material prosperity. Third, the appraisal looks briefly at the origins of the Church of God regarding its perspective on prosperity. Fourth, the appraisal is important in that it cites specific denominational teachings regarding monetary and material concerns.

3.6 Conclusion

In this section the following topics are briefly reiterated: (1) the aim of the chapter; (2) a summary of each section; (3) the relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda; and (4) a brief summation.

3.6.1 Aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to offer a contextual analysis of the research, specifically, an evaluation of the faith tradition of the Church of God. The scope of the analysis is not intended to be exhaustive, but to focus on specific areas relative to this research. This chapter addresses one of the primary research objectives cited in Chapter 1. One of the objectives of this research is to answer the question, what are the basic biblical and theological tenets of

the Church of God? To answer this question involves an examination of the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God. The aim of this chapter is to address this particular objective. To achieve this aim, several issues are addressed.

3.6.2 Summary of each section

In Section 3.2, a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God is offered. This assessment includes several elements. First, an examination of the historical origins of the Church of God is given. Second, a contemporary perspective regarding the Church of God is offered. Third, the Church of God is assessed in terms of its place within the broader Christian community. Fourth, and finally, this section is assessed per its relevance to this research.

In Section 3.3, an evaluation of several specific tenets of biblical theology from a Church of God perspective is given. The following topics are evaluated. First, the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture is examined. Second, an evaluation of several basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation and the Church of God's relationship to those tenets is offered. Third, an evaluation of hermeneutics from a Church of God perspective is given. Finally, the relevance of this section to the research topic is cited.

An analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God is offered in Section 3.4. Several issues are addressed in this analysis. First, a brief overview of pastoral ministry in the Church of God is given. Second, the pastoral role of mentor is assessed. Third, the pastoral role of exegete/educator is examined. Fourth, attention is given to the shepherding aspect of the pastoral role. Then, this section's relevance to the research topic is noted.

Section 3.5 offers an appraisal of four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective. The specific tenets are chosen because they are prevalent and recurring themes in word of faith theology. First, an appraisal of the Abrahamic covenant is given. Second, the atonement of Christ is appraised per its relationship to divine healing. Third, the biblical concept of faith is appraised, primarily, in terms of definition and emphasis. Fourth, an appraisal of prosperity is offered. This section's relevance to the topic of research is then offered.

3.6.3 Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda

Chapter 3 is vital to the relevance of the overall research agenda of this dissertation for the following reasons. First, Chapter 3 comprises one of several components (cf. Chapters 3-6), each of which is juxtaposed and contrasted in Chapter 6 per its similarities and dissimilarities with the others, and its importance in determining pastoral implications for the Church of God. Second, Chapter 3 engages one of the five primary objectives of this research, namely, to examine the basic biblical and theological tenets of the Church of God. Third, each of the five primary objectives derived from the main research problem in Chapter 1 is engaged in a chapter of its own; therefore, each chapter finds relevance in and of itself as being a contributing part of the whole.

3.6.4 Summary

In summary, Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the topic of this research by providing the background, research problem, objectives, purpose/value, delimitation, design, methodology, and hypothesis. In Chapter 2, a situation analysis is given that involves the history of research via a literature review. Chapter 3 offers a contextual analysis of the research by evaluating the faith tradition of the Church of God. Chapter 4 will now offer a historical analysis,

specifically a historical background and contemporary framework for word of faith theology.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK FOR WORD OF FAITH THEOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As noted in the introductory material, this research is organised per the LIM theological research model. Three modules are utilised in the LIM model in order to achieve the objective of the research: (1) interpreting the world as it is (present situation); (2) interpreting the world as it should be (preferred scenario); and (3) interpreting the contemporary obligations (practical recommendations). Chapter 1 sets forth the intent, purpose, design and methodology of the research. Chapter 2 involves the first component (a situation analysis) of Module 1. Chapter 3 focuses on the second component (a contextual analysis) of Module 1.

To further develop the research Chapter 4 engages the third component (a historical analysis) of Module 1. In this chapter the parameters of the research are further defined by addressing the scope of the research and the historical limitation, both of which are cited in Chapter 1. The research does not offer an exhaustive examination of word of faith theology; rather, it focuses on several specific tenets of the movement. Nor does the research offer an exhaustive treatment of the movement's adherents; instead, it focuses on specific persons, historical and contemporary, who have been instrumental in the development and dissemination of word of faith theology. However, while not exhaustive in content, the objective of the research is to be thorough and comprehensive. Hence, the analysis in this chapter is sufficiently representative of word of faith luminaries and their views.

The third sub-question designed to address the research problem of this study is: what is the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology? Chapter 4 addresses this sub-question by offering a historical analysis (historical background and contemporary framework) of word of faith theology. First, the chapter gives an assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement. Here, the movement as a whole is the focus of assessment. The next three sections of the chapter focus on specific aspects of word of faith theology. Second, an analysis of the development of word of faith theology is presented. Third, the chapter submits an evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology. Fourth, from a word of faith perspective, an appraisal is given of four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity), tenets that are analysed from a Church of God perspective in Chapter 3, and in terms of their biblical and theological foundations in Chapter 5. This chapter is relevant to the overall research agenda in that it provides the historical analysis required by the LIM theological research model.

4.2 An assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement

Section 4.2 offers a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement. In this section the following topics are examined: (1) the historical origins of the word of faith movement; (2) the contextual influences on the word of faith movement; (3) key persons in the development of the word of faith movement; and (4) the relevance of this section to the topic of research.

4.2.1 Historical origins of the word of faith movement

Numerous sources have informed and influenced the word of faith movement. Consequently, identifying the origins of the movement is no casual task.

Although the influences often intersect in terms of specifics, research suggests that three primary sources provide the historical origins of the movement: (1) the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions; (2) American revivalism of the 19th century; and (3) specific cultic influences and teaching. The task at this point is to delineate and differentiate among the proposed sources.

First, some propose that the movement arose primarily within the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions (cf. Barron 1990; Moriarty 1992; DeArteaga 1996; et al). Even pre-Pentecostals (e.g., John Wesley, Charles Finney, George Whitefield, et al) are cited as having laid the groundwork that would form the theology of the word of faith movement (Vreeland 2001:9). Because the word of faith movement utilises Evangelical and Pentecostal terminology and so many biblical proof texts, it often exudes the appearance of orthodoxy (Bjornstad 1986:69). Consequently, it is assumed by some that the word of faith movement is the product of those traditions (Sarles 1986:330; Coleman 1993:355). From the perspective of many, believers and non-believers alike, the word of faith movement is synonymous with the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions (Ezeigbo 1989:7). Indeed, some early adherents of the word of faith movement were connected to the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, if not through specific ecclesiastical ties, at minimum by embracing various tenets from those traditions. As a result, the word of faith movement currently enjoys influence within some sectors of the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions (Smith 1987:27-30).

Specific tenets of both the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements can be seen within the word of faith movement. While classical Pentecostalism emphasises the need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the elements of healing, signs and wonders, as well as an emphasis on spiritual gifts were at the heart of the movement from its earliest days (Hollinger 1997:20). Several distinguishing tenets of early Pentecostalism are evident within the word of faith movement, although in the latter they are often manifested in more

extremist terms (Moriarty 1992:27-29): (1) the belief that God is reviving the church within the present generation; (2) the tendency to exalt spiritual manifestations; (3) a tendency to be personality centred; (4) a tendency to produce ministers who are theologically thin (this due primarily to the anti-education mentality at the popular level); and (5) the belief that an outpouring of the Holy Spirit will bring unity to the church at large. Although elements of Pentecostalism at large are found within the word of faith movement, many of those elements are hermeneutically appropriated outside the mainstream of classical Pentecostal theology.

Second, some posit that the word of faith movement realises its antecedent in the revivals of the mid-19th century in the United States (cf. Hollinger 1997; Perriman 2003; et al). During the height of and immediately following the World War II era, numerous evangelistic associations were established. Many of these associations were founded by persons with Pentecostal roots (Harrell 1975:4). Under the leadership of persons who were dissatisfied with established denominational Pentecostalism, the Charismatic movement surged on the scene of post-World War II healing revivalism (Vreeland 2001:1). The healing revivals were often characterised by (Moriarty 1992:41-42): (1) sensationalism and exaggerated announcements of supernatural intervention; (2) cult-like figures who took centre stage of the meetings; (3) exaggerated views of deliverance; (4) scandalous fund-raising techniques; (5) a distorted view of faith; (6) a preoccupation with Satan and demons; and (7) new revelations as a way to obtain spiritual truth. The word of faith movement does indeed contain elements of the healing revival movement, but here too, appropriation of those elements is often extreme in terms of praxis.

Central figures within the healing revival movement were individuals such as Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, A. A. Allen, William Branham (assessed further in Section 4.2.3), Aimee Semple McPherson, Kathryn Kuhlman and Gordon Lindsay. Many others rode the crest of the movement's popularity. While similarities existed within the movement, individual figures also had their own

unique focus. Oral Roberts was the first to utilise the medium of television (the issue of media is discussed further in Section 4.3.3) to expose the general public to healing revivalism. Thomas Wyatt made prosperity the theme of his ministry, citing God's will to prosper the believer (Harrell 1975:229), a theme which characterised many of the revivalist's ministries and evoked considerable controversy among the broader Christian community. Some promoted activation of faith through means such as anointed prayer cloths to bring God's promises to fruition (Hollinger 1997:20). Such methodologies are also noted within the word of faith movement, often taken to an extra-biblical extreme.

Third, a number of researchers (cf. Neuman 1990; MacArthur 1992; Hanegraaff 2009; et al) argue that the word of faith movement is an infiltration of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements via cultic influences. In making a distinction between cult and cultic, Ronald Enroth (1983:12-15) uses three approaches: (1) the sensational; (2) the sociological; and (3) the theological. The sensational approach highlights the more extreme and unconventional elements of a movement or teaching. The sociological approach lends itself to a descriptive focus on the social, cultural and internal dynamics of a cult. The third approach, the theological, is primarily evaluative in that it compares and contrasts the teachings of a given group with Scripture. A fourth approach has been posited (McConnell 1995:17-18), the historical, in which the history of a religious movement or group is assessed in conjunction with the theological approach. The intent is to determine whether or not specific teachings within a group are cultic in nature, an approach utilised in this research as it relates to specific tenets of word of faith theology. The array of cultic movements that emerged in 19th century America can be classified in two groups (Perriman 2003:66-67): (1) the historically or eschatologically oriented cults such as Mormonism, the Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.; and (2) the ahistorical or gnostic cults, which originated from a fascination with the powers of the mental and spiritual worlds, ranging from

transcendentalism to the occult. It is the latter group that profoundly influenced aspects of the word of faith movement.

Research (cf. Farah 1981; Matta 1987; McConnell 1988; Ezeigbo 1989; Neuman 1990; Bowman 2001; Bloodsworth 2009; et al) suggests that due to its many Evangelical tenets, the word of faith movement may not be technically classified as a cult. Rather, specific aspects of the movement may be understood as cultic. For example, the movement holds to several tenets that place it within the broader parameters of Evangelical orthodoxy. Vreeland (2001:3) notes for example: (1) its exaltation of the authority of Scripture; and (2) its partial origins in Holiness/Pentecostalism. Bowman (2001:226) argues that: (1) none of the contemporary word of faith proponents explicitly reject the orthodox doctrines of salvation by grace or the Tri-Unity of God; and (2) word of faith teachers at times affirm the orthodox doctrines of the virgin birth, Christ's physical death, bodily resurrection and second coming.

At the same time, elements of the movement stretch the boundaries of orthodoxy. McConnell (1995:19) writes the following observation.

The word of faith movement is not a cult in the sense and to the degree of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Christian Science. No, the faith movement is not a cult, but it is cultic, that is, it has certain doctrines and practices that are cultic in thought and historical origin. The fact that much of the faith movement is Evangelical makes it all the more necessary, though painful, to expose and refute its cultic elements...That several doctrines of the faith theology are heretical does not mean, however, that participants of the movement are necessarily heretics.

From a historical perspective, based on the doctrinal positions of key persons who influenced the movement, cultic elements have influenced tenets of word of faith theology. Much of E. W. Kenyon's theology was assimilated into word

of faith theology, primarily via Kenneth Hagin. Since Kenyon admitted to having drawn upon cultic metaphysical sources in the formulation of his teaching (cf. Section 4.2.3), cultic elements are evident within particular tenets of word of faith theology.

Undeniably, elements from the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, the mid-19th century healing revival movement, as well as tenets of cultic teaching are found within the word of faith movement. The word of faith movement's extreme appropriation of elements from the first two sources, and the biblically deficient nature of the latter source, provide the framework for further analysis.

4.2.2 Contextual influences on the word of faith movement

Beyond the primary religious sources, various contextual influences also contribute to the development of the word of faith movement. Three influences in particular provide a context favourable for the cultivation of specific tenets of the movement (Bloodsworth 2009:75): (1) the “American dream”, said differently, the nation’s fascination with materialism; (2) the positive thinking school of Norman Vincent Peale; and (3) experience-centred Christianity. These influences are briefly examined in order to further validate the multiplicity of origins within the word of faith movement.

First, the concept of the “American dream”, or America’s fascination with all things material, facilitates certain tenets of the word of faith movement. More of a social than religious influence, the fascination with materialism offers context for the development of the movement. Coined by James Adams in his 1931 volume, *the epic of America*, the phrase “American dream” suggests that life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone (cf. Adams 1931). Written during the early part of the Great Depression, the concept articulates the hope of a brighter and better tomorrow. American society experienced

profound socioeconomic changes in the post-World War II period (Crews 1990:138): (1) economic transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society, especially in the South; (2) increase in the per capita income; (3) increased urbanisation; (4) racial turmoil resulting in the Civil Rights movement; and (5) religious pluralism.

Rising from the dearth of the Great Depression, American culture began to experience a growing pragmatism that led to the active pursuit of anyone and anything that promised to impact personal wealth and health (Simmons 1997:195). The optimism of the post-World War II years, along with an unprecedented economic surge, produced several factors that changed the religious landscape: (1) denominational divisions are no longer as significant as they were prior to World War II; and (2) transdenominational special-purpose groups, including those that tout the prosperity message, are proliferating (cf. Wuthnow 1988). The better and richer and fuller life suggested by the American dream came to be defined primarily in terms of money (Cullen 2003:7).

The lure of materialism attracted not only those of minimal socio-economic status, but also many in the upper strata as well. During this time of economic transition, the Charismatic movement helped to widen social acceptance of the Pentecostal message, producing numerous converts from the middle and upper classes (Crews 1990:159). This singular influence produced a context ripe for the message of the word of faith movement.

Second, the word of faith movement owes much to the positive thinking of Norman Vincent Peale (Cox 2001:272). The mid-20th century, with its expanding post-World War II enthusiasm, produced numerous innovations regarding positivity and a focus on the possibilities of the individual (cf. Meyer 1965). Peale (1989-1993), a Reformed Church in America minister, served for fifty two years as senior pastor of Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. Among his extensive writings is the book, *the power of positive thinking*,

written in 1952. The book is actually an informal compilation of the contents of Peale's sermons, written to assist the reader in achieving a happy, satisfying and worthwhile life. In the introduction, Peale (1952:xi) writes, "this book is written to suggest...that you do not need to be defeated by anything, that you can have peace of mind, improved health, and a never-ceasing flow of energy. In short, that your life can be full of joy and satisfaction". Peale's father, Charles Clifford Peale, a former physician turned Methodist minister, summarised the younger Peale's theology as "a composite of Science of Mind [New Thought], metaphysics, Christian Science, medical and psychological practice, Baptist evangelism, Methodist witnessing, and solid Dutch Reformed Calvinism" (Braden 1966:391). Peale's integration of New Thought principles with biblical theology provides fertile soil for later word of faith concepts.

A new wave in psychology, a non-directive, person-centred, psychotherapeutic approach to counselling, also began to make its mark (cf. Rogers 1951). The goal of this innovative approach was to facilitate self-actualisation. The Rogerian model emphasised the counselee's ability to determine what was best for him, while the role of the counsellor was to assist the counselee by encouraging and reinforcing positive thinking (Starner 2006:394). Here, as in Peale's positivity, the individual is the focus of attention. Such elements of context are noted because of their ultimate influence, whether directly or indirectly, on the word of faith movement. The possibility thinking promoted by Peale, along with a novel approach to psychology promoted by Carl Rogers (1902-1987), produced a climate ripe for the cultivation of specific tenets of word of faith theology.

Third, the experience-centred Christianity, birthed in the mind of 19th century theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, came to fruition in the 20th century in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements (Bloodsworth 2009:75). Because of the spontaneous spirituality, the two movements expanded rapidly at the popular level. People were affected emotionally as the emphasis on experience spread via testimony and personal contact (Anderson 2004:62).

So much so, that the essence of Pentecostalism cannot be understood through dogma and doctrine alone, but through the experience of God, that is, through a narrative theology whose central expression is the testimony (Cox 2001:58, 68-71).

Theology and experience deeply influenced each other within the Pentecostal movement (Jacobsen 2003:5). Although theology and experience are wedded within early Pentecostalism, it should be noted that such experience is to be guided by theological truth. Jacobsen (2003:3) further observes that experience alone is considered dangerous and needs to be “examined and evaluated” via the biblical text. Four interrelated terms describe the Pentecostals of the time: (1) full gospel, which included an emphasis on the doctrines of justification, sanctification, healing, the second coming and Spirit baptism; (2) latter rain, which emphasised a restoration of the lost power of the Spirit; (3) apostolic, which emphasised Pentecostalism as a movement of restoration of apostolic doctrine; and (4) Pentecostal, in which the Pentecostal experience was seen as the beginning of a new era, and whereby Pentecost was understood as both an event and a lifestyle to be repeated in the experiences of believers (Faupel 1996:28-41).

Not all within the Pentecostal or Charismatic movements assumed the posture of experience alone, nor did all within these movements hold an anti-academic or anti-education mentality. However, there was indeed an emphasis on experience-centred Christianity. Consequently, the word of faith movement was influenced by the religious context of one of its antecedents (cf. Anderson 2004:157). Experience-centred Christianity and the extra-biblical extremism often found in specific tenets of word of faith theology are assessed throughout this chapter.

The three contextual influences noted above are relevant to the overall research agenda in that they facilitate a deeper understanding of the historical

origins of the word of faith movement. Key persons in the development of the word of faith movement are now assessed.

4.2.3 Key persons in the development of the word of faith movement

Having examined three primary sources in Section 4.2.1 and three contextual influences in Section 4.2.2, it is advantageous to assess several key persons who facilitate the development of the word of faith movement. Because the movement is so diverse, even complex in its many nuances, numerous persons could be cited. Four in particular, Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866), E. W. Kenyon (1867-1948), William M. Branham (1909-1965) and Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003), are examined because of their influence on the specific biblical tenets assessed throughout this research: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity.

First, the origins of the word of faith movement can be traced back to Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, whose teachings form the nucleus for numerous 19th century mind-cure healing movements, and who is considered the forefather of New Thought (Jacobsen 2003:396; Harley 1991:77-79; et al). Although Quimby is not the sole founder of mental science, being only one of many mental healers plying the trade during the mid-19th century (Tucker 1989:153), his teachings fully embody the concept. After experiencing a personal illness, Quimby became disillusioned with the conventional medical practice of his time. In 1838 he witnessed a public demonstration of mesmeric healing. Quimby researched mesmeric healing for approximately two years before beginning the practice himself in 1840 (Smith 1995:58).

Quimby popularised the idea that disease and suffering originate from incorrect thinking, positing that illness could be cured through healthy attitudes and positive thinking.

If I believe I am sick, I am sick, for my feelings are my sickness, and my sickness is my belief, and my belief is my mind. Therefore, all disease is in the mind or belief. Now as our belief or disease is made up of ideas, which are [spiritual] matter, it is necessary to know what beliefs we are in; for to cure the disease is to correct the error, and as disease is what follows the error, destroy the cause, and the effect will cease...Your error is the cause of your sickness or trouble. Now to cure your sickness or trouble is to correct the error (Quimby 1921:186).

Quimby held that one could create one's own reality via the power of positive affirmation (confession) (Braden 1966:121-123). As such, one could visualise health and wealth, affirm or confess them with one's words, with the result of intangible images becoming reality (Bristol 1948:122). This concept is espoused by other key persons cited in this section and is central to specific tenets of word of faith theology.

Second, the person who represents the genesis of the word of faith movement is William Essek Kenyon (cf. MacArthur 1992; McConnell 1995; Hanegraaff 2009; et al). Kenyon's early religious affiliation was with the Methodist Episcopal Church in which he obtained an exhorter certificate for ministry. He later established and pastored several Baptist churches, remaining a Baptist minister until his death. Kenyon enrolled in the Emerson College of Oratory in 1892, an institution known for its dissemination of metaphysical, transcendental and New Thought teachings. Although some researchers (cf. DeArteaga 1992; Simmons 1997; Vreeland 2001; et al) diminish this influence, others (cf. Cannon n.d.; Matta 1987; McConnell 1995; Hanegraaff 2009; et al) posit that his association with Emerson greatly influenced the development of his theology. Believing the stale Protestant churches of his day were unable to offer what aspects of mind-science teaching could offer, Kenyon sought to forge a new kind of Christianity—a meld of Christianity and New Thought science (Geracie 1993:55).

Indeed, Kenyon's writings reveal influences beyond the scope of his Protestant theological affiliation. For example, Kenyon (1942:76-84) suggests that when David's soldiers appropriated the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, they became supermen and were shielded from death during warfare. Kenyon alludes to the formation of supermen, a master race of Christians no longer bound by external realities. He (Kenyon 1943:90) advances the notion of living in perfect health, free from the limitations of the physical nature, and (Kenyon 1945:93) proposes that the creative ability (*ex nihilo*) observed in creation is imparted to believers in the present reality (cf. Romans 4:17). Although Kenyon believed he had rediscovered hidden/lost truths from Scripture, his efforts to revitalise the churches of his day involved the incorporation of metaphysical religious concepts, i.e., a meld of evangelical Christianity and transcendental mind-science (Smith 1995:153-154, 168). Many of the phrases popularised by contemporary word of faith proponents, such as "What I confess, I possess", were coined by Kenyon (Hanegraaff 2009:18). Kenyon's influence on the development of the word of faith movement is further reflected in brief assessments of William Branham and Kenneth Hagin.

Third, the word of faith movement can be traced to the more extreme healing revivalists of the mid-20th century such as William Marrion Branham (Jacobsen 2003:396; Anderson 2004:157). Branham is called the second father of the modern word of faith movement (Bowman 2001:86). Since he was influenced by and often quoted the works of Kenyon (Simmons 1985:386), aspects of Branham's ministry and teaching facilitate the development of the word of faith movement. Branham was the major influence on the Latter Rain movement, a movement characterised by: (1) belief in a complete restoration of 1st century truths; (2) the restoration of the five-fold ministry of apostles and prophets to accompany pastors, evangelists and teachers; (3) the spiritual disciplines of deliverance, fasting and the laying on of hands for impartation; (4) restoration of personal prophecy to the church; (5) recovery of true worship in the church; (6) the belief that those operating in

the truth of Latter Rain restorationism would be blessed with immortality before Christ's return; and (7) the belief that the various segments of the church will receive unity of the faith before Jesus returns (Bowman 2001:44-47).

Branham also held several highly controversial views. First, the belief that God's message to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 were directed toward various epochs in history. He stated that Paul was the messenger to the Ephesian church, Irenaeus was messenger to the Smyrnean church, Martin was messenger to the Pergamean church, Columba was messenger to the Thyatiran church, Luther was messenger to the Sardisean church, Wesley was messenger to the Philadelphian church, and that he (Branham) was messenger to the Laodicean church. Second, the bizarre serpent seed doctrine of Genesis 3, in which Eve is purported to have been sexually intimate with the serpent, with Cain produced as a result of the union. Third, an inordinate emphasis on supernatural manifestations, in which Branham is dependent on the presence of an angel to effectively minister to the crowds. Whether most within the movement realise it or not, word of faith televangelists are heavily indebted to the Latter Rain movement and especially to Branham (Bowman 2001:89).

Branham is representative of numerous healing ministries of his day, many of which devolved into an emphasis on the miraculous that led to shameful showmanship, moral decadence, exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims of healing, and a triumphalism that betrayed the humility of the cross (Anderson 2004:59).

Fourth, while E. W. Kenyon is often referenced as the father of the word of faith movement, Kenneth E. Hagin (1978:8), who considered William Branham to be a prophet of God, is initially responsible for disseminating Kenyon's material at the popular level (Hanegraaff 2009:17). The individuals cited in this section, as well as numerous others, influenced the origins of the

word of faith movement. However, it was Kenneth Hagin who extracted components of those influences and popularised them. Converted in 1933, Hagin was healed the following year of a congenital heart disease (Riss 2003b:687). He began his ministry as a lay preacher in a multidenominational church. In 1937 Hagin was baptised in the Holy Spirit and began ministering in various Pentecostal churches. An itinerant ministry began in 1949, culminating in the establishment of a ministry base in 1963 (Tang 2006:2). In 1974, Hagin founded Rhema Bible Training Center, which by 2000 boasted 16,500 graduates.

Hagin's influence among Pentecostals and Charismatics at large is important because of the implications of his theology, much of which he plagiarises from the writings of E. W. Kenyon. Researchers (cf. McConnell 1995; Hanegraaff 2009; et al) cite extensive and frequent plagiarism from at least eight of Kenyon's books. Hagin, however, attributes his theological system (faith-formula theology) to visions, revelations, and personal visitations of Jesus (Moriarty 1992:83). Hagin's writings facilitate an understanding not only of the origin of many of his teachings, but also the development of specific aspects of word of faith theology.

In *redeemed from poverty, sickness, death* (1963), Hagin argues that poverty and sickness are a curse and that both have been nullified in Christ (cf. Galatians 3:13). In *what faith is* (1975) and *healing belongs to us* (1978) he proposes that physical healing is a gift that one needs only accept to possess. Hagin's book, *how to write your own ticket with God* (1979a), describes how to attain one's desires through the power of faith and positive confession of a four-step plan given by Jesus: (1) say it; (2) do it; (3) receive it; and (4) tell it. In *seven things you should know about divine healing*, Hagin (1979b:21) writes, "no believer should ever be sick...every believer should live his full life span down here on this earth...and finally fall asleep in Jesus". Through his writings, mass media and Rhema Bible Training Center, Hagin influenced many within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. The modern word of faith movement spread largely via the influence of independent

charismatic churches, many of which were founded by Rhema graduates (Barron 1990:426-427).

4.2.4 Relevance to this research

The purpose of Section 4.2 is to offer a brief historical and contemporary assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement. In this section the following topics are examined: (1) the historical origins of the word of faith movement; (2) the contextual influences on the word of faith movement; (3) key persons in the development of the word of faith movement; and (4) the relevance of this section to the topic of research. While not an exhaustive treatment, the examination in this section is representative of the myriad influences on the word of faith movement.

This section is relevant to this research, first, in that it contributes to the overall context of the study. Assessing the pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God necessitates an understanding, not only of the Church of God, but also of the word of faith movement. This idea is further examined in Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. Second, Section 4.2 facilitates an understanding of the complex origins of the word of faith movement. There is no single theological system that informs the movement. Myriad theological (Christian and non-Christian) streams inform its development. This is especially important for examining the implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God. Third, this section is relevant to the research in that an awareness of the key persons associated with the movement's development further validates the need for an assessment of implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

Having briefly assessed the origins of the movement, the research now analyses the development of the message.

4.3 An analysis of the development of the word of faith message

While Section 4.2 offers an assessment of the various origins of the word of faith movement, the assessment now shifts to the message of the movement. The assessment is not exhaustive in terms of why the word of faith message gained popularity or expanded in influence; rather, several specific sources of the message's expansion are examined. In this section, the following topics are analysed relative to their influence on the development of the word of faith message: (1) various sources of the message; (2) Scripture with notes: the Dake annotated reference Bible; (3) significance of mass media; and (4) the relevance of this section to the topic of research.

4.3.1 Various sources of the message

A succinct treatment of mind-cure is prerequisite to the task of analysing the development of specific tenets of the word of faith message. The mental healers of postbellum America used the term metaphysics in reference to the causative view of the mind and its control over matter. Said differently, the relationship of mind and matter was believed to enable one to experience bodily healing (Smith 1995:34). It is difficult to find an adequate term for this movement as it existed in the mid to late 19th century (Gottschalk 1973:99); however, the following descriptives are frequently utilised: metaphysical healing; science of the mind; science of health; science of thought; mental therapeutics; metaphysical Christianity; and practical Christianity.

The descriptive most often used is mind-cure (Gottschalk 1973:99). Within the mind-cure movement reside numerous streams of thought, from absolute monism to objective idealism (cf. Anderson 1991). The fundamental sources that contribute to the mind-cure worldview are: (1) philosophical idealism; (2) Swedenborgianism; (3) Mesmerism; (4) Unitarianism; and (5) Transcendentalism (Smith 1995:vi). Each source is now briefly assessed per its influence on specific aspects of the word of faith message.

First, philosophical idealism provides the core element of the mind-cure worldview. Here, the relationship between mind and matter is critical. Philosophical idealism is the view that matter does not exist in its own right, but is produced by the mind. Origins of this view are found as early as Plato (427-347 BC), who held that in addition to the world of sensible objects, there exists a world of ideas and forms (not merely ideas in the mind, but ideas which exist objectively or absolutely) (Smith 1995:36). Plato learned to focus his attention not on the fluctuating objects of sense experience, but on the fixed and abiding essence of things as the only possible objects of true knowledge; a practise assimilated by mind-cure in an attempt to harmonise the physical and ideal (Miller 1992:75). Although there are numerous variations of both objective and subjective idealism, the common thread within mind-cure is the belief that matter is defined by the mind. Mind is primary, while matter is secondary. Based on this premise, mind-cure, as well as myriad mental healers-at-large, proceed a step further by claiming that matter is causative—hence, mind over matter (Smith 1995:37-38). This aspect of philosophical idealism provides a valid source for specific aspects of the word of faith message, namely, positive confession and physical healing.

The second source to influence the word of faith message is Swedenborgianism, officially known as The Church of New Jerusalem. A sect born during the mid-18th century from the writings and mystical experiences of Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Swedenborgianism is a heterogeneous theology, much of which is a corrective to orthodoxy. Like Joseph Smith, who founded Mormonism, Swedenborg was convinced he was a messenger from God to his generation. He authored more than thirty religious volumes, based on communication from spirit guides who offered new biblical interpretations and extra-biblical revelations (Tucker 1989:381). Swedenborg (Sigstedt 1952:211) writes, “I have written entire pages, and the spirits did not dictate the words, but absolutely guided my hand, so that it was they who were doing the writing...as flowed from God Messiah”. Smith (1995:39) argues that Swedenborg’s spiritual approach to hermeneutics became a common feature

among mind-cure: the correction of the traditional, literal, sense-derived interpretation of Scripture by a deeper, spiritually-perceived understanding of revelation. This tenet of Swedenborgianism, a hermeneutic that seeks to correct orthodoxy, is also found in aspects of the word of faith message, and can therefore be listed among its myriad sources.

A third source to influence the word of faith message is Mesmerism. Holding doctorates in both medicine and philosophy, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) utilised magnetic cure as a form of realigning the body's electricity. Mesmer's theories and practices were rejected by the traditional medical community of his day, however, aspects of his theory continued to be explored. In 1784, Count Maxime de Puysegur, who had learned of Mesmerism from his brother, replaced the use of magnets with verbal commands and touch. Through mesmeric experimentation, Puysegur discovered two of the central elements of hypnosis: artificially induced somnambulism and posthypnotic amnesia, which, according to Zweig (1932:72), birthed the modern science of psychology. The premise of this discovery is at the very least foundational to the theory of suggestion (subjective mental suggestion) in modern psychology. Although Mesmer is not considered the father of mind-cure, his discoveries provide the foundation for what becomes the scientific component of mental healing, a premise that is obviously transitional to Christian Science and mind-cure (Smith 1995:44). Mesmeric healing introduces Phineas Quimby to the concept of mental healing (cf. Section 4.2.3), which in turn influences E. W. Kenyon, and ultimately becomes a source for specific aspects of the word of faith message.

A fourth source to influence the word of faith message is Unitarianism. The Unitarian movement burst on the American scene with the election and installation of Henry Ware to Harvard's Divinity chair in 1805. Orthodox reaction to this event was the founding of Andover Seminary (1807) to train candidates for orthodox divinity, a task for which Harvard was no longer deemed adequate by the orthodox (Wright 1975:8). Unitarianism conveyed an

overt anti-orthodox sentiment, embracing much of Enlightenment thinking; namely, a deistic worldview, utilitarian ethics, and an epistemology combining empiricism, rationalism and scepticism (Smith 1995:46). Such emphases later influenced and impacted the mind-cure movement (Atkins 1923:220-222). Mind-cure, while disregarding much of supernatural theology, understood the miraculous in terms of discovering and utilising various laws of the universe. Although mind-cure is not in the main Unitarian, indeed, aspects of Unitarian theology can be found to have influenced its development in that: (1) it nurtured an anti-orthodox sentiment; (2) it held a deep reverence for natural law; (3) it emphasised the employment of reason in the inner life; and (4) a number of leading figures in mind-cure were Unitarians or from that background (Atkins 1923:226). Consequently, Unitarianism is among the sources of the word of faith message.

A fifth source to influence the word of faith message is Transcendentalism, which brings together several core elements of mind-cure; specifically, the mystic character of eastern philosophy, a deified view of human potential, and the Swedenborgian understanding of cause and effect. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), a former Unitarian minister, pioneered the concepts of Transcendentalism in America, along with literary talents such as Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, William Channing and Theodore Parker. Channing summarises the movement from the perception of an insider.

Transcendentalism was an assertion of the inalienable integrity of man, of the immanence of Divinity in instinct...on the somewhat stunted stock of Unitarianism—whose characteristic dogma was trust in individual reason as correlative to Supreme Wisdom...and the result was a vague yet exalting conception of the godlike nature of the human spirit (Miller 1957:36-37; cf. Farina 1990:1183).

In Transcendentalism, the human spirit is credited with unlimited potential. The physical senses are inadequate to reveal reality, which can be known only by the inner perception of the human spirit. Revelation knowledge is gained by direct influx of divine wisdom to the individual, transcending the natural science of the physical world (Judah 1967:26). The concept of revelation knowledge is championed by Kenyon (cf. Section 4.2.3), ultimately finding its way into aspects of the word of faith message.

From the five sources briefly assessed, emerge several characteristics that inform mind-cure as a worldview: (1) an idealism that stresses mind over matter; (2) a subjective epistemology aimed at the ascendancy of inner spiritual perception over external physical sensation (with application both to bodily conditions and word meanings); (3) the discovery and application of universal laws governing mind and matter (with application to bodily healing and spiritual enlightenment); (4) a mystic tendency concerning the nature of mind and matter and their underlying harmony tending to deify humanity; and (5) an on-going connection to the world of paranormal/occult knowledge and spiritism in particular (Smith 1995:55).

This section is relevant to the overall research in that elements of the religious climate of this period inform the development of the word of faith message by providing an atmosphere in which specific tenets of the movement are cultivated.

4.3.2 Scripture with notes: the Dake annotated reference Bible

The *Scofield study Bible*, first published in 1909, was the predecessor of the very successful marketing trend of orienting Bible study tools to the average layperson (Mangum and Sweetnam 2009:172). The proliferation of study Bibles over the past few decades has produced at the popular level numerous options for the study of Scripture. Written from various theological, doctrinal

and translational perspectives, these Bibles include not only the text of a specific translation(s), but also incorporate aids designed to facilitate a clearer understanding of Scripture. Topics covered in study Bible's include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) explanatory notes regarding textual and linguistic issues; (2) insight into the cultural, social and political context of the biblical world; (3) manners and customs of biblical times; (4) historical data, from both biblical and secular perspectives; (5) individual word studies; (6) theological perspectives and positions; and (7) principles for life application.

Some study Bibles are thematic in nature in which the various aids employ a specific theme throughout the volume. Examples of thematic study Bibles include: the *archaeological study Bible*, which emphasises archaeological discoveries throughout history; the *life application study Bible*, with its focus on applying biblical principles to everyday living; and the *starting point study Bible*, with its emphasis on discipleship. Certain study Bibles incorporate the writings of a particular individual, which most always includes the individual's particular doctrinal or theological views. Examples of such include: the *MacArthur study Bible*, which incorporates the writings of evangelical pastor John MacArthur; the *Thompson chain reference Bible*, with its unique reference system designed by Frank Thompson; and the *Scofield study Bible*, with its emphasis on dispensational theology.

Study Bibles have the potential to significantly influence readers at the popular level. For example, the footnotes and marginal notations of the *Scofield study Bible* are viewed by many of its readers as containing absolute truth (Anderson 2004:21). Comparably, the *Dake annotated reference Bible* has profoundly influenced at the popular level many Pentecostals, Charismatics and word of faith advocates. Written by Finis Jennings Dake (1902-1987), the New Testament portion was published in 1961, with the complete Bible published in 1963. Acclaimed by some as the "Pentecostal study Bible", the Dake Bible contains the text of the King James Version. If Dake's influence was limited to the biblical text alone, its impact on the word

of faith message would perhaps be minimal. The influence comes from the commentary notes and theology posited by the Bible—more than 8,000 outlines, 35,000 commentary notes and over 500,000 references for study—as well as numerous books and booklets written by Dake. To his credit, Dake argues that the Bible is the inerrant and authoritative word of God, and his efforts to systematise biblical teachings on numerous topics seem to be sincere, however, his over simplistic, hyper-literal approach results in many incorrect interpretations (Spencer and Bright 2004). Many of the commentary notes are derived from the volume, *God's plan for man* (Dake 1949), originally a fifty-two week Bible study series compiled in book form. Dake's impact on conservative Pentecostalism cannot be overstated (Alexander 2003:569). Prior to the Dake's Bible, the Scofield Bible was a fixture among conservative Christians. Alexander (2003:569) argues that, after 1963, the notes contained in the Dake's Bible became the “bread and butter of many prominent preachers and the staple of [many] Pentecostal congregations”.

During the author's two decades of pastoral ministry in the Church of God, he has personally experienced more than a few Pentecostals who revere the Dake Bible and whose theological worldview has been influenced and informed by the footnotes and marginal notations therein. Jimmy Swaggart (1987:44) writes that Dake was a scholar unparalleled, and that he owed his Bible education to Dake. The Dake Bible is extremely popular among word of faith advocates, perhaps due to its embrace and usage by leading word of faith teachers such as Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland (Ferraiuolo 1994:50). As a result, the Dake Bible has greatly influenced the development and escalation of the word of faith message. Numerous word of faith teachers have been persuasively influenced by the Dake Bible, as noted by the following endorsements (Dake 2006): (1) Joyce Meyer states, “I thank God for the people who produced the Dake Bible, their hard work has made it easier for me to teach God's Word”; (2) Marilyn Hickey states, “the Dake Bible is the best reference and study Bible you can get. I have personally worn out four Dake Bibles”; (3) Creflo Dollar states, “the Dake Bible helped me build a solid

foundation in the Word”; (4) Rod Parsley states, “the Dake Bible is one of the greatest literary works ever made”. Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland have utilised Dake as a source for certain of their quizzical doctrines (Spancer nd).

Dake’s influence on the word of faith message in general—as well as on the four biblical tenets assessed in this dissertation—is unmistakable. First, Dake (1950:91) asserts that God’s blessing of Abraham with great wealth serves as an example that every believer has access to this aspect of the Abrahamic covenant. This is a resounding concept in the word of faith message. Second, Dake (1949:253; 1950:79) posits that the atonement of Christ guarantees physical healing to be God’s will for every Christian who appropriates adequate faith. This too is a recurring theme within the word of faith message. Third, Dake (1950:53) suggests that the nature of faith is reflected in the believer based on God’s activity described in Romans 4:17, a calling into existence things that are not. The word of faith message asserts that every believer, via positive confession, may enjoy the creative power (*ex nihilo*) described in Romans 4:17. Fourth, Dake (1949:222; 1950:95; 1963:282) argues that God desires abundant prosperity and material wealth for every believer. This frequent theme is disseminated on a regular basis within the word of faith message.

Evangelical scholars and apologists have expressed concern over Dake’s teachings, some of which fail to align with historic Christian orthodoxy (Spencer and Bright 2004). Although Dake has indeed influenced many Pentecostals, Charismatics and word of faith adherent’s, not all within these communities have been so readily motivated. Many of Dake’s theological assertions fail to align with classical Pentecostal theology. Assemblies of God general secretary, George Wood, states that many of Dake’s opinions are in direct conflict with the denomination’s statement of fundamental truth (Ferraiuolo 1994:50). The same is true of the Church of God, which also holds to a classical Pentecostal worldview. This section is relevant to the overall research agenda of this dissertation for the following reasons: (1) it reveals

one of the venues that facilitated the development of the word of faith message; and (2) it contributes to the implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God that will be examined in Chapter 6.

4.3.3 Significance of mass media

Communication professionals (cf. Ahonen 2010) have identified seven basic forms of mass media: (1) print, which includes books, booklets, letters, magazines, newspapers, etc.; (2) recordings such as music, lectures, sermons, etc.; (3) cinema, via theatre and movies; (4) radio; (5) television; (6) the Internet; and most recently (7) mobile. Each of the seven forms offers unique challenges, as well as, opportunities for influencing a particular target group. Utilisation of mass media is a major contributing factor to the global influence of the word of faith message, particularly US-based religious media (Phiri and Maxwell 2007; cf. Folarin 2007:71). The purpose of this section is not to offer an assessment of all, or even the most recent forms of mass media in terms of their facilitation of the word of faith message. Nor is the purpose to examine the influence of mass media in general on religion or culture. Each form of mass media noted above is significant in its own right. The purpose of this section is to appraise the influence of three forms of mass media—radio, television and print—on the rapid dissemination of the word of faith message during the second half of the 20th century.

First, the utilisation of radio as a form of mass media is significant in the propagation of the word of faith message, in that radio laid the foundation for the subsequent media form of television. The potential of radio for propagating the gospel was recognised early on by forward thinking religious entrepreneurs. The purpose of Christian radio programming is to convert people to Christianity and to provide teaching and preaching opportunities for Christians. Initially, the use of mass media was denounced and railed against

by some clergy; however, the possibilities of this new form of media became evident.

Congregationalist minister S. Parkes Cadman (1864-1936) was one of the first religionists to utilise the medium of radio, pioneering the field in 1923 (cf. Radio 1946). In 1928 Cadman began a weekly Sunday radio broadcast on NBC, reaching a national audience of some five million (cf. Air 1931). Aimee Semple McPherson, a pioneering tent-revivalist, is another who utilised the medium of radio to reach a larger audience. McPherson was one of the first women to preach via radio, airing programming over her own radio station beginning in 1924. Roman Catholic priest, Father Charles Coughlin (1891-1979), reached millions of listeners in the early 1930's via a thirty-six station network (Severin and Tankard 2001:111). Other early Christian radio entrepreneurs in the United States include (dates of broadcast shown): (1) Bob Jones, Sr., 1927-1962; (2) Ralph Sockman, 1928-1962; (3) G. E. Lowman, 1930-1965; and (4) Charles E. Fuller, 1937-1968 (cf. Televangelism). Indeed, radio established the potential of utilising mass media as a platform for expanding the Christian message. Although, for the word of faith message, the full extent of this potential would not be realised through radio, but television; however, radio did provide the framework within which the potential of mass media could be visualised.

Second, television, and specifically the advent of religious television, most profoundly impacted the rapid dissemination of the word of faith message. American Roman Catholic archbishop, Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979), was perhaps the first professional religionist to realise the immense potential of media as a means of shaping religion in the laity (Tickle 2008:68). Sheen hosted a night-time radio program from 1930-1950, then a television program from 1951-1968. Rex Humbard (1919-2007) was among the first Pentecostals to utilise television, beginning his broadcasting career in 1949 (Jenkins 2007), eventually being inducted into the Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1993. Pentecostal evangelist Oral Roberts (1918-2009) began broadcasting via

television in 1954, attracting millions of followers worldwide to his faith-healing ministry (Schneider 2009). Schneider (2009) further observes that Roberts trained and mentored several generations of younger word of faith preachers, who now have television, multimedia, corporation and business empires of their own.

Throughout the last half of the 20th century, word of faith-friendly ministries came to dominate religious media via television. Modern technology has given the word of faith message a potential global audience of multiple millions, not only via secular television stations, satellite and cable networks, but also through Christian television networks, which began to emerge in the early 1970's. The Inspiration Network (INSP), founded in the early 1970's as the PTL Satellite Network by televangelists Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, is available to over 66 million U. S. homes. Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the largest Christian television network in the U. S., was founded in 1973 by Paul and Jan Crouch. TBN reaches over 100 million homes in the U. S., with programming translated into eleven languages and broadcast to over 75 countries. Daystar Television Network, which traces its roots to 1993, has a potential U. S. audience of over 80 million homes and a global potential audience of 670 million homes. The majority of broadcasts are from groups and individuals aligned with various Charismatic and Pentecostal movements (cf. Daystar). Much of the programming on these stations is word of faith in orientation.

Perhaps no version of televangelism is more clearly American than the word of faith message, which over the past several decades has grown to represent over half of the highest-rated religious programming (Schultze 2003:133). Many Americans derive their sense of purpose from religious television, much of which is inherently word of faith in orientation (Schultze 2003:16-17). Religious programs are filled with good cheer. They celebrate affluence. Their featured players become celebrities. Though their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings, or rather, because their messages are trivial, the

shows have high ratings (Postman 1985:121). Religious media has become the venue from which many find a worldview that reflects their values and justifies their behaviour and way of life, producing a consumer-oriented spirituality (Fore 1987:24; Hull 1988:39). William Hendricks (1984:64) describes the theology of the electronic church as the hope that God is unambiguously on the side of the believer who claims the promises of faith.

Because of this, many newcomers to the faith are increasingly being discipled not by pastors, church discipleship programmes or other believers, but by religious media (Bowers 2004:4-5). Superstitious, and often biblically illiterate, many Americans are easily persuaded to believe and hope for things that: (1) reflect America's affluence as a nation; (2) express selfishness; and (3) manifest individualism (Schultze 2003:131-132). Such a message reflects the American dream and the hope of attaining affluence. Through myriad fundraising methods, such as telethons, praise-a-thons, share-a-thons, and Christian-oriented infomercials, support is gleaned in order to continue such programming. Viewers are bombarded with messages exhorting them to plant a seed of faith and believe that from it they will reap an unimaginable harvest of plenty (Lioy 2007:47; cf. Folarin 2007:83; Robison 2003; Sarles 1986:333). One study reveals that health related issues are mentioned more than any other personal concerns, including spiritual or religious concerns (Abelman and Neuendorf 1985:106). Many word of faith proponents excel in these types of communication methodologies.

Schultze (2003:81) argues that the reason for the current popularity of the Charismatic movement, and, by virtue of its doctrinal relationship the word of faith movement as well, is a culture increasingly dominated by the medium of television. W. Robert Godfrey (1990:164-165), professor of church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, writes that the great danger posed by much of contemporary religious programming is twofold: (1) it threatens to replace the local church as the central place of religious life for many people; and (2) since religious television cannot do all that Christ commissions the

local church to do, religious programming as one's sole source of spirituality will be a religion that is sub-Christian. Said differently, even if the doctrine is not errant (as it often is), it will certainly be incomplete.

Third, the printed page as a form of mass media has profoundly impacted human communication at large, as well as facilitated the spread of the word of faith message. This is evident via the myriad books, booklets, magazines, and personal letters made available to both present and potential adherents. The often unorthodox gospel of televangelism in general, and word of faith in particular, is seen most clearly in the barrage of fund-raising letters sent to viewers who respond to on-air offers of various products (Schultze 2003:141). The appalling practice of offering a ministry gift in order to facilitate further correspondence—with the intention of increasing revenue—is prevalent among such programming. Schultze (2003:142) further argues that while on the air such persons are frequently coy about the kind of gospel they preach; however, in letters, magazines, books and booklets, their real message is both revealing and frightening. Frequent use is made of such items as vials of purported holy water, olive oil from Israel, anointed prayer cloths and myriad other trinkets, all with the promise of God's personal blessings on the life of the recipient.

Adherents of the word of faith message treat faith as a magical force that can unleash the power of health and wealth (Lioy 2007:60). For example, word of faith media personality, Marilyn Hickey (1984:16), writes that she wants God to bless and prosper those who study and read her magazine, *time with him*, suggesting that as a result God's people will live in supernatural health and divine financial prosperity. Word of faith proponent Kenneth Copeland (1979c:29) writes to his constituents, telling them they have the right to live free from sickness and disease. John Avanzini (1989:7) boldly declares that God wants to reveal himself to every believer in the miracle of the hundredfold financial increase. Steve Munsey (2008) advocates a similar blessing related to the Jewish feast of Passover. *Charisma* magazine, one of the most

celebrity-oriented Charismatic magazines in the U. S., frequently profiles well-known word of faith broadcasters, many of whom further perpetuate such practices (Schultze 2003:82).

The utilisation of mass media in general, especially the three forms assessed in this section, has greatly enhanced and expanded the influence of the word of faith message. The American affinity for all things positive produces at the popular level a tendency, even a hope, that the emphases of the word of faith message such as health, wealth, success, prosperity, etc., can indeed be realised on a personal level.

4.3.4 Relevance to this research

The purpose of Section 4.3 is to offer an analysis of the development of the word of faith message. The assessment focuses on specific reasons the word of faith message gained popularity or expanded in influence in the last half of the 20th century. The following topics are analysed relative to their influence: (1) various sources of the message; (2) Scripture with notes: the Dake annotated reference Bible; (3) significance of mass media; and (4) the relevance of this section to the topic of research. The analysis in this section, while not all-inclusive, is characteristic of the numerous influences that facilitated the expansion of the word of faith message.

Section 4.3 is relevant to this research, first, in that it contributes to the overall context of the study. Pastoral implications of word of faith theology for the Church of God inevitably require an understanding of how and why the word of faith message gained acceptance at the popular level. Second, Section 4.3 facilitates an understanding of how specific tenets of the word of faith message have been embraced by some within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Third, this section is relevant to the research in that, due to the broad appeal of the word of faith message, it further validates the

need for an assessment of implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

Having briefly assessed several factors inherent in the development of the word of faith message, the research now evaluates several prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology.

4.4 An evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology

Section 4.2 offers an assessment of the various origins of the word of faith movement, while Section 4.3 analyses the development of the word of faith message. Section 4.4 now focuses on an evaluation of prominent proponents of word of faith theology. This evaluation is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of all word of faith proponents; such a task is beyond the scope of this study. Nor does the evaluation offer an exhaustive treatment of any one proponent; rather, a cursory treatment of seven prominent proponents is given. However, the proponents evaluated in this section represent the nucleus of word of faith theology. While variations are indeed evident among the seven persons evaluated in terms of doctrine, praxis, methodology, etc., the core elements that define word of faith theology are obvious in all. Although others could be evaluated with equal relevance, a profile of the following contemporary proponents serves as a sampling of the broader word of faith movement: (1) Kenneth and Gloria Copeland; (2) Charles Capps; (3) Joel Osteen; (4) Joyce Meyer; (5) Paula White; (6) Benny Hinn; and (7) Robert Tilton.

4.4.1 Kenneth & Gloria Copeland

Televangelist and author, Kenneth Copeland, one of the most popular of the word of faith proponents, was born in Lubbock, Texas, in 1934. Prior to his conversion in 1962, Copeland was a recording artist with the Imperial Records label, having at least one song on the Top 40 chart in 1957. Copeland became a student at Oral Roberts University in 1967, serving as a co-pilot for Roberts' crusade flights. During this time he also attended Kenneth Hagin's Tulsa seminars and was heavily influenced by Hagin's teaching. In 1968, Kenneth and his wife, Gloria, returned to Fort Worth, Texas, where they founded the Kenneth Copeland Evangelistic Association (Riss 2003a:562). In 1973, the ministry began publishing *believer's voice of victory*, a monthly magazine promoting the word of faith message. The Copelands began broadcasting via radio in 1975, a program which quickly gained popularity in North America. In 1979, they launched an equally successful television program that soon became international in scope. In 1981, the ministry further expanded its base by offering satellite communications that currently enjoy a global outreach. Kenneth claims an earned Ph.D. and Gloria an earned D.Min.—both from Life Christian University in Lutz, Florida. On the surface this appears to add scholarly validity to the substance of their message; however, additional research reveals otherwise.

The source of the Copelands' credentials is Life Christian University, a school based in Lutz, Florida. According to the LCU website (cf. Life), the following word of faith proponents obtained doctorates from the school: (1) Kenneth Copeland; (2) Gloria Copeland; (3) Joyce Meyer; (4) Benny Hinn; (5) Rodney Howard-Browne; (6) Adonica Howard-Browne; and (7) Norvel Hayes. LCU maintains that it is "rapidly becoming known as one of the premier ministry universities in the world...and a great number of prominent and distinguished ministers...have chosen Life Christian University for recognition of their academic work" (cf. Life).

While claiming to offer “one of the most prestigious degrees available” (cf. Life), LCU holds accreditation by an independent, non-government approved accrediting agency. The purpose of accepted norms of accreditation is to ensure contemporary standards of academic excellence. Since this form of ministry accreditation is not recognised by the United States Department of Education, LCU does not operate within the benchmark models of regional or national accreditation. In a paper presented at Dallas Theological Seminary, William Brown (2006:4-5) makes the following observation.

I was confronted with the claim that word of faith teacher Joyce Meyer possesses an earned Ph.D. in theology from Life Christian University. Other word of faith teachers were prominently featured, most notably Kenneth Copeland. I contacted the registrar at LCU on September 20, 2006. The registrar named Tammy told me that neither had written a dissertation or defended it, but both were given Ph.D.’s because of their already extant work. A certain number of pages netted each faith teacher a bachelor’s degree, more pages earned a master’s degree, and doctorates were awarded based on already published books. I only note this in case someone raises the objection that faith teachers possess earned doctorates in theology. Their “training” is little more than an honorary certificate that is not called such.

Since many entities such as LCU award similar credentials, LCU is not the only source of doctoral titles among word of faith proponents. Nor is the use of such academic nomenclature for the purpose of adding supposed credibility to one’s doctrinal or theological position(s) unique to word of faith proponents. It is evident among many faith traditions. This facet of the research is noted only to make the reader aware that, from the perspective of proponents who claim such credentials, the word of faith message posited is not necessarily the result of substantive hermeneutics or the scholarly exegesis of Scripture.

Furthermore, a legitimately earned academic doctorate is not prerequisite to propagating biblical truth. As Reformed theologian, R. C. Sproul (1990:35) writes, “one does not need a Ph.D. in theology to understand that the Bible teaches that we are sinners in need of the atoning work of Christ”.

Copeland is known as one of the most extreme of the word of faith proponents (Bloodsworth 2009:16), indeed, “the chief exponent” of the faith message (Ostling 1986:69). Promoting the power of positive confession Copeland (1987:32) writes, “As a believer, you have the right to make commands in the name of Jesus. Each time you stand on the Word, you are commanding God to a certain extent because of his Word”. Authority over Satan, according to Copeland (1974:15), is exercised by the force of faith, of which he writes, “There are certain laws governing prosperity revealed in God’s Word...they will work when they are put to work, and they will stop working when the force of faith is stopped”. To facilitate the force of faith, Copeland (1974:99) asserts that a believer’s words must be “disciplined to agree with what the Bible says about wealth and prosperity”, that to say negative doubtful words allows Satan to create sickness and poverty. The gospel preached by Copeland (1985a:14) does not include poverty, which he argues is an evil spirit. He gives the following formula for receiving God’s provision: (1) decide on the amount you need; (2) get in agreement according to Matthew 18:19; (3) lay hold on it by faith; (4) bind the devil and his forces in the name of Jesus; (5) loose the forces of heaven; and (6) praise God for the answer (Copeland 1985:101-103).

Copeland’s wife, Gloria, is an influential speaker in her own right, every bit as effective at propagating the seed faith message and raising funds as her husband (Bloodsworth 2009:16). In *God’s will for you*, Gloria (1972:54) writes, “Give \$10 and receive \$1000; give \$1000 and receive \$100,000...give one house and receive one hundred houses or a house worth one hundred times as much...In short, Mark 10:30 is a good deal”. She (2010:23) writes that

Christians should expect to live long lives, in good health and fully productive up to 120 years of age.

A strong advocate for divine health and healing, Copeland (1999:25) argues, “You are entitled to all the rights and privileges in the kingdom of God, and one of their rights is health and healing”. Copeland’s (1990) view of the atonement is that “it wasn’t the physical death [of Jesus] on the cross that paid the price for sin...anybody could do that”; rather, Jesus had to suffer in hell to fully atone for sin (a word of faith view of the atonement is given further treatment in Section 4.5.2). Mentored by Kenneth Hagin and modelling his theology after that of Hagin, Copeland applies God’s promises to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1-3) to modern-day believers. The part Jesus played was to make the promise binding through his atonement (Gongwer 2007:72). Copeland (1987a:10) argues that the blessings and curses listed in Deuteronomy 28 are also linked to contemporary believers, writing “That’s a list of curses Christ has freed you from...those are things God has healed you of and delivered you from”. The Copeland’s have profoundly influenced a younger generation of word of faith advocates through their extensive use of media.

4.4.2 Charles Capps

A retired farmer, land developer and Bible teacher for over thirty-five years, Charles Capps has travelled extensively in the United States and abroad, emphasising the authority of the believer, faith, and the power of words. His media ministry, Concepts of Faith, is broadcast daily via radio and weekly via television. Capps’ books include: (1) *God’s creative power*; (2) *releasing the ability of God through prayer*; (3) *authority in three worlds*; (4) *the tongue: a creative force*. The centre of operations for Capps and his wife, Peggy, is England, Arkansas. Ordained in the International Convention of Faith Churches and Ministers by Kenneth Copeland, Capps derives his theology

directly from Kenneth Hagin. He (Capps 1976:63-76) writes that while at his lowest ebb financially and spiritually, he was introduced to Hagin's book, *right and wrong thinking*, from which he learned the concept of positive confession and soon had a financial turn-around. Capps (1979:55) elaborates, "Let's ask ourselves what it is like in heaven. Is there any poverty there? ...No. Jesus told His disciples to pray that the will of God be done in earth as it is in heaven. Then He must be saying to pray that there be...no poverty here".

Unlike his mentor, Kenneth Hagin, Capps uses limited anecdotes, while focusing on the systematic exposition of the core elements of the word of faith message. Said differently, Capps offers a caveat to his listeners regarding one's use of words, emphasising that words possess power (cf. Mark 11:22-25). Indeed, the inherent power in spoken words exudes creative ability. Capps (1976:8-9) explains:

Words governed by spiritual law become spiritual forces working for you. Idle words work against you. The spirit world is controlled by the word of God. The natural world is to be controlled by man speaking God's words. The spoken word of God is creative power. Therefore even the words of our prayers should be chosen carefully and spoken accurately.

Capps (1976:17; 40) further expands on the creative power of God as imparted to the believer:

Man was created in the image of God and His likeness. There was creative power that flowed out of the mouth of God and you were created in the image of God. Then, according to the Scriptures and what Jesus said, you have the same ability dwelling or residing on the inside of you...If you go to talking sickness and disease and defeat, you have released words that will produce after their kind. You can stop the natural healing

power that God put in you by the words of your mouth. Many have stopped divine healing the same way, by negative words.

Capps is aware that his extreme positions on the issues of positive confession and the creative power of words have been compared to Christian Science and the metaphysical cults. He (Capps 1976:27) writes, “One lady punched her husband in a service in Texas and said (my wife overheard them), ‘That sounds like Christian Science’. It is not Christian Science...it is Christian sense...I don’t deny the existence of disease. I deny the right of that disease to exist in my body”. Responding to Charles Farah’s scholarly critique of extreme aspects of word of faith theology (cf. Section 2.2.2.1), Capps (cf. 1982a) states, “He’s a good example for you of head knowledge...He’s so educated beyond his intellect that he don’t [sic] know how to control what he’s learned...He’s put out all revelation knowledge...This is what happens when people get highly educated”. Indeed, Capps follows the typical word of faith *modus operandi* in his views on revelation knowledge, sense knowledge and positive confession. Along with others in the word of faith movement, Capps has influenced an entire generation of word of faith adherents via his mass media ministries of radio, television and printed material.

4.4.3 Joel Osteen

Founded in 1959 by Joel Osteen’s father, John Osteen (1921-1999), Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, soon became influential among some Pentecostals and Charismatics. John Osteen had been a Southern Baptist minister, but after experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit he withdrew from his Baptist fellowship and began the non-denominational Lakewood. Kenneth W. Hagin (1983:21), son of Kenneth E. Hagin (cf. Section 2.2.1.2), writes that John Osteen learned the word of faith aspects of his theology “from my dad”. Consequently, much of Hagin’s word of faith theology is at the core of John Osteen’s message, a fact acknowledged by Osteen himself in a taped

interview with Dan McConnell in 1982 (1995:4). Upon the elder Osteen's death in 1999, his youngest son Joel assumed the pastorate of Lakewood. Joel now serves as senior pastor of America's largest church. Since assuming leadership of Lakewood Church in 1999, the church has grown five-fold, with weekend services currently attracting up to 43,500 persons. Services are broadcast via television in most major US Markets and more than 100 countries (cf. Lakewood).

Osteen is perhaps the most genteel of the word of faith proponents assessed in this section. Known for his amiable smile, affable preaching style and down-home rhetoric, Osteen effectively disseminates key aspects of the word of faith message. Osteen has no formal theological training; but readily acknowledges that his personal theology is derived from many years of listening to his father's preaching. While holding his father's word of faith theology, he focuses more on positive uplifting messages while ignoring unpopular biblical teachings such as hell, self-sacrifice and suffering (Bloodsworth 2009:21). Such a focus has often placed him in uncomfortable situations. For example, in a 2005 interview on cable television's Larry King Live, Osteen was asked if atheists, Jews or Muslims go to heaven if they don't accept Jesus Christ. Osteen (cf. King 2005) responded, "I don't know". Although he later apologised for his lack of clarity on the subject, such ambiguity in regard to historical orthodoxy has often elicited criticism of Osteen's message.

Dubbed as "cotton-candy theology", much of the content of Osteen's message is without a doubt word of faith in orientation, coupled with the self-help, success, you-can-do-it concepts of Russell Conwell, Norman Vincent Peale, and Bruce Wilkinson (cf. Byassee 2005). Lioy (2007:60) suggests that "proponents of success operate as if it is their God-given entitlement to be rich and happy in every way possible". In his most recent book, *it's your time*, Osteen (2010:303) writes, "Remember, you have the DNA of Almighty God...You are full of wisdom, strength, talent, and creativity. In your future [is]

favor, good breaks, the right connections, the right opportunities. You may not have seen those blessings in the past, but this is a new day...If you'll get up each morning with faith and expectancy...then you'll step into one of your moments of favor".

Osteen's popularity is another evidence of religion coupled with the American dream. In his book, *your best life now*, Osteen (2004:3) writes, "We have to conceive it on the inside before we're going to receive it on the outside. If you don't think you can have something good, then you never will. The barrier is in your mind. It's not God's lack of resources or your lack of talent that prevents you from prospering. Your own wrong thinking can keep you from God's best". The book is filled with examples and illustrations of how everyone should speak words of faith and victory in order to make prosperity a reality. In *become a better you*, Osteen (2007:63) posits, generational curses or blessings are passed from one generation to the next via "the bloodline being formed in one's DNA". Scripture, however, reveals that consequences—not curses—are passed from one generation to the next.

On a personal level, Osteen's message is an ideology of materialism that is framed in a kind of Tony Robbins positivism (cf. Lioy 2007:45; Van Beima and Chu 2006). Such a message does indeed promote a "you-can-make-it" worldview; however, Osteen's core principles are derived from word of faith theology. Michael Horton (cf. 2010), professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, offers the following summation of Osteen's message.

Exemplifying the moralistic and therapeutic approach to religion, Osteen's message is also a good example of the inability of Boomers to mourn in the face of God's judgment or dance under the liberating news of God's saving mercy. In other words, all gravity is lost—both the gravity of our problem and of God's amazing grace. According to this message, we are not

helpless sinners—the ungodly—who need a one-sided divine rescue. (Americans, but especially we Boomers, don't take bad news well.) Rather, we are good people who just need a little instruction and motivation.

Osteen excels in the aspect of motivation, a fact evidenced by the titles and contents of his bestselling books. Unfortunately, per Osteen's theology, as Horton (cf. 2010) further observes, "Salvation is not a matter of divine rescue from the judgment that is coming on the world, but a matter of self-improvement in order to have your best life now".

4.4.4 Joyce Meyer

In recent years, Joyce Meyer has risen to prominence in the word of faith movement. A *New York Times* bestselling author, Meyer has authored over 80 books, which have been translated into over 80 different languages, with over 12 million distributed worldwide. Hailing from Fenton, Missouri, Meyer's media program, Enjoying Everyday Life, has a potential audience of 4.5 billion people (cf. Meyer). Her ministry is further expanded by some 15 annual conferences designed to teach practical biblical principles for daily living. Like Kenneth Copeland, Meyer also claims a Ph.D. from Life Christian University in Lutz, Florida. Correspondingly, according to the LCU registrar, Meyer neither wrote nor defended a doctoral dissertation (cf. Section 4.4.1 analysis of Life Christian University).

Meyer traces her fervour to early childhood abuse and alcoholism. After a failed marriage in her early 20's, she was briefly affiliated with the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod). She soon began leading a Bible class at a St. Louis cafeteria and became active in Life Christian Center, a Charismatic church in Fenton, Missouri, eventually becoming the church's associate pastor. In 1985, Meyer resigned the associate pastor position and launched her own teaching

ministry, Life in the Word. Time (2005) magazine lists Meyer among the twenty-five most influential Evangelicals in America.

Meyer's message has been referred to as "Christianity lite," because it avoids the tough but traditional teachings of orthodox Christianity and is closely associated with the secular self-help movement (Koch 2009:8). While strongly self-help in orientation, Meyer's theology incorporates several aspects of word of faith theology. For example, Meyer presents the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (cf. John 5:1-15) as lacking faith. She (2002:27) writes, "I would think that after thirty-eight years a diligent, determined person could have crawled over to the edge of that pool. Even if that man had only moved an inch a year, it seems that in thirty-eight years, he ought to have been able to get close enough to the edge to just roll over into the water when it was stirred". Said differently, Meyer teaches that the paralytic's on-going circumstances are the result of his own lack of faith. She (2002:28) goes on to posit, "I would have been on the edge of that pool, and the next year when the angel came around...I would have fallen in and said 'Either I'm going to get healed or I'm going to die, but I'm not staying like this'". If, according to Meyer, the paralytic had exercised an appropriate level of faith, his healing was guaranteed.

Another tenet of word of faith theology incorporated into Meyer's theology is positive confession. According to Meyer (2002:87-88), "words are containers for power...they carry either creative or destructive power...what you say today is...what you'll end up having tomorrow". Meyer (2002:95; 151) further argues that the words spoken by a believer are the means by which one may "keep the devil under one's feet"; therefore, one must "talk back to the devil" and in so doing, assume authority over negative life situations. Coupled with the power of faith, Meyer argues that such a dynamic force changes one's life and destiny.

Meyer also believes in generational curses, a teaching held by myriad word of faith proponents. This teaching posits that many of the negative, abusive and destructive life situations encountered by believers are the result of the sinful penchants of past generations. Such teaching suggests that a believer may remain in bondage to varied curses passed from one generation to the next and needs to have them broken via spiritual warfare. In such cases, it appears that a believer who is under a generational curse is somehow predisposed, even compelled, to act upon the tendencies of the particular curse. Meyer (1991) argues that a spirit of incest was passed from her grandfather to her father, resulting in the sexual abuse she experienced from her father. Scripture (cf. Ezekiel 18:2-4; 20) does indeed suggest that consequences may be communicated from one generation to the next. However, there is no biblical evidence that subsequent generations are cursed, or even compelled, to repeat the sin(s) of their ancestors. Indeed, the biblical text suggests the opposite (cf. II Kings 22:1-2).

4.4.5 Paula White

According to her website bio, Paula White is a pastor, life-coach, motivational speaker, author, philanthropist, media personality, mother, preacher and teacher (cf. White 2011a). As co-founder of Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Florida, her television programme, Paula White Today, is hosted on Trinity Broadcast Network, Black Entertainment Television and Daystar. In 2004, Without Walls International Church had grown to the seventh largest church in the United States (Tubbs 2004). Such media venues place White in a position of potential influence, since numerous tenets of word of faith theology are incorporated into her teaching. White also claims a doctorate (cf. Section 4.4.1 analysis of Life Christian University), but the source of the certificate is not given (cf. White 2004a).

At age eighteen, White claims she was given a vision of millions of people. In the vision, every time she opened her mouth and began to declare the word of God, there was a visible manifestation of the power of God. When she remained silent, people began to fall into utter darkness (2011a). The message White is commissioned to declare is that God does not want believers to live in poverty or lack but to be prosperous. At age 22, Paula marries Randy White, both of whom have a previous marriage. They move to Tampa, Florida, and launch South Tampa Christian Center, which would ultimately become Without Walls International Church. The word of faith message facilitates the growth of Without Walls Church to 23,500 members on two campuses. The past few years have revealed personal tragedy in the White camp. Paula and her husband Randy divorced, citing as the reason, not adultery, but the entering of a new season in their respective ministries. According to the editor of *Charisma* magazine, J. Lee Grady (2010:88), "We were left scratching our heads. Paula continued on her whirlwind ministry circuit without skipping a beat, teaching people how to live a 'life by design', the official name of her trademark success seminars". White now serves as senior pastor of Without Walls International Church, while continuing to host her other media venues.

White's media presentations and teaching heavily emphasise the word of faith tenet of prosperity. White (2003) bases her teaching on Deuteronomy 8:18, stating that God gives believers the power to get wealth. According to White, enjoying God's best in one's life requires the sowing of a faith seed, which is to be understood primarily as a monetary offering. White's faulty exegesis of the biblical text is evident in the pick-and-choose methodology she posits. For example, citing Psalm 68:19 (KJV), "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits", White (2003) encourages her audience to give a monthly seed faith offering of \$68.19. To validate such a request, White notes that \$68.19 times 12 (a one year commitment of 12 equal payments) equals \$818. This amount is then connected to Deuteronomy 8:18 (KJV), which reads, "it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth". White (2005) promises those who

contribute in such a way to her ministry, “The Word cannot return void. When you put your faith in the Word, then you have mandated results”. White (2011b) encourages her constituents to send a seventy dollar (or more) atonement offering in order to attain the eight specific promises she insinuates are in the atonement. Of course, one must send the seed faith offering to gain access to these purported blessings.

White also places great emphasis on the word of faith tenet of positive confession. To a television audience, White (2004b) states, “If God can create something out of nothing, and we are created in his image, then if we can image it, or imagine it, then, so it can be for us”. Here, as in other aspects of White’s teaching, the biblical text is the victim of faulty exegesis. Romans 4:17 (NKJV), God, “who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did”, is clearly the source of White’s teaching at this point. White (2008) assures her constituents that each believer has the authority, by merely speaking the right words, to create one’s own reality or one’s own world.

4.4.6 Benny Hinn

Televangelist Benny Hinn is best known for his miracle crusades, held in stadiums around the world. Born in Jaffa, Israel, and raised within the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, Hinn’s family moved to Toronto, Canada, soon after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Hinn converted to Pentecostalism as a teenager and was mentored under Winston I. Nunes at Broadview Faith Temple in Toronto (cf. Hinn 2011a). Nunes was a leading proponent of latter rain theology (cf. Section 4.2.3). Hinn’s (cf. 2011b) television programme, This is Your Day, is seen daily in over 200 countries and is among the world’s most watched Christian programmes. According to Hinn, he has preached face-to-face to over a billion people via television. Via crusades, conferences, television venues, the Internet and printed page, Hinn’s message is reaching

“hundreds of millions” (cf. Hinn 2011b). Like Kenneth Copeland and Joyce Meyer, Hinn claims an earned Ph.D. from Life Christian University in Lutz, Florida (cf. Section 4.4.1 analysis of Life Christian University).

Ordained by the International Faith Churches and Ministers, an organisation comprised of word of faith churches, Hinn regularly defends prominent word of faith proponents such as Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland (White 1987). Advocating prosperity theology, Hinn (1990a) states, “I’m sick and tired of hearing about streets of gold. I don’t need gold in heaven, I gotta have it now”. He also promotes the word of faith tenet that believers are little gods. Responding to criticism of his teaching regarding this issue, Hinn (1990b) states,

Now are you ready for some *real* revelation knowledge? OK.

Now watch this: He laid aside His divine form so one day I would be clothed on earth with the divine form. Kenneth Hagin has a teaching. A lot of people have problems with it. Yet it is absolute truth. Kenneth Copeland has a teaching. Many Christians have put holes in it, but it’s divine truth. Hagin and Copeland say: You are god. Ye are gods. "Oh! I can't be god." Hold it. Let's bring balance to this teaching. The balance is being taught by Hagin. It's those that repeat him that mess it up. The balance is being taught by Copeland, who is my dear friend, but it's those that repeat what he says that are messing it up.

In a 1991 interview for *Christianity Today*, Hinn states that he no longer believes the word of faith message (Frame 1991:44-45). However, an assessment of Hinn’s doctrinal positions and teaching since 1991 reveals that he has consistently embraced the excesses of word of faith theology. In what appears to be an attempt at replicating the events of II Kings 13:20-21, Hinn (n.d.) states that he has frequented the gravesites of Kathryn Kuhlman and

Aimee Semple McPherson in order to obtain the anointing from their bones. Such a bizarre statement is not infrequent in Hinn's ministry.

Hinn further exacerbates his theological integrity with a litany of strange and perplexing predictions. From Orlando Christian Center, Hinn (cf. 1990c) predicted that no later than 1995, God would destroy the homosexual community in America. He (cf. Hinn 1999) also predicted that,

People around the world who will lose loved ones, will say to undertakers, "Not yet. I want to take my dead loved one and place him in front of that TV set for twenty-four hours." I see rows of caskets lining up in front of this TV set...I actually see loved ones picking up the hands of the dead and letting them touch the screen, and people are getting raised [from the dead] as their hands are touching that screen.

In 2000, Hinn (cf. 2000a) predicted that within only a few months, Jesus would "appear physically" in one of his crusades. Within days of this prediction, he (Hinn 2000b) further states, "I'm prophesying this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is about to appear physically in some churches and some meetings and to many of his people".

4.4.7 Robert Tilton

Robert "Bob" Tilton's early years were characterised by criminal behaviour, drugs and experimentation in the occult (Tilton 1982:16; 23). Tilton and his first wife, Marte, were converted in 1969. In 1974, the Tilton's launched their ministry as tent evangelists. Experiencing myriad challenges for two years, and after reading books by Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, Tilton (1982:70; 72; 129) writes that God instructed him to go to Farmer's Branch, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, and build a family church and full

gospel teaching centre. The Word of Faith World Outreach Center was founded in 1976 and in just a few years grew to a membership of 8,000, with over 1,700 affiliate churches via satellite.

In the late 1980's, Tilton is hailed to become perhaps the most influential faith teacher of the 1990's (Barron 1987:59). After repeated failures with television programming, Tilton is inspired by real estate entrepreneur Dave Del Dotto's infomercial concept, from which emerges, Success-n-Life, Tilton's religious infomercial (Baradell 1992:19-20). Just as McDonald's popularises fast food, Tilton's ministry propagates fast faith (Hanegraaff 2009:62), utilising technology and media to profoundly impact his audience. Success-n-Life is ranked as high as twelfth in the national religious Arbitron ratings and is viewed by some 6 million homes via 212 stations (Swindle and Pusey 1992A:1A; 28A).

While riding the crest of financial success, in the early 1990's Tilton is the subject of an exposé by ABC's Prime Time Live. He is accused of taking his massive mail-in prayer request ministry, literally thousands of letters, removing any gifts or financial contributions, and placing them, unread, in garbage dumpsters. After the airing of the exposé, Success-n-Life ratings drop by some 39% (Swindle and Pusey 1992B:1A; 29A). Consequently, Tilton airs a video titled, Prime Time Lies, in which he states that he is being persecuted for the cause of Christ. Repeated litigation brought the demise of much of Tilton's religious empire, which at its height grossed some \$65 million per year. However, navigating both personal and professional losses, Tilton continues to air his message, along with his third wife, Maria, of Success-n-Life. More than ten years after his ministry collapses in scandal, Tilton is again reaching millions of television viewers (cf. Branstetter 2003).

Like many of his fellow word of faith proponents, Tilton emphasises personal wealth and material prosperity as the benefits of a faith-filled life. Tilton's message has remained consistent since his early ministry. In the most recent

episodes of Success-n-Life, the scenario is the same. Tilton quotes several Scriptures, purports to speak in tongues, and pushes emotional buttons, such as cancer, emphysema, alcoholism, credit card addiction, job layoffs, ailments that can be cured through faith. However, faith must be demonstrated by making what Tilton refers to as a vow, which typically begins at \$1,000, that is, a financial donation to Tilton's ministry. According to him, "If Jesus Christ were alive today and walking around, he wouldn't want his people driving Volkswagens and living in apartments" (cf. Rowe 1997).

Tilton (1982:6) utilises two primary biblical texts to propagate his message of wealth and materialism: (1) Deuteronomy 8:18, "thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (KJV); and (2) Galatians 3:13-14, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (KJV). Linking specific aspects of the Abrahamic covenant with contemporary Christian living is manifest in most all word of faith theology. Robert Tilton continues to use mass media to broaden his potential audience, proclaiming that his ministry will help "release God's miracle supply into your life" (cf. Success-n-Life).

4.4.8 Relevance to this research

The teaching and message of word of faith proponents is relevant to this research for several reasons. First, word of faith theology has a direct correlation to Church of God pastoral ministry. For example, in the early 1980's, prior to the researcher's entry into full-time pastoral ministry, a woman (mid-80's in age) in the church he attended passed away. A man in the church, who had been significantly influenced by Kenneth Copeland's teaching, stated that the woman did not have to die, but could have refused to

accept the cancer. According to him, her death was directly related to a lack of faith and failure to appropriate a positive confession. The researcher has personally experienced the impact and effect of such teaching on parishioners in every parish setting in which he has served. Consequently, at the very least, a cursory understanding as to who is propagating word of faith theology is relevant to this research.

Second, many of the major contemporary word of faith proponents claim to hold academic doctorates. This would seem to add credibility to the word of faith message they posit. Consequently, the brief analysis of Life Christian University (cf. Section 4.4.1) is of particular relevance to this research. When assessed by contemporary standards of academic excellence, claiming an academic credential does not necessarily mean the credential was earned via conventional protocol. From the perspective of proponents who claim such credentials, the word of faith message posited is not necessarily the result of substantive hermeneutics or scholarly research. Third, this section is relevant to the research in that it further validates the need for an assessment of implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

In this section a cursory evaluation of prominent contemporary word of faith proponents is given. Although not exhaustive, the selected luminaries represent the spectrum of word of faith proponents. The research now moves to an appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a word of faith perspective.

4.5 An appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a word of faith perspective

Section 4.2 offers an assessment of the various origins of the word of faith movement. Section 4.3 analyses the development of the word of faith message. Section 4.4 evaluates prominent proponents of word of faith theology. Section 4.5 now offers an appraisal of specific biblical tenets from a

word of faith perspective. The four biblical tenets in this section were appraised from a Church of God perspective in Section 3.5, and will be evaluated in terms of their biblical and theological foundations in Chapter 5. The appraisal in this section is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, a cursory treatment is given. Per each of the four biblical tenets, variations of emphasis and diversity do indeed exist among word of faith advocates at large. However, the appraisal in this section sets forth the core elements of a word of faith perspective regarding: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity.

4.5.1 The Abrahamic covenant

The biblical basis often cited by word of faith proponents (cf. Copeland G 1978:4-6; Copeland K 1974:51; Pousson 1992:158; et al) for a great deal of their theology is the Abrahamic covenant. Kenneth Copeland (1987b:10) articulates a word of faith understanding of the inception of the Abrahamic covenant as follows:

After Adam's fall in the Garden, God needed an avenue back into the earth;...since man was the key figure in the Fall, man had to be the key figure in the redemption, so God approached a man named Abram. He re-enacted with Abram what Satan had done with Adam...God offered Abram a proposition and Abram bought it.

He depicts a word of faith understanding of the concept of covenant by arguing that God is the lesser party, while Abraham is the greater party (cf. Copeland 1985). If Abraham fails, the covenant is then rendered void (Capps 1982:66). However, in word of faith theology, the concept of covenant is more analogous to a contract. Edward Martens (1981:72-73) illustrates three features that distinguish a covenant from a contract.

1. Contracts are thing-oriented (focusing largely on the benefits to which each party is entitled), whereas covenants are person-oriented (arising out of a desire to form an intimate relationship, one party to another).
2. Contracts arise from a mutual agreement between two parties (thereby involving some form of negotiation), whereas covenants are initiated by the stronger party (who offers non-negotiable help, not of necessity, but out of grace or as a gift).
3. Contracts have conditions that are performance-oriented (focusing on the fulfilment of certain terms), whereas covenants stipulate obligations in terms of personal loyalty.

Hanegraaff (2009:227) argues that the Abrahamic covenant (indeed, any covenant) is not a mere contract by which one may command God; on the contrary, such pretensions are foreign to Scripture. Although proponents of the word of faith movement are to be commended for their high view of Scripture, the hermeneutical approach utilised by such persons often posits a distorted understanding of myriad biblical passages. A prime example is the word of faith perspective regarding the Abrahamic covenant and its application for the contemporary Christian. According to word of faith proponents, the primary purpose of this covenant is to bless Abraham with material possessions (the tenet of prosperity is appraised in Section 4.5.4). Harvey Cox (2001:271) summarises the word of faith position when he writes, “through the crucifixion of Christ, Christians have inherited all the promises made to Abraham, and these include both spiritual and material well-being”. Christians are Abraham’s spiritual children and heirs to the blessings of faith. The Abrahamic inheritance is unpacked primarily in terms of guaranteed material entitlements.

Copeland (1974:51) argues that since the Abrahamic covenant has been established and prosperity is a provision of this covenant, Christians too are entitled to this provision. Fred Price (1990a:36-37) reinforces Copeland's position when he argues that since Abraham was blessed materially, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us...with cattle, gold, manservants, maidservants, camels, and asses". "We have seen that prosperity is a blessing of Abraham and that poverty is under the curse of the law...Consequently, there is no reason for you to live in poverty of any kind" (Copeland 1974:50-51).

To support such a claim, word of faith proponents appeal to Galatians 3:14. Here, it states "the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ". Consequently, according to word of faith theology, every Christian also has the promise of material well-being. Word of faith theology interprets the Galatians 3:13-14 promise of being redeemed from the curse of the law as meaning redemption from the curses listed in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Kenneth Hagin (1963:1) argues that the penalty for breaking God's law is threefold: poverty, sickness and spiritual death. Expanding on this concept, Copeland (1987b:28) writes,

Remember what was listed under the curse in Deuteronomy 28? Poverty of every kind, political failure, drought, war, every calamity known to mankind; and Jesus has redeemed us from it all. ALL sickness and ALL disease, even those not mentioned there, come under the curse. Therefore, we are redeemed from all sickness and disease. You need to fight the temptation to be sick just as you would fight the temptation to lie or to steal.

Utilising the word of faith perspective of the Abrahamic covenant, Kaiser (1997:29) offers the following assessment.

What the redeemed person needs to realize is that with his or her personal salvation comes a release from all poverty, sickness, or even the second death. But there is more...[we are] also promised all the blessings of Abraham since we too are now Abraham's seed. Since God promised that he was going to make Abraham prosperous and rich, we too are going to enjoy the same benefits.

The position cited above permeates word of faith theology; however, two concerns are immediately obvious. First, such an appeal to Galatians 3:14 ignores the second half of the verse, which reads "so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit". Here, Paul clearly writes to inform the Galatians of the spiritual blessing of salvation, that is, justification apart from the works of the law (cf. Campbell 2004:599). Paul's concern at this point is not to encourage the amassing of material possessions. Redemption from the curse of the law implies spiritual redemption, not earthly materialism. Second, to claim that believers, through faith, receive all the blessings promised to Abraham ignores the orthodox understanding that the Abrahamic covenant was an unconditional covenant (cf. Wolf 1989:7), a fact demonstrated by the following: (1) the covenant ceremony in Genesis 15 was unilateral; in fact, Abraham was asleep; (2) the covenant articulates no conditions; (3) the covenant is called everlasting when restated in Genesis 17:7,13, 19; and (4) the covenant is confirmed despite Abraham's continued disobedience and lack of faith. Said differently, the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are not contingent solely upon one man's obedience. As a result, even if the Abrahamic covenant did apply to Christians, all believers would already be experiencing material blessings regardless of prosperity theology. Exegetically, Paul's statement "does not allow us to transfer the expectation of material abundance to the person who has become a descendant of Abraham through faith" (Perriman 2003:125).

The hermeneutical approach utilised by word of faith proponents for the interpretation and application of the Abrahamic covenant is deficient (a biblical and theological evaluation of the Abrahamic covenant is offered in Section 5.2). However, as noted in the above examples, the Abrahamic covenant is essential to understanding particular tenets of word of faith theology. Consequently, a word of faith perspective of the Abrahamic covenant sets forth implications that are examined in Section 6.3.

4.5.2 The atonement

Two components comprise a word of faith perspective regarding the atonement of Christ: (1) the nature of the atonement; and (2) the results of the atonement. The first component may be systematised into three primary ideas (Hanegraaff 2009:170): (1) Christ is re-created on the cross from a sinless deity to a symbol of Satan; (2) redemption is not secured on the cross, but in hell; and (3) Jesus is born again in hell.

First, the orthodox view of the atonement posits the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross as being the means whereby redemption is accomplished. Said differently, the sinless Christ became the sacrificial Lamb upon whom the collective sin of humankind is laid. A word of faith perspective suggests otherwise. Kenneth Hagin (1979c:31) argues, “Spiritual death means something more than separation from God. Spiritual death also means having Satan’s nature...Jesus tasted death—spiritual death—for every man”. Numbers 21:8-9 and John 3:14 are cited as proof that Jesus assumed the nature of Satan on the cross. Hinn (cf. 1990d) states, “He [Jesus] did not take my sin, He became my sin...He became one with the nature of Satan”. Rather than serving as the righteous servant of Isaiah 53:11, Jesus is re-created into what Copeland (cf. 1990) calls “a sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross”.

Second, word of faith theology holds that redemption for sin is not secured at the cross, but in hell. Fred Price (1980:7) writes,

Do you think that the punishment for 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 they dragged Him down to the very pit of hell itself to serve our sentence.

Of necessity, the work of redemption is completed in hell. Billheimer (1996:83-84) writes, “[In hell] 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”. Numerous word of faith proponents hold this view, suggesting that the cross is inadequate to secure redemption, and, as a result, Jesus must suffer as a sinner in hell.

Third, a word of faith perspective of the atonement posits that while in hell, Jesus is born again (re-born). Creflo Dollar (cf. 2011) writes,

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you became born again. That simply means that your spirit was transformed from a state of spiritual death to life in a split second of time. But have you ever considered that Jesus went through the exact same thing? Often, in the midst of our religious views of Him, we forget that He was actually the first person to ever become born again.

Copeland (cf. 1989) claims that the Spirit of God told him that “a twice-born man whipped Satan in his own domain...[and]...if you’d...had the knowledge of the Word of God that He did, you could have done the same thing because

you're a reborn man too". This theme is amplified by Benny Hinn (cf. 1990b) when he suggests, "Don't let anyone deceive you. Jesus was reborn...He had to be reborn...If he was not reborn, I would never be reborn". The second component focuses on the results, or the benefits, of the atonement of Christ, and how those benefits are applicable to the Christian. Within a theology that purportedly enables the believer to take control of the physical, healing is another arena for divine deliverance through "force faith" and the utilisation of so-called "spiritual laws" (Beckford 2001:18). In word of faith theology, the concepts of divine healing and divine health find their origin in a particular interpretation of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Copeland (1996:6) argues, "The basic principle of the Christian life is to know that God put our sin, sickness, disease, sorrow, grief, and poverty on Jesus at Calvary". This position is affirmed by Hinn (1991:44) when he writes, "The Bible declares that the work was done 2,000 years ago. God is not going to heal you now—he healed you 2,000 years ago. All you have to do is receive your healing by faith".

Kenneth Hagin (1974:53-54) posits,

Jesus...came to redeem us from Satan's power and dominion...we are to reign as kings in life. That means we have dominion over our lives. We are to dominate, not to be dominated...Disease and sickness are not to rule and reign over you. You are to rule and reign over sickness.

Copeland (1979a:25) further corroborates this position when he writes, "The first step to spiritual maturity is to realize your position before God. You are a child of God and a joint-heir with Jesus. Consequently, you are entitled to all the rights and privileges in the kingdom of God, and one of their rights is health and healing". This view is also propagated by Dake (1963:282), who writes that "bodily healing and health are God's will for the believer". He (Dake 1949:244-245) further suggests that "healing is on the same basis as

forgiveness of sins and just as easy to get...There is no excuse for children of God to be sick".

In the main, word of faith theology mandates divine healing as the right of every Christian. It also sets forth divine health as the norm for those who understand their rights and authority as a believer. Both tenets result from a word of faith interpretation of the atonement of Christ, and both are taught extensively by word of faith proponents. For example, Fred Price (1976:20) asserts, "We don't allow sickness in our home". Jerry Savelle (1982:9-10) boldly proclaims, "When the Devil tries to put a symptom of sickness or disease on my body, I absolutely refuse to accept it". Regarding physical symptoms, Kenneth Copeland (cf. 1991) states, "I refuse to consider my body, I refuse to be moved by what I see and what I feel...I'm going to choose His Word, instead of what my body's trying to say".

Indeed, this approach to physical sickness and disease has wide acceptance among word of faith advocates. Unfortunately, such an approach has also been assimilated into the praxis of many within the larger Pentecostal and Charismatic communities. Inevitably, such an approach creates implications for pastoral ministry that are examined further in Section 6.3.

4.5.3 Faith

The tenet of faith is appraised from a Church of God perspective in Section 3.5.3 and is given further biblical and theological treatment in Section 5.4. Orthodox Christianity understands faith as "trust in the person of Jesus Christ, and the truth of His teaching, and the redemptive work He accomplished at Calvary" (cf. Douglas 1999). Word of faith theology sets forth a very different view of faith. From the perspective of the latter, faith is not merely a God-centred act of the will in which one exercises simple trust in God; rather, it is a human-centred spiritual force one directs toward God. Said differently, it is a

self-oriented manipulative force over the impersonal forces (so called spiritual laws) operating in the universe. A word of faith rendering of several biblical passages contributes to this perspective.

E. W. Kenyon (1942:19-22), a dominant influence in much of word of faith theology, argues that there are different phases or kinds of faith (e.g., religious faith; dominant faith; creative faith). Of particular importance to word of faith theology is Kenyon's concept of creative faith. Hebrews 11:3 (KJV) states, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear". Kenyon (1969:67) explains, "All God did to create was to say, 'Let there be' and there leaped into being the things that are". Consequently, Kenyon (1942:20) concludes that, "Faith-filled words brought the universe into being; and Faith-filled words are ruling that universe today". This perspective is echoed by contemporary word of faith proponents (cf. Capps 1976:12-13; Copeland 1980:4-5; et al). According to this perspective, words spoken in faith apply to both Christians and non-Christians alike. Kenneth Hagin (1980:3-4) clarifies this concept as follows,

It used to bother me when I'd see unsaved people getting results, but my church members not getting results. Then it dawned on me what the sinners were doing: They were cooperating with this law of God—the law of faith.

Mark 11:22 is also crucial to understanding faith from a word of faith perspective. In his attempt to systematise the doctrine of faith, Kenyon draws heavily from this particular passage, which reads, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, 'have faith in God'" (KJV). Kenyon (1942:103) renders this verse as "Have the faith of God". Word of faith proponents have popularised and marketed this concept as "The God kind of faith" (Capps 1976:131). Utilising this type of faith, Hagin (1979:16) writes, "I have not prayed one prayer in 45 years...without getting an answer. I always got an answer—and the answer

was yes". In his book, *the laws of prosperity*, Kenneth Copeland (1974:19) writes, "Faith is a spiritual force, a spiritual energy, a spiritual power. It is this force of faith which makes the laws of the spirit world function". A third biblical reference critical to understanding the word of faith concept of faith is Romans 4:17 (KJV), where Paul writes that, "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were". Hagin (1974:74) surmises that, "The kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence is dealt to our hearts".

At this point in the word of faith perspective, faith and the spoken word are inextricably woven together to form the powerful force of positive confession. Hagin (1979a:5) asserts, "You can have what you say. You can write your own ticket with God. And the first step in writing your own ticket with God is: Say it". Setting forth the principle of his faith formula, Hagin (1979a:3) writes, "the Lord Jesus appeared to me [telling me to] write down: 1, 2, 3, 4". The four-part formula, according to Hagin, is: (1) say it; (2) do it; (3) receive it; and (4) tell it. Based on this faith formula, one need only to speak forth, that is, make a positive confession, regarding whatever one desires. Copeland (cf. 1985c) offers a similar formula when he states that one needs only to: (1) see or visualise whatever you need; (2) stake your claim on Scripture; and (3) speak it into existence. The spoken word, coupled with creative faith, initiates the process of obtaining the desires of one's heart. This kind of faith "prays once, speaks the word into existence, and then holds to the confession of the word despite all contradictory evidence of the physical senses" (McConnell 1995:139). At the popular level among word of faith advocates, this view of faith is passionately endorsed. Christians should decide what they want, believe it is theirs, and confess it to be true (Lioy 2007:43).

Another factor in understanding faith from a word of faith perspective is the aspect of the will of God. A common practice among word of faith proponents is to recoil from the statement, "If it is your will". In support of this practice, and in contradiction to numerous biblical references (cf. I John 5:14; Romans 8:27,

etc.), Hagin (1983:10) writes, “It is unscriptural to pray, ‘If it is the will of God.’ When you put an ‘if’ in your prayer, you are praying in doubt”.

As with the Abrahamic covenant and the atonement, a word of faith approach to faith has also been assimilated into the praxis of some within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic communities. This too creates implications for pastoral ministry that are examined further in Section 6.3.

4.5.4 Prosperity

The fourth biblical tenet appraised from a word of faith perspective is prosperity. This tenet is indispensable to word of faith theology, so much so, that the movement is dubbed by many as the prosperity gospel. Allowing for differences among the various proponents, prosperity theology typically refers to an earthly life of health, wealth, and happiness as the divine, inalienable right of all who have faith in God and live in obedience to his commands (Starner 2006:393). Teachers of the prosperity gospel encourage their followers to pray, and even demand, from God “everything from modes of transportation (cars, vans, trucks, even planes), [to] homes, furniture, and large bank accounts” (cf. Pilgrim 1992:3). Robert Tilton (1983:6) asserts, “I believe that it is the will of God for all to prosper because I see it in the Word, not because it has worked mightily for someone else. I do not put my eyes on men, but on God who gives me the power to get wealth”. Dake (1963:282) offers numerous biblical references to suggest that God’s will for every believer is material prosperity. To augment this position, he (Dake 1949:217) argues that, “poverty, sickness and unhappiness...should not exist [because]...God wants you to be prosperous”.

Perhaps the central biblical text used to support this aspect of word of faith theology is III John 2 (KJV), which states, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth”. In

1947, after reading this verse, Oral Roberts sensed that God would use his ministry to bring hope to a wounded world, and, as a result, he makes the III John 2 passage the “master key” of his ministry (Harrell 1985:66). Deeply impressed by the apparent assurance of prosperity, Roberts devises a “Blessing Pact”, that promises financial blessing for people who give \$100 to his ministry (Hollinger 1997:21). Because of Roberts’ teaching on prosperity, such phrases as “God is a good God”, “expect a miracle”, and “seed-faith” enjoy widespread popularity (Perriman 2003:64), profoundly influencing the word of faith movement at large.

A secondary text used to support the word of faith tenet of prosperity is John 10:10 (KJV), where Jesus proclaims, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”. Here, the text is interpreted by prosperity proponents as affirming the provision of “financial prosperity and entrepreneurial success” (Lioy 2007:44) for all believers. The abundant life is not understood as the righteousness, peace and joy offered through the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 14:17); rather, it is understood in terms of material abundance. Fred Price (cf. 1990b) affirms such a position when he boasts, “The Bible says that He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. That’s the reason I drive a Rolls Royce. I’m following Jesus’ steps”.

The prosperity tenet is characterised by an obsession regarding the act of giving, specifically monetary giving. Numerous biblical references are used to support this obsession (cf. Mark 10:30; Ecclesiastes 11:1; II Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7; III John 2; et al). John Avanzini claims that while ministering in Nigeria, God enters his hotel room and gives him a message of biblical economics. The message given by God, writes Avanzini (1989:15) is, “When you lay your hand on the offering, I will multiply it back to them one hundredfold”. Avanzini offers biblical support for such a claim by utilising Mark 10:29-30a (KJV), where Jesus states, “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospels, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this

time". Avanzini isn't alone in his declaration that a one hundredfold return is promised to those who make a monetary investment in a particular ministry. Gloria Copeland (1978:54) asserts, "Give \$10 and receive \$1,000; give \$1,000 and receive \$100,000...in short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal".

The church's distrust of prosperity, according to Fred Price (1990a:71-72), "has allowed the wealth of the world to fall into the hands of Satan and as a result [the church] now finds itself at the mercy of an ungodly financial system". Because this is so, according to prosperity proponents, believers are to appropriate the promise of Proverbs 13:22 (KJV), "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (cf. Proverbs 28:8; Job 27:13-17; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Isaiah 61:5-6). Such a position also has eschatological overtones. Gloria Copeland (1978:54-56) quotes a prophecy given by Charles Capps in 1978, "There's coming a financial inversion in the world's system. It's been held in reservoirs of wicked men for days on end. But the end is nigh. Those reservoirs shall be tapped and shall be drained into the gospel of Jesus Christ".

As with the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement and faith, a word of faith perspective regarding prosperity has been assimilated into the praxis of some within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic communities. This perspective has transcended those communities to influence many within non-Pentecostal/Charismatic communities as well. Indeed, implications for pastoral ministry are created that are examined further in Section 6.3.

4.5.5 Relevance to this research

The appraisal offered in this section is representative of the views held by word of faith advocates at large. By appraising only four biblical tenets per a word of faith perspective, a line of demarcation between a classical Pentecostal world view and word of faith theology is immediately noticeable.

The following account validates this assertion. Miroslav Volf, professor of theology at Yale University, grew up in the home of a Pentecostal minister in Croatia. His father had endured incarceration in a Communist concentration camp. Volf (2010:xv) writes that his father fasted for weeks to receive the baptism in the Spirit, practiced speaking in tongues, had a gift of interpretation, and practiced laying on of hands and prayer for the sick. Volf was also active in Pentecostalism prior to his move to California (USA) in 1977. He describes his introduction to American Pentecostalism as follows (Volf 2010:xvi-xviii):

As I flipped through the channels one evening, I stumbled upon an over-the-top flamboyant TV evangelist, who was, among other bizarre things, pulling evil spirits out of people's ears. I was shocked not so much by the strange spectacle as by what seemed to me a complete lack of spiritual depth. Soon I found out he was not alone. On television and in many churches, preachers were peddling a compromised gospel of health, wealth, and power, which believers had a right to claim as their own by a simple act of faith. That seemed to me a faith designed not to direct peoples' striving toward God and neighbor, but to feed the black hole of their self-absorption and greed...My father's Pentecostal faith and American Pentecostalism clashed in my experience...I knew, of course, that there was much more to it than the health and wealth gospel.

Indeed, as Lioy (2007:60) writes, much of word of faith "dogma indicates that it is predominately anthropocentric, rather than Christocentric, in its theological orientation". The story of Volf's personal journey, along with Lioy's assessment of the word of faith movement, makes this section particularly relevant for this research.

4.6 Conclusion

In this section the following topics are briefly reiterated: (1) the aim of the chapter; (2) a summary of each section; (3) the relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda; and (4) a brief summation.

4.6.1 Aim of this chapter

As noted in Section 4.1, the LIM theological research model utilised for this study is comprised of three basic modules. This chapter addresses the third component of Module 1, the historical analysis. The aim is to offer a historical analysis of the research, specifically, a historical background and contemporary framework for word of faith theology. The scope of the analysis is not intended to be exhaustive, but to focus on specific areas relative to the research.

4.6.2 Summary of each section

First, Section 4.2 offers an assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement. Here, the focus of assessment is the word of faith movement at large. The next three sections of the chapter focus on specific aspects of word of faith theology. Second, in Section 4.3, an analysis of the development of word of faith theology is presented. Third, in Section 4.4, an evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology is given. Fourth, Section 4.5 appraises, from a word of faith perspective, four biblical tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity), tenets that are analysed from a Church of God perspective in Chapter 3, and in terms of their biblical and theological foundations in Chapter 5.

4.6.3 Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda

First, Chapter 4 comprises several components, each of which is juxtaposed and contrasted in Chapter 6 per its similarities and dissimilarities, as well as, its importance in determining pastoral implications for the Church of God. Second, the chapter engages one of the five primary objectives of this research, namely, to examine the historical and contemporary framework of word of faith theology. Third, each of the five primary objectives derived from the main research problem in Chapter 1 is engaged in a chapter of its own; therefore, each chapter finds relevance in and of itself in that it contributes to the success of the research agenda.

4.6.4 Summary

Having examined in Chapter 1 an introduction to the topic of this research, Chapter 2 provides a situation analysis per the history of research via a literature review. Chapter 3 proceeds to offer a contextual analysis of the research by evaluating the faith tradition of the Church of God; then, a historical analysis is given in Chapter 4 regarding the word of faith movement and specific tenets of its theology. To move the research agenda forward, Chapter 5 will now set forth biblical and theological foundations for specific tenets of word of faith theology.

CHAPTER 5

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: AN EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC TENETS OF WORD OF FAITH THEOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

To continue the progress of the research, Chapter 5 explores the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology. While the delimitations of this study do not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject matter, the two-fold evaluation (exegetical analyses and theological assessment) offered in this chapter seeks to address the nucleus of word of faith theology.

First, an exegetical analysis of three biblical passages is offered. Although numerous passages could be explored, Romans 4:17, III John 2, and Mark 11:24 are frequently cited by word of faith advocates as validation of their theological positions. The analysis of each passage includes the following criteria: (1) an examination of the contextual data; (2) an examination of the pericope (small unit); (3) an evaluation of the passage; and (4) an application of the passage. The immediate objective of an exegetical analysis is to understand the biblical text, with the ultimate objective of applying that understanding to the contemporary church and world (Fee 2002:2). This overall objective is critical to the praxis of this research. Said differently, correctly understanding significant biblical passages reveals the inadequate interpretations utilised within word of faith theology.

Second, a core group of theological tenets is fundamental to word of faith theology. These tenets often overlap in terms of emphases and interaction,

yet each is significant in and of itself. This chapter examines four of those tenets (i.e., the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, faith and prosperity). The topics covered in this chapter are representative of word of faith theology as a whole. As such, the biblical and theological foundations set forth in this chapter provide the means to adequately critique word of faith theology.

5.2 An exegetical analysis of Romans 4:17

One component of word of faith theology involves the concept of positive confession. Here, it is suggested that believers have the authority, through the power of words, to create their own reality. Romans 4:17 is often cited to support such a claim, specifically the phrase, “the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not”. Hagin’s (1979a:5) succinct formula, “You can have what you say”, accurately encapsulates this position. Because Romans 4:17 is so frequently utilised to validate this component of word of faith theology, an assessment of the passage is important. Per Fee’s (cf. 2002:2) two-fold definition, a concise exegetical analysis is offered.

5.2.1 Contextual data

The letter to the Romans is the premier example of the epistolary form of writing in the New Testament proper (Witmer 2004:435). While the corpus of Romans is indeed a genuine letter (Price 1971:398), the book has long been regarded as a theological treatise (deSilva 2004:598). Even a terse reading of the letter reveals its myriad theological emphases. Harrison (1976:13) offers the following outline for Romans, revealing a panorama of its content:

- I. Introduction (1:1-15)
- II. Theme: the gospel as the revelation of God’s righteousness (1:16-17)

- III. The need for salvation: the plight of mankind (1:18-3:20)
- IV. Justification: the imputation of righteousness (3:21-5:21)
- V. Sanctification: the impartation of righteousness (6:1-8:39)
- VI. The problem of Israel: God's righteousness vindicated (9:1-11:36)
- VII. Our spiritual service: the practice of righteousness (12:1-15:13)
- VIII. Conclusion (15:14-16:27).

5.2.1.1 Author and date

Seldom is the authorship of Romans attributed to anyone other than Paul (cf. Harrison 1976:3; Wang 1992:968; Mounce 1995:22; Witmer 2004:435; et al). The custom in ancient letter writing is to begin a letter by identifying its author. Greek letters normally begin with the formula “writer to recipient, greeting”, while Jewish letters generally begin with “writer to recipient, may your peace be multiplied”. The Roman letter opens by identifying Paul as the author (cf. 1:1). Paul exercises freedom in further qualifying himself and the person to whom he writes (Newman and Nida 1973:5), however, the letter reflects the customary protocol for letter writing.

The letter of Romans is most likely written from Corinth, since Phoebe, who lived in nearby Cenchrea (cf. 16:1-2), was given the task of carrying the letter to its destined audience. The mention of Gaius (cf. 16:23) seems to corroborate this conclusion, since Gaius was one of the most prominent converts during Paul’s ministry at Corinth (cf. I Corinthians 1:14). Paul appears to write the letter near the end of his third missionary journey during the three months he was in Greece (cf. Acts 20:3). This corresponds with the beginning of Paul’s final missionary journey in AD 57 (Harrison 1976:4). Based on the preceding data, the date of Romans is approximately AD 57 (cf. Allen 1986:1316; Witmer 2004:436; Kasali 2006:1349; et al).

5.2.1.2 Main theme and purpose

Unlike most of his letters, Paul's letter to the Romans is not written primarily to address a particular emergency, but is rather a calm exposition of the gospel he preached (Metzger 2003:229). His previous letters are written out of concern for the problematic nature of local churches; however, in Romans, Paul directs his attention to matters of God's gospel for the world. The letter skilfully presents the gospel from the perspective of a scholar, a lover of Christ and a passionate pastor (Kasali 2006:1349). Although primarily theological, the letter also reveals the integral relationship between Christian theology and Christian praxis (Newman and Nida 1973:2).

Internal evidence corroborates the main theme of the Roman letter as twofold: (1) chapters 1-11 focus on orthodoxy; and (2) chapters 12-16 focus on orthopraxy. Witmer (2004:436-437) suggests that Paul has three major purposes for writing the Roman letter:

- (1) To announce his plans to visit Rome after his return from Jerusalem (cf. 15:24, 28-29; Acts 19:21)
- (2) To present a complete and detailed statement of the gospel message he proclaims (cf. 1:15)
- (3) To engage the possible tension between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the Christian community at Rome.

The context of the entire letter reinforces the relationship between theology and praxis, a theme relevant to the topic of this research. Romans 4:17 falls within Paul's thematic emphasis of orthodoxy. Since this is one source of the pastoral implications discussed in Chapter 6, an accurate understanding of the passage is imperative. An assessment of the contextual data facilitates such an understanding of the passage in question. This, in turn, allows for an adequate hermeneutical approach to be utilised in assessing a word of faith interpretation of the passage.

5.2.2 Pericope (Romans 4:13-17)

Before examining Romans 4:17 in particular, a cursory appraisal of the pericope (small unit) or paragraph within which it resides is given. According to Fee (2002:22), the New Testament letters are primarily comprised of paragraphs of argumentation or exhortation. Per the Romans 4:17 passage, verses 13-17 appear to constitute the paragraph in which it resides (cf. Harrison 1976:50; Allen 1986:1324; Witmer 2004:453-454; et al).

Wang (1992:980) comments on the importance of the Romans 4:13-17 pericope, noting that those who follow the faith of Abraham become his spiritual descendants, and in so doing fulfil God's promise. The text of the pericope indicates that because, according to faith, everything depends on God, God can and will affect the transformation of the person who trusts, just as Abraham did (deSilva 2004:614). The movement of the pericope leads the reader to recognise that God is the source of any and all blessings, benefits and provision. Indeed, the God of Abraham becomes actively involved in the lives of those who assume the faith modelled by Abraham. However, unlike the word of faith perspective in which the believer is said to assume the creative capacity of God via speaking right words (cf. Capps 1976), the broader context of Romans 4:17 places the emphasis not on the ability of the believer, but on the capacity of God.

5.2.2.1 Historical and cultural context

The Roman Empire dominates most of the known world during the New Testament era. The city of Rome serves as the centre of the empire. Reflecting its imperial and cosmopolitan status, the city attracts visitors and settlers from throughout the empire's vast boundaries. After his conquest of Jerusalem in BC 63, Pompey the Great brings thousands of Jews to Rome to serve as slaves. At the time of Paul's writing, Rome has a large Jewish

population, estimated at between forty and fifty thousand (Leon 1995:135-136). Consequently, many of the founders of the Roman church are Jewish Christians (cf. Acts 2:10). In the early 40's, the emperor Claudius expels the Jewish community from Rome (cf. Acts 18:2). As a result, until the death of Claudius, the Roman church is comprised primarily of Gentile Christians. Upon their return to Rome, after the death of Claudius, the Jews begin to assimilate back into the Christian community. That Paul knows so many people who had moved to Rome (cf. 16:3-16) is evidence of the city's status as a primary destination within the empire, with good roads and political peace facilitating frequent travel to and from the capital (Johnson 1999:700).

Given the different cultural nuances, Paul addresses a church experiencing possible tension between two valid cultural expressions of the Christian faith (Keener 1993:412). Since the Christians at Rome know Paul only by his reputation, the Roman letter presents a more or less formal account of Paul's teaching, something he would be less inclined to do if he had established the church himself. The Roman letter presents the fullest account of Paul's theology than any of the Pauline letters (Metzger 2003:209). Mounce (1995:24) observes three general groups in the church at Rome: (1) the legalists, who thought that righteousness was a human achievement; (2) the libertines, who abandoned the law even as a guide for the response of faith; and (3) the spiritualists, whose pride destroyed the true sense of community and made them indifferent to the demands of civic order. As a result, part of the letter is directed to a Jewish minority (cf. 2:17-24), while the overall tone of the letter seems to indicate a Gentile majority (cf. 9:3-5; 11:13-32).

The historical and cultural context of the passage sets forth parameters that facilitate correctly interpreting its intended purpose. Here, Paul's purpose in utilising the illustration of Abraham is not to focus on unsubstantiated benefits that may be used subjectively for one's own aggrandisement; rather, it is an attempt to reveal the soteriological provision of a holy God.

5.2.2.2 Literary context (Paul's letter to the Romans)

The main body of Romans is a treatise or tractate, addressing key theological issues against the backdrop of middle 1st century Christianity, rather than within the context of specific local problems. With this in mind, Romans is in the main a tractate letter, having at its heart a general theological argument, or series of arguments (Moo 1996:14). While Romans falls naturally within the major literary category of a letter, within this framework, Paul appears to incorporate, at specific points, a form of argumentation commonly known as diatribe. deSilva (2004:605) suggests that Romans contains a lengthy, coherent, unified argument concerning the relationship of Jew and Gentile to God and each other in one body of Christ. Using such a method, which differs from the basic outline of the letter, an overall schematic of Romans might resemble the following:

- (1) Epistolary prescript announcing to his audience the theme of the letter (1:1-7)
- (2) Thanksgiving developing Paul's past and future partnership with the Romans (1:8-15)
- (3) Thesis, or proposition, that the gospel brings God's saving power to life in all who trust (1:16-17)
- (4) The solidarity of Jew and Gentile under sin (1:18-3:20)
- (5) The solidarity of Jew and Gentile under God's favour in Christ (3:21-4:25)
- (6) Conclusion and transition in celebrating God's initiative in bringing humankind back into a state of favour (5:1-21)
- (7) Clarifications of possible questions (6:1-8:39)
- (8) Treatment of the questions raised in Romans 3:1-4 (9-11)
- (9) General instructions regarding how to respond to God's gift of acceptance (12-13)
- (10) Specific instructions promoting unity and cohesiveness among Christians (14:1-15:13)

- (11) Paul's travel plans and the role Roman Christians are asked to play (15:14-32)
- (12) Greetings and doxology (16) (deSilva 2004:605-606).

The above schematic offered is relevant to the analysis of Romans 4:17, because it offers a context for correctly understanding the “calls into being things that were not” statement. This is examined further in Sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

5.2.2.2.1 Literary unit (Romans 4)

Having proven that all humankind is in sin (Chapters 1-3), the literary unit of Romans 4 highlights the source of salvation as being the declared righteousness of God. The theological expression for such an act is justification by faith—justification being the act of God whereby the believing sinner is declared righteous on the basis of Christ’s vicarious work on the cross. As a micro unit the Romans 4:13-17 pericope is comprised of a series of didactic statements. Paul gives specific instructions regarding inheritance and justification:

- (1) The law is inadequate to save (4:13)
- (2) Faith is the key (4:14)
- (3) Faith secures salvation in a very real sense for both Jew and Gentile (4:16)
- (4) Individual faith in Christ is modelled after the faith of Abraham—a faith that finds its source in God (4:17).

Within this chapter the soteriological emphasis is unmistakably clear, providing the proper framework within which to analyse its individual pericopes. The intent of verse 17 is seen as being illustrative of the salvation motif, not a corroboration or validation of positive confession.

5.2.2.2 Literary genre

Keener (1993:413) argues that, while Romans is written in the form of a letter, Paul also utilises the approach of deliberative rhetoric, an argument intended to persuade the readers to change their behaviour. Several subgenres are included in the letter, for example: (1) testimony lists (3:10-18; 9:25-29; 15:9-12); (2) hymns; and (3) a mini-letter of recommendation (16:1-2) (Fitzmyer 1993:91-92). It is difficult to place the letter within a single genre, because the distinctiveness of Romans far outweighs the significance of its conformity with current literary or rhetorical custom (cf. Moo 1996:15). However, in general terms, the theological content of the letter, along with its didactic character, establish for the audience a context in which to inform its praxis. Here, too, in the extended discussion of Romans 4:17, the soteriological nature of the treatise seeks to inform the reader's understanding of salvation.

5.2.3 Evaluation of Romans 4:17

After a brief examination of Romans 4:13-17 and the position of verse 17 within the pericope, a succinct evaluation of verse 17 in particular is now offered. The analysis focuses on the following three areas: (1) comparative translation; (2) composition (key words and phrases); and (3) synthesis.

5.2.3.1 Comparative translation

A comparative translation of Romans 4:17 is now offered that utilises two approaches: (1) given the scholarly nature of the research, the verse is first cited from the original language; and (2) a comparison of the verse from three English translations is utilised. The purpose is to provide several renderings in order to compare the translational aspects of the passage.

- (1) UBS Greek New Testament (4th rev ed)
καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε, κατέναντι οὗ
ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζωοποιοῦντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα
ώς ὄντα.
- (2) New International Version (NIV)
As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He
is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God
who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were
not.
- (3) New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—
in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life
to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
- (4) New English Translation (NET)
(as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”).
He is our father in the presence of God whom he believed—the
God who makes the dead alive and summons the things that do
not yet exist as though they already do.

In the Greek text, as well as in each of the English translations, the subject verb relationship between the terms θεοῦ (subject) and καλοῦντος (verb) is clearly seen. This is important to the overall theme of the research, for it is here that word of faith theology posits that creative capacity resides within the believer. Said differently, the “calls into being things that were not” statement is used by word of faith proponents (cf. Capps 1976) as validation for the tenet of positive confession. Yet, even a cursory reading of the passage reveals such an interpretation as incompatible with the intent of the author. This is addressed further in Section 5.2.4.

5.2.3.2 Composition (key words and phrases)

Romans 4:17 is rather straightforward in its composition. The verse is rendered: ‘As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not’. Three key words or phrases enhance the meaning of the verse: (1) θεοῦ (God); (2) ζωοποιοῦντος τοὺς νεκροὺς (gives life to the dead); and (3) καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (calls into being things that were not). Each word or phrase is briefly analysed in terms of its definition and usage in the New International Version.

(1) θεοῦ

The Greek term θεοῦ following its typical rendering in this passage, a modified form of θεος, is translated as God. Not any god, but the God who calls Abraham to leave his homeland in Ur, and in whom Abraham has placed his faith. By linking God with the subsequent descriptives (e.g., “gives life to the dead” and “calls into being things that were not”), the reader is given an obvious reference to the divine promise that Abraham at age 100, and Sarah at age 90, will have a son (cf. Genesis 17:17) (Witmer 2004:454). Abraham’s faith is centred upon God’s power to surmount physical incapacity; therefore, since God is the source of the promise, Abraham believes God regardless of the obstacles. The descriptives cited in the verse do not suggest, as word of faith theology implies, that believers possess synonymous traits; rather, because of who God is, the promise is valid (Newman and Nida 1973:86).

(2) ζωοποιοῦντος τοὺς νεκροὺς

God is described by Paul as possessing the ability to make alive or bring to life (ζωοποιοῦντος) that which is dead (νεκροὺς). The ability of God to bring the dead to life is seen in its clearest light in the resurrection of Jesus (cf. Romans 4:24-25) (Mounce

1995:128). However, in the context of Abraham's faith, this is a direct reference of God's promise to Abraham that he and Sarah will bear a child in their old age (cf. Genesis 17:15-21; 18:11-14). It may also correlate with Abraham's plan to sacrifice his son (cf. Genesis 22:1-14), and his recognition that God is able to bring Isaac back from the dead (cf. Hebrews 11:19). In either case, Abraham's faith resides in the belief that he can trust God to do what he promises and that God will inevitably keep his word (Kasali 2006:1358-1359). Paul's emphasis at this point is that God, not self, is the object of the trust, a fact of vital importance in terms of the subject of this research.

(3) *καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ως ὄντα*

Paul further describes God as one who *καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ως ὄντα*. Such a descriptive not only anticipates the portrayal of Abraham's own faith in God (cf. Romans 4:18-21), it also reinforces the truth of God's sovereignty and creative ability (cf. Genesis 1:1-3). Bruce (1990:112) suggests that Paul's reference here is to the many nations that are yet to spring from Abraham; not only have they no existence as yet, but given Abraham and Sarah's age, nothing seems less likely than that they should ever exist at all. This phrase holds particular relevance for Paul's advocacy of the view that Gentiles are included among the righteous through the criterion of faith. It was his trust in God alone—his trust in a God who could do what only God could do, in this case, call into being things that were not (Johnson 1999:722). Indeed, the phrase in question reveals that biblical faith is trust in the ability of God to do what we cannot do, not a proof text that lends support to the concept of positive confession. This too is of critical importance to the intent of this research, for it further validates Paul's intent in verse 17 as being soteriological in emphasis.

5.2.3.3 Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?

Clearly, the author communicates a soteriological theme. From Paul's perspective, one who believes God turns one's attention away from one's self and focuses the attention toward God, who is the source of all power and life (Newman and Nida 1973:86). This is contrary to a word of faith perspective, which places the attention upon the rights and authority of the believer. Nor do the divine descriptives in Romans 4:17 imply, as word of faith theology posits, that believers possess creative ability that can be exercised at will via the power of positive confession.

The evaluation in Section 5.2.3 reveals that in Roman's 4:17, Paul attempts to communicate that Abraham's example of faith testifies that the promise of God is realised through faith (Youngblood 1995:1100). Here, Paul highlights God's promise of a son, even though both Abraham and Sarah are sexually dead. This rules out Abraham's confidence in his own ability to fulfil the promise and directs him to God, who can both renew life and issue a creative call (Allen 1986:1325). Within Judaism, it is understood that God can speak things into being (cf. Genesis 1:3). Knowing this, Paul argues that God's promise to Abraham is enough to transform Gentiles into his children (Keener 1993:423). Said differently, the broader context of Romans 4:17 communicates that through Abraham all nations (Jew and Gentile) are blessed with the promise of salvation. The soteriological essence of the passage reveals the faulty rendering given the verse by word of faith proponents. It also aids in facilitating biblical guidelines by which to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology.

5.2.4 Application of Romans 4:17

The application of Romans 4:17 is realised primarily in the didactic nature of its content. Based on what Paul seeks to communicate in the passage, both

Abraham and the Christian share the same conviction, that is, God gives life to the physically dead in Abraham. Paul then utilises the illustration as a paradigm for the spiritual deadness of humankind (cf. Mickelsen 1987). Both are able, via the medium of faith, to access God's promise of life. Paul concludes that justification comes by grace, through faith, and thus all people (Jews and Gentiles) can be saved. Although Abraham is the father of the Jews in a literal and physical sense, he is also the father of Christians in a spiritual sense as they follow his example of faith. As people of faith, Christians continue to benefit from this promise today (Stamps 2009:2096).

The faith of Abraham does not apply solely to Abraham. Although the letter is addressed to believers in Rome, it ultimately offers guidelines for the Christian community at large. In Romans 4:17, as well as in numerous complementary biblical passages, the fundamental relationship between belief and behaviour is revealed. This is the essence of practical theology, i.e., orthodoxy influencing orthopraxy. With this in mind, the directives set forth in the verse are applicable to every follower of Christ.

It is precisely the issue of Abraham's trust at the point of human responsibility that Paul uses to attack the understanding of righteousness current within the Judaism of his day (Johnson 1999:722). Neither Abraham's faithfulness nor works produce righteousness; rather, it is Abraham's trust in God alone that is credited as righteousness. Relationship with God hinges on one's faith in God's ability to do what only God can do, i.e., to make one righteous. Therefore, the relationship is based on grace, not on human achievement, and is therefore guaranteed. Those who follow the faith of Abraham as described in Romans 4:17 become his descendants.

It is evident from this brief exegetical analysis that Romans 4:17 is of importance to the subject of this research. The passage clearly distinguishes the source of creative ability as God himself. Clearly, Paul's intended purpose is to facilitate an understanding of the divine relationship between God and

humankind. More specifically, Paul sets forth the paradigm by which this relationship transpires, which is faith in God. In the main, the focus of Romans 4:17 is soteriological in nature, not a didactical exchange regarding the power of positive confession.

5.3 An exegetical analysis of III John 2

Essential to word of faith theology are the tenets of divine health and prosperity—that God’s will for every believer is to live a healthy life, free from sickness and disease, as well as a prosperous and abundant life, especially in terms of material possessions. To support such a claim, word of faith proponents frequently cite III John 2, which states, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (KJV). Dake (1949:244-245) corroborates this position when he writes “There is no excuse for children of God to be sick”. Oral Roberts makes III John 2 the central theme of his ministry (cf. Harrell 1985:66). Using the KJV rendering of the verse, Roberts interprets “above all” in a way that emphasises physical health and financial prosperity over spiritual well-being (Landrus 2002:81). The teachings of both Dake and Roberts profoundly influenced word of faith theology. As a result, III John 2 has become a favourite proof text among word of faith proponents—even among many Pentecostals and Charismatics. The tenets of divine health and prosperity are given specific treatment in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.4 respectively. However, since III John 2 is a core component in validating these tenets of word of faith theology, an exegetical analysis of the verse is important to this research.

5.3.1 Contextual data

Perhaps more than any other New Testament writing, III John displays many of the features of ordinary letters surviving from the ancient world, including a

health wish (v. 2), a thanksgiving (v. 3), the promise of a visit (vv. 13-14), and the sharing of greetings with a third party (v. 15) (Lieu 2008:265). III John is also an excellent example of a Greco-Roman recommendation letter (Keener 1993:750; Thatcher 2006:529; Mitchell 2008:371). The following outline sets forth the general context of the letter:

- I. Greeting (1-4)
 - A. The sender (1a)
 - B. The recipient (1b)
 - C. The blessing (prayer-wish) (2)
 - D. Word of praise (3-4)
- II. Commendation of Gaius' hospitality (5-8)
- III. Condemnation of Diotrephes' behaviour (9-10)
- IV. Consistency of Demetrius' testimony (11-12)
- V. Benediction (13-14) (Akin 2001:235).

5.3.1.1 Author and date

The author of III John is not named within the letter itself. Rather, the letter begins with a prescript, as was customary in both secular and Christian letter forms (cf. Strecker 1996:255), with the author introducing himself as the elder (*O πρεσβύτερος*). Although the term *πρεσβύτερος* is generally understood as an older man, it may also refer to an original witness to the life and teachings of Jesus (Hodges 2004:911). Although I John is anonymous, as early as the late 2nd century the letter is attributed to the apostle John. Both I and II John appear to address the same set of problems and to originate about the same time (Dunning 1992:1205), while both II and III John bear the same greeting from the *πρεσβύτερος*. While the text of the letters does not state that the apostle John is the author of the three letters, the view is based on the following criteria (Orr 1986:1571): (1) the ancient testimony of the church; certain internal indications such as a common stock of ideas; (3) vocabulary

and style; and (4) biographical data concerning John drawn from Scripture and tradition. Stott (1988:17) argues that the evidence is strongly in favour of Johannine authorship.

John's letters, according to both Irenaeus and Eusebius, are apparently composed in Ephesus (Orr 1986:1571). In terms of date, any attempt to specify such with certainty is problematic. Hodges (2004:911) suggests that since no independent data exists on which to base a date for III John, it is simplest to suggest a date in the early 60's. However, since church tradition suggests that John was in Ephesus until the time of Trajan, and since Trajan's reign covers A.D. 98-117, a plausible date for John's corpus of letters, including III John in particular, is somewhere between A.D. 85-100 (Akin 2001:27).

5.3.1.2 Main theme and purpose

The Johannine letters offer important insight regarding the nature of God, the meaning of the incarnation, and the importance and difficulty of Christian community as a witness to and an expression of divine love (Rensberger 2006:278). III John is the shortest book in both the Old and New Testaments, containing only 219 words in the Greek text. There is little indication that the issues addressed in I and II John, namely, Christological error and matters of praxis, are in view in III John (Berg 1999:1484). However, there is a similar problem that lies behind both II and III John, namely, the visits of itinerant teachers and what treatment is to be given to them (Stott 1988:220). This brief letter is not written to a group of believers or to a specific church; rather, III John is written to a specific person, a man named Gaius. No general exhortations or refutation of false doctrine are given, instead the letter has historical rather than theological interest (Haas, De Jonge and Swellengrebel 1972:175).

John's purpose in his third letter is essentially three-fold (Gundry 1994:452; Kruse 2000:219):

- (1) To reinforce Gaius' commitment to the noble work of providing hospitality to travelling missionaries, something he is already doing (cf. 5-8)
- (2) To draw attention to the intolerable behaviour of Diotrephes and to foreshadow the steps he intends to take in response to addressing the behaviour (cf. 9-10)
- (3) To offer commendation for Demetrius, who is probably the carrier of the letter (cf. 12).

An assessment of the contextual data surrounding III John 2 is important because it establishes parameters within which the passage may be correctly understood. As with the analysis of Romans 4:17 (cf. Section 5.2), since III John 2 holds such prominence in word of faith theology, this allows for an adequate hermeneutical approach to be utilised in assessing a word of faith interpretation of the passage.

5.3.2 Pericope (III John 1-4)

Since the New Testament letters are comprised largely of individual pericopes or units of argumentation, the pericope within which III John 2 resides is now briefly appraised. This will facilitate the evaluation of the passage in Section 5.3.3. Verses 1-4 of the letter seem to constitute the unit in question (cf. Black 1998; Hodges 2004; Thatcher 2006; Lieu 2008).

The III John 1-4 pericope primarily comprises a salutation. The salutation is brief in contrast with the salutations of other personal letters in the New Testament (cf. Ryrie 1990). Following the typical epistolary structure of the time period, John begins the letter with a greeting, and in so doing seeks to

establish a positive rapport with his reader. Adopting the writing style of the letters of his day, the greeting consists of three basic parts: (1) identification of the author and recipient; (2) a blessing or expression of good wishes; and (3) a word of praise (Berg 1999:1522; Akin 2001:238). The greeting is somewhat unusual, in that, instead of the common form normally used (Dunning 1992:1219); there is a more personal wish for Gaius' physical and spiritual well-being. The identification of Gaius in relation to the phrase "my children" (v. 4) may be indicative that he is one of John's personal converts. If this is the case, it further validates the intimate nature of the letter.

The preliminary data revealed in the pericope is especially important in terms of assessing word of faith theology on divine health and prosperity, and specifically the position that III John 2 offers a guarantee of such. That said, the context of the pericope highlights, not a divine mandate for personal material prosperity or divine health; rather, the context bears the characteristics of a standard letter in ancient times. Coupled with the personal nature of the letter, John's comments reveal his desire that all go well for the recipient. This topic is assessed further in Section 5.3.3.

5.3.2.1 Historical and cultural context

The very nature of John's third letter emphasises its historical interest. The letter offers insight into a personality conflict that arises near the end of the 1st century and the strategy implanted to resolve it (Akin 2001:238). Unlike the letters of Paul that overflow with specific historical allusions, the letters of John contain almost no references to well-known persons, places or events. Nonetheless, traditions develop in the early church regarding the origin of the letters that offer the general historical background for interpretation (Barker 1981:293-294).

In general, the historical and cultural context of III John reflects a period in the life of the early church when organisation is loose and local congregations are bound together by letters from those in authority and by personal visits of their representatives and itinerant evangelists (Metzger 2003:261). With this in mind, the letter is written to a man named Gaius. Three other men by the same name are found in the New Testament (cf. Acts 19:29; 20:4; Romans 16:23; I Corinthians 1:14), however, there is no confirmation that this particular Gaius is to be associated with the others.

The historical and cultural context of III John 2 provides the framework within which the passage may be understood. Clearly, John's use of the health wish (blessing) in verse 2 is seen as a matter of the writing protocol of his day, and not a foundation for matters of doctrine or theology.

5.3.2.2 Literary context (Johannine corpus)

Depending on the context of study, John's letters are classified in two ways: (1) along with the letters of Peter, James, and Jude, they are referenced as general or catholic letters; or (2) grouped with the Gospel of John and Revelation they form the Johannine corpus. The literary context of the John's third letter places it within the broader context of the Johannine corpus. In I John, the process of composition that produced the letter is not as obvious as the latter two. In II and III John, the letters are easily understood as containing a relatively simple message, perhaps with more than one central theme and written at a single setting without the use of written sources (Smith 1991:21-22). The corpus as a whole depicts a church engaging various elements of conflict in which false teachers have separated from the church because of: (1) an inadequate view of the incarnation (I John 2:22; II John 7); (2) a deficient view of sin (I John 1:8, 10: 2:4); and (3) a failure to fellowship (I John 2:9; 4:20) (Polhill 1995:1311).

Although the entire Johannine corpus contains similarities in terms of literary context, the letters of II and III John are obviously a matched pair (Orr 1986:1586). The following similarities are evident:

- (1) The author describes himself as “the elder” (II John 1; III John 1).
- (2) The recipients are those whom he “loves in the truth” (II John 1; III John 1).
- (3) The recipients are the occasion of “great rejoicing” (II John 4; III John 3).
- (4) The recipients “walk in the truth” (II John 4; III John 3).
- (5) The elder has received good reports about both (II John 4; III John 3, 5).
- (6) Both letters contain a warning (2 John 8; 3 John 9).
- (7) The elder desires to see the recipients of both face-to-face (II John 12; III John 14).
- (8) The greetings of others are included in each letter (II John 13; III John 14) (Akin 2001:236).

The above comparison facilitates a correct understanding of the III John 2 passage by offering the broader literary context within which it resides. Here, the larger framework is established for John’s use of the health wish in verse 2, a motif given further treatment in Sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.

5.3.2.2.1 Literary unit (III John)

The cursory appraisal of the literary context at large, namely the Johannine corpus, leads to a focus on the literary unit of III John. The third letter is the most personal of the Johannine corpus. The author identifies himself as “the elder”, perhaps as a means of affirming his pastoral self-understanding and probably public identity (Sweeney 2010:148). Four men (i.e., the elder, Gaius,

Diotrephes, and Demetrius) and their reputations (growing out of their behaviour) constitute the substance of the letter (Akin 2001:238). The III John 1-4 pericope is comprised of a series of very personal salutatory statements to Gaius, the recipient of the letter:

- (1) Introductory remarks to the recipient (III John 1)
- (2) Personal blessing and well wishes (III John 2)
- (3) Commendation of faithfulness to the truth (III John 3)
- (4) Personal joy regarding those who walk in truth (III John 4).

Within the letter as a whole, the structure of the recommendation letter is clearly visible, which provides a proper framework within which to analyse the individual pericopes. To understand the context of the literary unit is to recognise that the author's intent is not to provide a doctrinal or theological basis for the word of faith concepts of prosperity or divine health. When the III John 2 passage is placed within the context of the broader literary unit, its intent is clearly understood as that of a personal blessing, a common component found within genuine letters of the time.

5.3.2.2.2 Literary genre

Like II John, III John may clearly be categorised in general as a typical Greco-Roman letter. The letter is also an excellent example in particular of a Greco-Roman recommendation letter (Stowers 1986:156; Aune 2003:163), a form of correspondence used by the early church to indicate a person's doctrinal credentials. Such letters are a widely recognised genre in the ancient world, complete with established guidelines for proper form and content (Thatcher 2006:529). Watson (1989:482-485) argues that III John is a mixed letter exhibiting the characteristics of numerous letter sub-genres, namely: (1) friendly letter; (2) advisory letter; (3) commendation letter; (4) praise letter; (5) encouragement letter; and (6) letter of vituperation. As such, the literary genre

of III John places it within the succinct parameters of a personal correspondence.

5.3.3 Evaluation of III John 2

Having briefly examined the pericope of III John 1-4 and the arrangement of verse 2 within the pericope, an evaluation of verse 2 is now offered. Three components comprise the evaluation: (1) comparative translation; (2) composition (key words and phrases); and (3) synthesis.

5.3.3.1 Comparative translation

A primary reason for the faulty word of faith interpretation of III John 2 is two-fold: (1) the way the verse is translated in particular English versions (cf. 5.3.3.1); and (2) the contemporary usage of the word prosper (cf. 5.3.3.2). The KJV, the translation used by most all early, as well as many contemporary word of faith proponents, renders the verse, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth”. Other English translations that employ the term prosper include the NKJV, ASV and NASB. With this in mind, III John 2 is now assessed via a comparative translation. To facilitate this objective, the following methodology is utilised: (1) the verse is first cited from the original language; and (2) the verse is cited from three English translations. The Greek and English renderings accentuate the translational components of the passage.

- (1) UBS Greek New Testament (4th rev ed)

Ἄγαπητέ, περὶ πάντων εὔχομαι σε εὐόδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, καθὼς εὔοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχή.

(2) New International Version (NIV)

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

(3) New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

(4) New English Translation (NET)

Dear friend, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

In the Greek text, as well as in each of the English translations, the focus of the passage is that of a personal greeting, accompanied by a general statement of wishing the recipient well (cf. 5.3.2.2). Cognisance of the literary nature of verse 2 is important to the overall theme of the research, for it is here that word of faith theology assumes foundational legitimacy for its emphasis on material prosperity and physical healing/health. Said differently, if material prosperity is not the will of God for every believer, then John would not have written such a wish to Gaius (cf. Dake 1963:282). However, reading the text of III John 2 via a comparative translation reveals that such an interpretation is inconsistent with the intent of the author. This is addressed further in Section 5.3.4.

5.3.3.2 Composition (key words and phrases)

III John 2 is comprised of an epistolary introduction written to a specific individual. As such, it follows the conventional norms of its genre. The passage reads, “Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well”. An examination of three key words and phrases allows for a clearer understanding of the verse. Each of the following phrases is briefly analysed in terms of its definition and usage in the New International Version: (1) $\pi\epsilon\rho\imath$

πάντων εὐχομαί (I pray that you may); (2) *σε εύοδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν* (enjoy good health and that all may go well with you); and (3) *καθὼς εύοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχή* (even as your soul is getting along well).

(1) *περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί*

Problematic to this phrase is its translation in the KJV, the version of the Bible used by most all word of faith proponents during the development of their theology. The KJV translates the phrase *περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί* as “I wish above all things”. This rendering seems to suggest that what follows the statement supersedes most, if not all, of the remaining letter. It also suggests that the object of the “above all” descriptive is elevated to a place of unwarranted importance. This is indeed how Oral Roberts utilised the verse (cf. Harrell 1985:66; Landrus 2002:81), connecting the “above all” statement to the elements of prosperity and physical healing. However, such a rendering is devoid of textual support (Brown 1982:703-704). Rather than “above all”, the preposition *περὶ* is better understood as “in all” or “concerning all” things (cf. Lukaszewski 2006). Translating *περὶ* as “in all” or “concerning all” aligns with the health wish model utilised in verse 2. As a result, the emphasis placed on the passage by word of faith theology is clearly seen as faulty and inadequate.

(2) *σε εύοδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν*

The elder’s general greeting is expanded to include the terms *εύοδοῦσθαι* (to have a prosperous journey) and *ὑγιαίνειν* (to be sound). Here too the KJV rendering, “that thou mayest prosper and be in health”, is problematic. Word of faith theology uses this statement as a proof text to support the position that material prosperity and physical healing are the certain will of God for every believer. The problem with this position is twofold.

First, the KJV usage of the word prosper seems to indicate, at least from the contemporary usage of the term, the achievement of economic success (Webster 1989:945). However, the term translated prosper (*εὐοδοῦσθαι*) in the KJV is derived from the word *εὐοδῶ*, which means “to show a good way”, “to guide well”, or in a generic sense “to succeed” (Michaelis 1967:114; Verbrugge 2000:497). The word *εὐοδῶ* occurs only four times in the New Testament (cf. Romans 1:10; I Corinthians 16:2; twice in III John 2), and in each case the conventional meaning is employed; specifically, success in one’s journey or passage in life, including anything in which a believer might legitimately engage. In none of the passages is the word used primarily to express the intent of economic success (i.e., financial prosperity). Consequently, the NIV rendering, “that all may go well with you”, flows naturally from the structure of the text. Second, connected grammatically via the conjunction *καὶ*, the elder’s wish of general well-being also includes the term *ὑγιαίνειν*. The KJV renders *ὑγιαίνειν* as “to be in health”. Word of faith theology links “to be in health” and “prosper” back to the “above all” rendering of *περὶ* (cf. Landrus 2002:43), hence, the faulty emphasis on financial prosperity and divine health as holding priority in the life of the believer. To pray or wish someone to have good health is a common feature of the letters, both epistolary and secular, of John’s day (Brown 1982:703; Akin 2001:240). Indeed, the usage of such a wish in verse 2 is in keeping with the health wish motif.

(3) *καθὼς εὐοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχή*

Here, the elder’s general health wish is amplified by the phrase *καθὼς εὐοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχή*, rendered in the KJV as “even as thy soul prospereth”. Although word of faith theology does not discount the need for spiritual health or the well-being of the

ψυχή (soul), it emphasises that one who is spiritually healthy can expect to prosper materially and physically (Hagin 1974:52; Price 1991:xx-xxi). According to Hiebert (1987:62), one's spiritual well-being is indeed the standard of measurement for one's physical and material counterparts. However, the elder's use of the phrase *καθὼς εὐόδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχή* is indicative of the conventional health wish of his day (Black 1998:461). As such, along with the entire verse, the phrase fails to provide textual support for the health and wealth components of word of faith theology.

5.3.3.3 Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?

III John is a prime example of an ancient letter, which, when interpreted as such, eliminates faulty interpretations of the passage. The author begins the letter with a prayer for the health of Gaius and that all may go well with him. Unfortunately, the KJV (cf. also the NKJV, ASV, NASB) rendering of the verse conveys the impression that financial prosperity and good health are rated above everything else (Orr 1986:1588; Keener 1993:751). However, the textual data does not support this assumption. Good health and success are themes that accompany personal letters throughout the Greek world of John's day (cf. Romans 1:10) (Polhill 1995:1318; Kistemaker 1996:2; Painter 2002:367; Jones 2009:269). Rather than comprising a mandated biblical promise or conclusive verification of a specific doctrinal tenet, the structure of III John 2 is purely a literary device used to greet the recipient of the letter. John employs the standard *formula valetudinis* or health wish (typically accompanied by the verb ὑγιαίνειν), expressing the idea in general terms, "If you are well, it would be excellent" (Aune 2003:166).

5.3.4 Application of III John 2

John's third letter is primarily a private correspondence, therefore, application of the letter, and particularly the verse in question, must be made with care. To extend John's wish for Gaius to refer to financial and material prosperity for all Christians of all times is totally foreign to the text; likewise, to argue from the text that God wills financial prosperity or divine health for all believers is to abuse the text (Fee 2006:10). The III John 2 passage finds application via several agencies. First, the passage clearly emphasises the importance of both physical and spiritual well-being. Care should be given on the part of the believer regarding: (1) attention to matters of nutrition, exercise and ample rest per the physical life; and (2) attention to matters of prayer, Scripture, etc. per the spiritual life (cf. Smalley 1984:346; Akin 2001:240). Second, one may employ the same general practise, and is encouraged to do so, of praying for one's fellow believers that all may go well with them. There appears to be biblical warrant here for desiring the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of one's fellow believers (Stott 1988:223; Keener 1993:751; Hodges 2004:912).

This brief assessment of III John 2 is important to the topic of this research in that it sets forth a clear understanding of the text. To interpret John's intimate greeting as the basis upon which to build a theological system (e.g., prosperity theology or divine health), and to attempt to make application of such, is to miss the point of his very personal salutation. John neither intended such an interpretation, nor would Gaius have so understood it; moreover, hardly anything can be found in the Johannine tradition to support such an idea (Berg 1999:1522; Fee 2006:10).

5.4 An exegetical analysis of Mark 11:24

Another tenet central to word of faith theology is the purported utilisation of faith in receiving what one desires from God. To validate this position, word of

faith proponents cite Mark 11:24, which states, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (KJV). Kenneth Hagin (cf. 1979a) claims that Jesus gave him the formula by which to apply Mark 11:24 and similar faith passages: (1) say it; (2) do it; (3) receive it; and (4) tell it. According to word of faith theology, by employing the proposed formula, one has the assurance of receiving that for which one asks. Hagin (1979:16) assures his followers, “I have not prayed one prayer in 45 years...without getting an answer—and the answer was yes”. Such teaching permeates the word of faith movement and has influenced many within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Although the tenet of faith is given specific treatment in Section 5.5.3, the emphasis placed upon this verse by word of faith proponents makes an exegetical analysis of Mark 11:24 important to this research.

5.4.1 Contextual data

Mark offers a succinct, unadorned yet vivid and dynamic account of the life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (Wessel 1984:603; Brooks 1992:17; Cole 2006:1171). The briefest of four similar accounts of the life of Jesus, Mark details specific events from the perspective of an eyewitness. The following outline sets forth the general context of Mark’s gospel (Wessel 1984:615-617, adapted):

- I. Prologue (1:1-13)
- II. Early Galilean ministry (1:14-3:6)
- III. Later Galilean ministry (3:7-6:13)
- IV. Withdrawal from Galilee (6:14-8:30)
- V. Journey to Jerusalem (8:31-10:52)
- VI. Ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-13:37)
- VII. Passion and resurrection narrative (14:1-16:8 [9-20]).

5.4.1.1 Author and date

Although the gospel of Mark—like the other three gospels—is anonymous, there is a strong and early tradition that Mark (Acts 15:37; Colossians 4:10; I Peter 5:13) is the author (Wessel and Strauss 2010:678). Nothing within the text suggests that Mark is the author, however, the titles connected with the gospels circulated early throughout the Roman world, indicating an early tradition of the authorship (Keener 1993:132). Early 2nd century writers such as Papias, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria attest to John Mark as the author of the gospel (Short 1986:1156). Mark is believed to have derived his account of the events in the life of Jesus from Peter, then, subsequently placed it in written form (Bruce 1980:395-396; Grassmick 2004:95; Cole 2006:1171). Eusebius (1998:3.39.15) writes that Mark, “wrote accurately...of the things said or done by the Lord...for he was careful of this one thing, to omit none of the things he had heard and to make no untrue statements therein”. Based on the above data, Mark is referenced as the gospel’s author throughout this analysis.

For several reasons, the most plausible date of Mark’s gospel is between 64 and 67 AD. First, the internal evidence seems to support a time after Peter’s death, as Mark is very forthright regarding the failures of Peter, a matter more easily understood if Peter has already been martyred and gained the affection of the early church (Wessel 1984:608). Second, church tradition suggests that John Mark died soon after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (64-67 AD) (Brooks 1992:28; Cole 2006:1172), which would place the writing at some point within this window. Third, the gospel appears to have been written during the time of the great persecution in Rome, which also occurred during the dates suggested above (Keener 1993:132).

5.4.1.2 Main theme and purpose

Perhaps the most common suggestion as to theme and purpose is that Mark writes his gospel to Roman Christians during a time of intense persecution (Keener 1993:132). Within Mark lies an apologetic and evangelistic purpose, not so much to keep Christians from apostatising out of shame for the cross, but to convert non-Christians despite the shame of the cross (Gundry 1993:1026). From the text (cf. 1:1) emerges the main theme of Mark's writing, "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God". Throughout Mark's writing Jesus is proclaimed to be the son of God by: (1) his heavenly Father (cf. 1:11; 9:7); (2) demons, who possess supernatural knowledge (cf. 3:11; 5:7); and (3) by himself (cf. 12:6; 14:61) (Short 1986:1157). This overall theme sets the tone for Mark's entire corpus.

Mark's purpose in writing his gospel is essentially four-fold and is inferred by the contents of the text (Brooks 1992:30-31; Green 1992:853; Cole 2006:1171):

- (1) To collect and arrange various individual traditions into a mosaic of the deeds and teachings of Jesus
- (2) To set forth his own understanding of Jesus and thus develop his Christology in such a way as to minister to the needs of his own church
- (3) To emphasise not only the deeds and teachings of Jesus, but also the necessity of being a disciple of Jesus
- (4) To clarify Jesus' teaching about the future.

Analysing the contextual data surrounding Mark's gospel is important, because it establishes parameters within which Mark 11:24 is most accurately understood. As with the previous analyses of Romans 4:17 (cf. Section 5.2) and III John 2 (cf. Section 5.3), since Mark 11:24 holds such celebrity in word

of faith theology, this analysis allows for an adequate hermeneutical approach to be utilised in assessing a word of faith interpretation of the passage.

5.4.2 Pericope (Mark 11:12-26)

Because the gospels are comprised largely of individual pericopes or units of narrative or teaching, the pericope within which Mark 11:24 resides is given cursory treatment. This will facilitate the evaluation of the passage in Section 5.4.3. Per the structure of the chapter, verses 12-26 appear to constitute the unit in question (cf. Short 1986:1172; Green 1992:855; Keener 1993:165; Grassmick 2004:102). The pericope is comprised of a three-part narrative. First, Mark gives the account of the unfruitful fig tree Jesus encounters en route from Bethany to Jerusalem (12-14). Second, in contrast to Matthew's account of the same incident (21:18-22) in which the temple scene occurs prior to the fig tree incident, Mark records that Jesus travels to Jerusalem and subsequently purges the temple (15-19). Third, the fig tree episode is revisited as Jesus and his entourage travel back by the place where the tree had been cursed (20-26). Here, Jesus expounds on his earlier action of cursing the fig tree.

The pericope serves as a micro-unit emphasising the overarching motif examined within its greater context, namely, the judgment Jesus pronounces on Jerusalem (Keener 1993:165). The cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple are symbolic devices referencing the same thing—that judgment is coming to Israel. The introductory information revealed in this pericope is relevant in terms of a correct assessment of word of faith theology regarding faith, particularly the assertion that Mark 11:24 assures the receipt of whatever one may desire and request. The context of the pericope highlights, not a biblical directive to assert one's faith for personal gain; rather, it highlights the judgment that Jesus is prophesying upon the temple, Jerusalem, and basically Israel at large.

5.4.2.1 Historical and cultural context

Much of Evangelical scholarship associates Mark's gospel with Rome (Keener 1993:132; Metzger 2003:91). Early church tradition also connects Mark's gospel with the apostle Peter. According to Wessel (1984:608), this is consistent with: (1) the historical likelihood that Peter was in Rome toward the end of his life and probably was martyred there; and (2) the biblical evidence that Mark too was in Rome about the same time and was closely associated with Peter (cf. II Timothy 4:11; I Peter 5:13). Peter's martyrdom occurred during the persecution of Nero (64-65 AD), during which the entire Christian community experiences severe persecution. Consequently, Mark writes perhaps from Rome and to Roman Christians, many of whom were Gentiles, in a historical context of extreme persecution.

Internal evidence suggests primarily a non-Jewish audience, which places the gospel culturally within a Gentile missional context (Wessel 1984:609; Grassmick 2004:99). Several reasons suggest such a context. First, Mark appears to go beyond the norm to explain Jewish customs that would seem unfamiliar to non-Jewish readers (cf. 7:2-4; 15:42). Second, for the benefit of the reader, Mark translates numerous Aramaic words (cf. 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22). Third, he exhibits a special interest in persecution and martyrdom (cf. 8:34-38; 13:9-13). Fourth, Mark uses a large number of Latin loan words, especially in comparison to Matthew and Luke (cf. 5:9; 6:27; 12:15; 15:16). Fifth, very few Old Testament quotations or references to fulfilled prophecy are used. Sixth, a particular concern for all nations is expressed (cf. 5:18-20; 11:17; 14:9). Indeed, it appears that a Gentile cultural context is set forth.

The historical and cultural context of the gospel provides a framework within which Mark 11:24 can be better understood. Clearly, within this context, verse 24 is seen as a matter of messianic priority and prophetic judgment upon Israel, not validation of the word of faith concept of believe and receive.

5.4.2.2 Literary context (Mark's gospel)

Although Marcan priority is an issue of much debate, its relevance to the subject of this analysis is minuscule. Several issues, however, emerge in reference to the literary context of Mark's gospel: (1) the language of the gospel; and (2) the literary style of the gospel.

First, the vocabulary of the gospel is rather limited, using only 1270 different words, 80 of which are peculiar to Mark. This is in contrast to Luke's use of over 250 words not found elsewhere in the New Testament. He frequently uses Latin and Aramaic words, which account in large measure for the rough, ungrammatical Greek often found in the gospel (Wessel and Strauss 2010:690). Mark's Greek has been compared to that spoken by the lower classes in Rome, specifically those of Palestinian or Syrian origin (Rawlinson 1960:xxxii).

Second, Mark's literary style has frequently been described as barbarous, unrefined and of lesser quality to that of Matthew and Luke (Lane 1974:26; Brooks 1992:17). While his proficiency with Greek does not match that of other New Testament writers, his style is forceful, fresh and vigorous (Wessel 1984:612). He introduces singular events some 41 times with the word immediately. His literary style is unique among the gospels in that: (1) he emphasises Jesus's actions over and above his teachings; (2) his style is vivid, forceful and descriptive, reflecting an eyewitness source such as Peter; (3) he portrays his subjects with unusual candour; and (4) his gospel is dominated by Jesus' movement toward the cross and the resurrection (Grassmick 2004:99-100).

The information noted above aids in facilitating a correct understanding of the Mark 11:24 passage by offering the broader literary context within which it resides. Here, the larger framework is established for Mark's use of the faith

concept in verse 24, a motif given further treatment in Sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4.

5.4.2.2.1 Literary unit (Mark 11)

The cursory appraisal of the literary context at large, namely the gospel of Mark as a whole, points to the literary unit of Mark's eleventh chapter. Chapter eleven is essentially comprised of four parts.

- (1) Celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)
- (2) Cleansing/purging of the temple (11:15-19)
- (3) Cursing of the fig tree (11:12-14, 20-26)
- (4) Conflict with the religious hierarchy (11:27-33).

At this point a new segment in the gospel narrative begins. This chapter finds its setting at the beginning of Jesus' Jerusalem ministry. Here, private teaching transitions to public confrontation. The literary unit brings the confrontation with the religious authorities into sharp focus and thus forms the backdrop of Jesus' trial and crucifixion (Camery-Hoggatt 1999:338). Judgment is pronounced upon Israel's corrupt religious system, and is symbolically portrayed in both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing/purging of the temple (France 2002:428). This is especially important for correctly interpreting Mark 11:24.

Within the chapter as a whole, the judgment theme is clearly visible. This provides a proper framework within which to analyse the individual pericope. The context of the literary unit clearly reveals that Mark's intent is not to provide a doctrinal or theological basis for the concept of faith as a means to receive material blessing. When Mark 11:24 is placed within the context of the broader literary unit, it is more correctly understood as God being the source of human faith, not the corrupt religious system of Israel.

5.4.2.2.2 Literary genre

Mark's written corpus may indeed be summarised as historical narrative motivated by theological concerns (Wessel and Strauss 2010:678). It falls within the literary genre of a gospel. Derived from the Greek term *εὐαγγέλιον*, the word gospel literally means "good news" or "good tidings". However, as a literary genre, a gospel is more than the mere embodiment of good news. A gospel is the joyous proclamation of God's redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of sinful humankind (Mounce 1989:472).

That said, much debate has occurred regarding the nature of a gospel as a particular genre, with varied positions being offered in terms of definition (Short 1986:1157; Perkins 1995:518-520): (1) a literary form created by the early Christians and therefore unique to the ancient world; (2) folk literature, non-literary collections of oral traditions loosely strung together in a connected narrative; (3) the compilation of the collective memory of the Christian community concerning the words and deeds of Jesus; (4) ancient biographies; and (5) a foundation story for a community that had no interest in history or biography. While elements of each may in varying degrees be found within the narratives, the gospel genre is more than the mere documentation of the deeds of Jesus. In a very real sense, it can be said that there are not four gospels, but rather four versions of the one gospel.

5.4.3 Evaluation of Mark 11:24

After the brief examination of the Mark 11:12-26 pericope, an evaluation of verse 24 is now offered. Three components comprise the evaluation: (1) comparative translation of verse 24; (2) composition (key words and phrases within the verse); and (3) synthesis.

5.4.3.1 Comparative translation

The reason for the prominence of Mark 11:24 in word of faith theology is three-fold: (1) the words are spoken by Jesus; (2) when removed from its context the passage appears to offer a universal promise of receipt; and (3) the condition for receipt appears to be solely the faith of the believer. With this in mind, Mark 11:24 is now assessed via a comparative translation. To facilitate this objective, the following methodology is utilised: (1) the verse is first cited from the original language; and (2) the verse is cited from three English translations. The Greek and English renderings accentuate the translational components of the passage.

- (1) UBS Greek New Testament (4th rev ed)

διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἴτεῖσθε, πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν.

- (2) New International Version (NIV)

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

- (3) New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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

- (4) New English Translation (NET)

For this reason I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

The Greek text, along with each of the English translations, presents the passage in a forthright and straightforward manner. Taken as a singular statement, separated from its context and without the benefit of supplemental texts of the same topic, it is easy to ascertain the faulty interpretation postulated by word of faith theology. It is here, along with subordinate passages, that word of faith theology finds legitimacy in its extreme emphasis regarding faith (cf. Kenyon 1942:20; Capps 1976:12-13; Copeland 19804-5;

Hagin 1980:3-4; et al). In contrast, when the passage is understood within its broader context, a different view emerges. A reading of Mark 11:24, via a comparative translation and against the backdrop of its broader context, reveals that a word of faith interpretation is inconsistent with the intent of the author. This topic is addressed further in Section 5.4.4.

5.4.3.2 Composition (key words and phrases)

Mark 11:24 is comprised of a specific statement that finds its true meaning and application when understood within Mark's gospel motif. As such, the passage follows the recognised characteristic of a gospel, the proclamation of the good news via the words and deeds of Jesus. Each of the following phrases is briefly analysed in terms of its definition and usage in the New International Version: (1) *πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἴτεῖσθε* (whatever you ask for in prayer); and (2) *πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν* (believe that you have received it and it will be yours).

(1) *πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἴτεῖσθε*

Here too, the KJV rendering of the phrase is problematic. Especially since the KJV was used by most all word of faith proponents during the development of their theology. The KJV translates the phrase *πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἴτεῖσθε* as "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray". This rendering gives the impression that one may legitimately petition God with whatever one desires, setting forth an egocentric approach. A superficial reading suggests that Christians should decide what they want (Lioy 2007:43). Such is indeed the interpretation fostered by Hagin (cf. 1979a:3-5) and his followers. However, when the phrase is understood in relation to the Jerusalem judgment (cf. Mark 11-13), a different picture emerges. Against the backdrop of judgment, the phrase *πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἴτεῖσθε*

assumes a different idea. The judgment motif, along with the two-fold reference to Jesus' saying concerning the destruction of the temple (14:58; 15:29), strongly suggests that the mountain reference of verse 23 refers to the Temple Mount (Evans 2001:192; cf. Green 1992:866; Camery-Hoggatt 1999:343-344). The "whatever you ask for in prayer" statement is in direct relation to Jesus' exhortation regarding the temple as a house of prayer, and the allusion to its impending destruction. Here, Jesus implies that the temple will no longer be the designated house of prayer, consequently, prayer will be focused on faith in God (11:22). As such, the egocentric emphasis (what things soever ye desire) placed on the passage by word of faith theology inadequately portrays its intended meaning.

(2) πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν

At first reading, *πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν* looks like an exhortation to generate enough confidence so that the disciples can also curse fig trees with similar results or move literal mountains (Mann 1986:452). However, such a rendering removes the phrase from its contextual composition, setting it up for almost certain misunderstanding. This very hermeneutic is seen throughout word of faith theology, where the belief/faith of the believer is elevated to the level of deity (Kenyon 1942:20; Copeland 1974:99; Capps 1976:63-76; Hагin 1979a:3; 1980:3-4). Mark's "have faith in God" (11:22), in word of faith theology, becomes "have the faith of God" or "have the God kind of faith" (Capps 1976:131; et al). Mark's use of the words "believe that you have received it" is not chosen arbitrarily as a condition of prayer; it is the basis of all relationship with God (cf. Hebrews 11:6), including prayer. Even here, the text does not suggest a generalisation, that is, that one may remove any mountain or wither any fig tree at will (Cole 1989:256). Clearly, the statements of Jesus are to be understood metaphorically, for not

even he moved physical mountains during his earthly ministry. This is not to suggest that he could not do so, for he certainly commanded the physical elements (cf. 4:39; 6:41; 11:21). Mountains in a metaphoric sense will indeed be moved, however, such acts are according to God's will, not merely via human desire (cf. 14:36; Matthew 6:9-10; John 14:13-14; I John 5:14). Regarding such faith, God's omnipotence is its sole assurance and God's sovereignty is its only restriction; for God is always ready to respond to the prayers of obedient believers, and they can petition him knowing that no situation is impossible (Stauffer 1956:169; Grassmick 2004:159).

5.4.3.3 Synthesis: What is the author attempting to communicate?

The context of Mark 11:24 is concerned primarily with three things: (1) the judgment of the temple, which represents the corrupt Judaic system of worship; (2) the transition from temple worship to a new understanding of the focus and method of worship; and (3) the symbolic acting out of both via the two-fold live parable of temple cleansing and cursing of the fig tree. First, Mark's admonition that "whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" is to be understood in juxtaposition and contrast to the corrupt religious system of his day. He addresses the valid question of how prayer and forgiveness will occur, separate and apart from temple worship, proclaiming Jesus as the source. The temple may well be gone, just as the fig tree has withered, but one is not left in the world without God (Camery-Hoggatt 1999:343). Second, Mark's fig tree-temple couplet is a call to faith, signifying that Jesus, and not the temple, is to become the object of faith. At this time in history the Jewish worldview perceives life without the temple as unthinkable, even unfathomable. Mark endeavours to communicate the imminent transition about to take place. Faith is explained as a choice to trust Jesus and nothing else (Edwards 2002:347). Third, Mark's live parable,

the tree-temple couplet, serves not only as a call to expect and accept God's new paradigm, but to present the medium by which this paradigm is realised, namely, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.

5.4.4 Application of Mark 11:24

Mark 11:24 finds application in several ways. First, Mark's words serve to remind the followers of Christ to have faith in God. Neither the temple, a church, denomination, movement or person is adequate; God alone is to be the source of the believer's faith. Any other source is faulty and void of reality. Second, the passage is an object lesson taught by Jesus regarding the importance of faith and prayer. Here, Jesus is not suggesting "if you pray sincere enough and truly believe", God is obligated to answer any prayer one may pray. This is not faith in God, but faith in faith, a practice well appropriated by word of faith proponents (cf. Section 4.5.3). Genuine faith finds its reference point in Scripture (cf. John 15:7; Romans 10:17), and it is here that God's will is made known to the believer. Then, based on this premise, the believer is to pray in faith believing. Third, the mountain (cf. 11:22) is symbolic of life's difficulties and challenges (cf. Zechariah 4:7), and in the case of each, God is sovereignly active. He is always ready to respond to the believer's prayer, and he may be petitioned with the confidence that nothing is impossible for him (Grassmick 2004:159).

This brief assessment of Mark 11:24 is important to the topic of research, in that it sets forth a clear understanding of the text. To interpret Mark's words in verse 24 outside their given context, then postulate a theological system (i.e., desire, ask, believe, receive) that is universally applicable in every context, fails to adequately understand the author's original intent. Indeed, in terms of praxis, Mark 11:24 has much value beyond the original context, however, the statement is not to be universalised and applied without exception (Brooks

1992:183). Mark neither intended, nor does the broader context indicate, the interpretation and application so often assumed by word of faith theology.

5.5 A theological assessment of four biblical tenets

The exegetical analyses in Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 assess key biblical passages relating to specific aspects of word of faith theology. The purpose in those sections is to reveal the necessity of solid hermeneutical principles. Without such, biblical passages may, and often do, produce faulty and inadequate theology and praxis, a reality discussed throughout those sections. A core group of theological tenets is fundamental to word of faith theology. Section 5.5 now offers a theological assessment of these tenets: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity. These tenets are assessed from a Church of God perspective in Section 3.5, a word of faith perspective in Section 4.5, and are juxtaposed and appraised in Section 6.3.1. Facets of these tenets are referenced in the various exegetical analyses; however, the emphasis there is primarily in regard to correctly interpreting the biblical text.

Theology is important because correct doctrinal beliefs are essential to the relationship between the believer and God (Erickson 1985:28). The assessment of each tenet emerges from the presuppositions of evangelical theology: (1) God has spoken in his word, therefore, we have an inspired, inerrant and authoritative word from God in the Bible; and (2) since the Bible is the word of God, it forms a harmonious whole, without inner contradictions (Smith 2008:183-184). Each of the four tenets is given individual treatment per: (1) biblical foundation; (2) theological assessment; and (3) application for contemporary praxis.

5.5.1 The Abrahamic covenant

God's historic interaction with humankind involves a succession of covenants, in which his creative and redemptive purposes are revealed. From a biblical perspective, a covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and humankind that stipulates the conditions of their relationship (Grudem 1994:515). Eight major covenants emerge from the chronology of human history: (1) the edenic covenant; (2) the Adamic covenant; (3) the Noahic covenant; (4) the Abrahamic covenant; (5) the Mosaic covenant; (6) the Palestinian covenant; (7) the Davidic covenant; and (8) the new covenant. Prior to the Abrahamic covenant, God's involvement with humankind was primarily in general terms. Via the Abrahamic covenant, God chooses to initiate the redemptive process through one man—Abraham (Abram)—then extends it gradually to his family, then to a people, a nation, and finally, the whole of humankind (Murray 1987:4; Reyburn and Fry 1997:271). This covenant becomes the spring from which the rest of God's redemptive history emanates. As such, its soteriological essence is critical to understanding the dynamics of the covenant.

5.5.1.1 Biblical basis

Genesis 1-11:26 reveals a record of the history of nations; however, beginning in Genesis 11:27, the narrative focuses on the chosen nation via the Abrahamic covenant. The importance of Abraham is clearly seen in the amount of space his story is allotted in the biblical text. In Genesis 11 (origins and call) through 25 (death), the story of this patriarchal figure lays the framework for God's redemptive purposes. The Abrahamic covenant finds its initial context in Genesis 12:1-3, with supplements to the covenant in later chapters. The covenant, which is reiterated and ratified throughout the Old Testament (cf. Genesis 26:3-5; Genesis 35:10-12; Deuteronomy 28:8-13;

Joshua 1:2-6; I Chronicles 16:15-18; Isaiah 49:6; et al), is comprised of the following components.

- (1) I will make you into a great nation (12:2)
- (2) I will bless you (12:2)
- (3) I will make your name great (12:2)
- (4) You will be a blessing (12:2)
- (5) I will bless those who bless you (12:3)
- (6) Whoever curses you I will curse (12:3)
- (7) All people on earth will be blessed through you (12:3)
- (8) I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth (13:16)
- (9) I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for generations to come (17:7).

Elsewhere in the Old and New Testaments, Abraham is referenced in regard to the motifs of the covenant, namely, redemption, faith, promises and blessing/cursing.

5.5.1.2 Theological assessment

The Abrahamic covenant is comprised of a series of promises given to Abraham that contain several salient features: (1) the promise of land (cf. Genesis 12:1); (2) the promise of descendants (cf. Genesis 12:2), in which God pledges to make a great nation from Abraham; and (3) the promise of blessing (cf. Genesis 12:3), in which God tells Abraham that through his posterity all families of the earth will be blessed. This corpus of Scripture in biblical literature contains profound importance for biblical theology, for the promised blessing has an underlying soteriological motif that is realised throughout biblical history. Yet, the material regarding the Abrahamic covenant is not easy to systematise, for it is dispersed over different chapters

and is often repetitive in its presentation (Dumbrell 1997:47). This assessment will look first at the covenant in the Torah, then in the remainder of the Old Testament, and finally, in the New Testament.

The key theological themes of the Torah are set forth in Genesis 12:1-3 (House 1997:76; Essex 1999:192; cf. Wenham 1994). God's judgment via the flood (Genesis 7-8) and the dispersion of nations (Genesis 11:1-9) leads to his determination to bless humankind. By placing it after the dispersion narrative, Abraham's call is revealed as God's gift of salvation in the midst of judgment (Sailhamer 1990:111). It is here that the Abrahamic covenant emerges with the promise of blessing. The blessing (**ברך**) described here is not mere materialistic abundance, as is often emphasised in word of faith theology; rather, it is the ability to function and produce at optimum level, and in so doing fulfil God's purpose and design (Brown 1997:759). Abraham is called to leave the land of his origin and go to a land that God will show him (12:1). In response to Abraham's obedience, God promises three things: (1) through the renunciation of his national identity, he will be enabled to produce a nation; (2) divine favour in terms of fertility and prosperity will be his provision; and (3) what human ability had failed to achieve, the making of a name (cf. Genesis 11:4), would be given to Abraham via prominence and reputation. The three-fold promise given to Abraham is further realised throughout the remainder of the Torah. Abraham's offspring grow into a great nation. The nation is delivered from servitude in Egypt. God's tolerance with sinful Israel is a direct result of the Abrahamic covenant. The blessings detailed in the Mosaic covenant reflect a continuum of Genesis 12:1-3. As the Torah concludes, Israel is anticipating possession of the land of Canaan.

The remainder of the Old Testament also reflects numerous references to the Abrahamic covenant. Abraham's descendants inherit Canaan in Joshua 21:43-35. I Kings 4:20-21 reveals the embryonic nation as increasing exponentially. God is praised in Psalm 105 (1-10) for his faithfulness to the covenant. In II Kings 13:23, judgment upon Israel is deferred because of the

covenant. Israel is sustained in seasons of judgment, believing that God will honour his promise to Abraham (cf. Isaiah 41:8-16; Micah 7:18-20). Such references indicate that the Abrahamic covenant is foundational in terms of God's relationship with Israel in the past and serve to facilitate anticipation for what he has promised in the future. Indeed, the Old Testament concludes with a soteriological promise (Malachi 4:5-6) that finds its antecedent in God's promise to Abraham.

Further realisation of the covenant is observed in the New Testament. The arrival of Jesus as the Christ reflects directly on the promise of the covenant. Here, Jesus is understood as the fulfilment of God's promise to deliver Israel from her enemies (cf. Luke 1:54-55; 68-75). The New Testament perception is that the Israelites are the descendants of Abraham (cf. Luke 16:24; 19:9; John 8:37; Acts 13:26; Romans 11:1). That said, biological posterity is no guarantee of enjoying the future blessings of the covenant (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28). Even here, one must approach God in faith via repentance in order to share in the covenant provision (Acts 3:19-26). Gentile believers participate in the covenant based on their union with Christ (cf. Romans 11:11-24), who is the seed of Abraham (cf. Genesis 22:17-18; Galatians 3:16). Ultimately, both the Old and New Testaments present the final and complete fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant as futuristic. While numerous theological motifs reside within the covenant (e.g., faith, promises, blessing and cursing), its soteriological emphasis provides the cohesion allowing for the unity of the whole.

5.5.1.3 Application for contemporary praxis

The covenant sets forth the essential premise that God chose and called Abraham, and that via his posterity, would come the means of redemptive grace. Fulfilment of the covenant is seen first in Abraham, then through his posterity, and ultimately through Christ's revelation of the new covenant (cf.

Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25). Several questions arise at this point: (1) to what extent does the Abrahamic covenant apply to contemporary believers; and (2) do all components of the Abrahamic covenant apply to all believers within the new covenant?

First, in terms of contemporary praxis, application of the Abrahamic covenant is realised primarily in soteriological terms. The extent of the Abrahamic covenant is best understood from a redemptive perspective, as opposed to the word of faith position that suggests guaranteed material entitlement or financial prosperity. Validation is found for this perspective in several New Testament passages. First, the blessing component of the Abrahamic covenant is depicted as being justified by faith, a clear reference to the spiritual dynamic of covenant relationship (Galatians 3:7-9). Second, the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant is realised through Christ's redemptive work and ultimate fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:11-14) (Simmons 1999:993). Third, new covenant recipients owe a debt of gratitude to Jews via the blessing promise of the Abrahamic covenant. Said differently, the blessing inference opens for the Gentiles privileges once exclusive to the covenant people (Romans 11:17-24) (Johnson 1999:765). In the main, the Abrahamic covenant finds application for contemporary praxis in the redemptive process of salvation.

Second, not all components of the Abrahamic covenant are applicable to all believers within the new covenant. Word of faith theology posits that, based on the death of Christ, Christians are promised all the blessings of Abraham (cf. Genesis 17) and of Israel (cf. Deuteronomy 28). The emphasis here is typically in reference to material blessing and benefits. Ironically, those who argue that all the components of the covenant are available, even guaranteed, within the new covenant, fail to emphasise, for example: (1) that God will literally make a great nation out of each believer; (2) that every believer will have descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth; or (3) that the descendants of each believer will literally inhabit the land of Canaan prior to

Christ's kingdom on earth. However, the blessing component, most often observed as materialistic in emphasis, is set forth in word of faith theology as the right of the believer. From a biblical and theological perspective, the reference to blessing neither infers nor guarantees material entitlement to all recipients of the new covenant. That is, the Abrahamic covenant contains no provision that guarantees all believers to live in wealthy abundance. Living under the new covenant implies that one is a spiritual descendant of Abraham. Through faith, the same faith utilised by Abraham (cf. Hebrews 11:8-19), all people on earth are offered the provisions of the new covenant, namely, redemption, salvation, and indeed provision.

5.5.2 The atonement

Broadly speaking, the term atonement—one of the few theological terms derived from the English language—refers to a reconciled state between two parties, formerly alienated in some manner (Eddy and Beilby 2008:84). The atonement is understood primarily as the vicarious suffering and sacrifice of Jesus that makes salvation for humankind possible (Erickson 1995:781). As such, the atonement is primarily soteriological in its intent and scope. While important in the broad perspective, the purpose here is not to engage the various theories or extent of the atonement. Such an exhaustive treatment is beyond the scope (and word count) of this research. Rather, the assessment in this section is in regard to one aspect of the atonement, specifically, the relationship between the atonement and divine healing. For what did Christ atone? Said differently, does the atonement contain the provision of physical healing for every believer in every situation? More importantly, if the answer to the above question is yes, does the provision of divine healing guarantee physical healing for every believer in every situation? Such an assessment is important because of its significance in word of faith theology and pastoral implications for the Church of God.

5.5.2.1 Biblical basis

Throughout the New Testament, Christ is consistently presented as having borne the sin of humankind in the atonement (cf. Matthew 20:28; John 1:29; Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; I John 2:2; et al). Numerous biblical passages focus on the subject of physical healing (cf. Acts 12:28; I Corinthians 12:28; James 5:14-16; et al), however, not all are immediately connected to the atonement. Several biblical passages do indeed appear to lend support to the relationship between divine healing and the atonement. The following are briefly noted because they are central to word of faith theology regarding the issue of physical healing.

First, Isaiah (53:4-5) writes, “he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed”. The connection of Isaiah’s prophecy with that of Messiah’s ministry is seen in the New Testament gospels. Here, Matthew (8:16-17) writes that, “many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases’”. Third, I Peter 2:24 states, “he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed”. Although Peter does not reference Isaiah in his letter, the similarity of the language in both passages is obvious.

5.5.2.2 Theological assessment

For what did Christ atone? This is the question that immediately arises. Clearly, in the main, the atonement is soteriological in its intent and essence. Although innocent of sin himself, Jesus’ death atoned for the sins of

humankind (Thielman 2005:196). As such, Jesus' vicarious act of atonement on the cross assumes the place of each person, in that he took their place and died their death (cf. Mark 10:45; II Corinthians 5:21). Although the New Testament sets forth no precise theory of atonement, there are several motifs upon which the atonement is effected (Morris 1984:97): (1) Christ became the perfect sacrifice (cf. Hebrews 9:26; 10:5-10); (2) Christ paid the penalty for sin (cf. Romans 3:25-26; 6:23; Galatians 3:13); (3) Christ redeemed humankind by paying the price (cf. Ephesians 1:7; I Corinthians 6:20; Galatians 5:1); (4) Christ established a new covenant (cf. Hebrews 9:15); (5) Christ won the victory over all enemies (cf. I Corinthians 15:55-57); and (6) Christ effected the propitiation that turns away the wrath of God (cf. Romans 3:25). Such references clearly indicate that the primary essence of the atonement is soteriological.

The question specifically relevant to the topic of this research is, "does the atonement guarantee physical, emotional and mental healing for every believer in every situation"? Said differently, just as the atonement guarantees forgiveness of sin and the benefit of salvation to all who repent, confess and believe in Christ, does the atonement, on equivalent terms, guarantee physical, emotional and mental healing to all who ask and believe? This is not to suggest that healing is not possible or that it does not occur in contemporary times, for the New Testament offers examples of such (cf. I Corinthians 12:28; James 5:14-16). Rather, based on the Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:16-17 and I Peter 2:24 passages, all of which appear to suggest some aspect of healing, should every believer expect physical, emotional and mental healing in every situation? In light of other passages in Isaiah (29:18; 33:24; 35:5-6; 65:20) that allude to a time of physical healing, this is a legitimate question.

According to Unger (1971:243-244), healing in the case of a Christian is a direct and sovereign act of God's gracious power, flowing from the cross of Christ, as all God's blessings to fallen humankind, but independent of it and

subject to the dispensation of an all-wise heavenly Father. This is the reason Matthew declares Isaiah's prophecy that Christ would bear our sicknesses and carry our sorrows (Isaiah 53:4) was fulfilled in Christ's ministry of physical healing (cf. Matthew 8:17), not in His atoning death on the cross. Christ's miracles of healing served to certify Him as the Redeemer and were signs of the spiritual healing He came to bring. At the same time they were pledges also of the ultimate full deliverance of the redeemed, not only from sin, but from every evil consequence of it in the body as well as the soul. In this sense alone Christ atoned for disease and physical sickness.

Several considerations are important in addressing the question of healing and its purported guarantee in the atonement (Mayhue 1995:128-132). First, the physical body is corruptible and will degenerate in death (cf. I Corinthians 15:50-58; II Corinthians 5:1-4), therefore, the believer awaits the redemption of the body (cf. Romans 8:23). Second, the gospel is primarily good news about the sin problem (cf. Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; Ephesians 1:7; I John 3:5). Third, Jesus was made a sin offering (cf. II Corinthians 5:21), but never a disease or sickness offering. Fourth, Jesus forgave sin (cf. I John 2:12), not sickness or disease. Fifth, Jesus gave himself for sin (cf. Galatians 1:3-4), not for sickness or disease. Sixth, if physical, emotional and mental healing is guaranteed in the atonement, then a believer who appropriates such provision would never die. However, death is the lot of all persons (cf. Hebrews 9:27). Believers in the present age are subject to physical, emotional and mental duress, and the promise of eventual physical death.

As noted earlier, the issue in question is not whether or not Jesus can or does heal in the present age, nor that physical, emotional or mental healing are somehow inherently related to the broad scope of the atonement. The specific issue is whether or not the atonement guarantees such healing for every believer in every situation.

We would prefer, then, to say that physical healing is one effect of the atoning death of Christ...This being the case, and the effects of Christ's death being applied to people through a process of time, it is specious to claim that the believer must have deliverance from sickness in the same way and to the same extent that he or she has deliverance from sin. The atoning death of Christ provides for the healing of all our diseases - but nothing [guarantees] that this healing will take place in this life (Moo 1997:67).

5.5.2.3 Application for contemporary praxis

The focus of this section concerns the benefits of the atonement of Christ and how those benefits are applicable to contemporary praxis. In the atonement one comes to a crucial point in the Christian faith, a point of transition, for it is here that systematic theology has direct application in one's life (Erickson 1995:781). Word of faith theology accentuates that divine healing is inherent in the atonement of Christ. Copeland (1996:6) asserts that, "God put our sin, sickness, disease...on Jesus at Calvary". Hinn (1991:44) argues, "the Bible declares that...all you have to do is receive your healing by faith". Dake (1963:282) further corroborates this position when he writes that "bodily healing and health are God's will for the believer". However, such a proposed application of the atonement is extra-biblical and faulty. The fundamental premise of the atonement is soteriological in nature, securing the redemption of humankind, and is to be understood first and foremost in terms of salvation.

The biblical and theological evidence reveals that physical, emotional and mental healing is not guaranteed in the atonement. However, there is indeed an applicatory component per healing in the atonement. Erickson (1995:841) observes that Jesus healed during his ministry on earth, and he heals today; however, such healing is not to be understood as a vicarious bearing of

sickness in the same fashion that he bore our sins. The physical, emotional and mental healing of human life is part of God's redemptive activity. One of the reasons Christians pray for the sick to be healed is the conviction that the body, though still subject to decay and death in the present age, nonetheless belongs to the Lord and is destined for resurrection. A body healed—or healthy—because of God's gracious activity on our behalf is a sign of the future already at work in the present age (Fee 2006:20). For the following reasons, healing in the atonement as postulated by word of faith theology is inadequate and faulty: (1) the atonement refers primarily to sin and not directly to the various effects of sin; (2) the New Testament writers do not present the absence of sickness as the norm for believers; (3) all humans—including Christians—experience some degree of sickness or departure from perfect health, and ultimately experience physical death; and (4) proper hermeneutics and correct exegesis present a different understanding of the issue of physical, emotional and mental healing.

5.5.3 Faith

Faith lies at the very heart of Christianity. Its importance for contemporary Christians is clear from the fact that Protestantism was born through the rediscovery of the biblical theme, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17, KJV) (Lyon 1988:761). Indeed, Scripture reveals that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (cf. Hebrews 11:6). From a biblical perspective, such a faith is at the core soteriological in nature, and is always and exclusively faith in God. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, faith is fundamentally linked with God's redemptive activity (cf. Galatians 3:6-9; Hebrews 11). Nevertheless, word of faith theology posits a very different understanding of faith, namely, a human-centred, self-oriented manipulative force used to obtain desired benefits and blessings from God. For this reason, a cursory assessment of faith is offered.

5.5.3.1 Biblical basis

A biblical basis for the concept of faith is enumerated throughout Scripture and when appropriated correctly engages every area of life. For example, the Scriptures reveal that one is saved by faith (cf. Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8); enriched by faith (cf. Galatians 3:14); kept by faith (cf. Romans 11:20; I Peter 1:5); established by faith (cf. Isaiah 7:9); healed by faith (cf. James 5:15); walks by faith (cf. II Corinthians 5:7); and overcomes difficulties by faith (Hebrews 11:32-40). In both the Old and New Testaments faith carries several meanings: (1) it may mean simple trust in God or in the Word of God; (2) it may at times almost become equivalent to active obedience; (3) it may find expression in the affirmation of a creedal statement; and (4) it may mean the entire body of received Christian teaching or truth (Lyon 1988:761).

The idea of faith develops in Scripture as God's revelation of grace and truth, on which faith rests, enlarges and expands. In the Old Testament, faith is first understood in the sovereign creative capacity of God, who is not only creator, but sustainer of life and controller of history. The Old Testament variously alludes to faith as resting, trusting, and hoping in the Lord, cleaving to him, making him one's shield and tower, taking refuge in him, etc. There is an unwavering trust in God to save his people from their foes and fulfil his declared purpose for their lives. Isaiah (30:1-18), for example, describes reliance on human aid as inconsistent with such trust. The New Testament follows this pattern of thinking by describing faith as the replication (Romans 4:11-25; Hebrews 10:39-12:2) of the world-renouncing obedience and heroic tenacity displayed in the lives of Old Testament believers. The focus of faith in the New Testament is Jesus Christ, i.e., the acknowledgement of Jesus as not only a God sent teacher, but as God incarnate (cf. John 20:28), whose atoning death is the sole means of salvation (cf. John 3:14-15; 6:51-58) (Packer 1989:401). Although the New Testament has no single view of faith, two main lines of thinking are discerned, the first understands faith

subjectively, while the second orients faith to its content (Luhrmann 2003:265).

5.5.3.2 Theological assessment

From a theological perspective, one can distinguish at least three uses, as well as two areas of scholarly inquiry, regarding faith (Ritschl 2003:261-262). First, the term faith is used almost synonymously with the term religion, referencing the personal disposition of individuals or communities, as in the Christian faith or Jewish faith. Second, faith is often used in a more precise sense to describe that which is strictly Christian, as opposed to a nonbelieving, secular, agnostic attitude toward the world and life. Third, faith is understood in terms of the Reformational declaration of faith in Jesus Christ as the means of salvation. Two areas of scholarly inquiry are available for engaging the issue of faith. First, exegetical analysis of the biblical text offers insight into the basis of the concept of faith. Second, systematic theology attempts to clarify and explain faith in terms applicable for doctrine and praxis.

Old Testament Hebrew does not use a noun for the term faith, except perhaps **הַמִּתְּחָנֵן** (*emunah*; cf. Habakkuk 2:4), which is usually rendered faithfulness (Brown, Driver and Briggs 2001:53). Rather, the Hebrew language depicts the concept of faith primarily in verb form. This could convey the idea that faith is something one does instead of something one has, i.e., an activity rather than ownership. Most common among the Hebrew verbs used to designate the idea of faith is **אָמַן** (*aman*). Used frequently with prepositions it denotes the idea of confident resting upon something or someone, while also designating the giving of assent to a testimony (Scott 1980:51-52). The intended meaning at this point is the fastening of the heart upon the divine word of promise, a leaning upon the power and faithfulness of God (Oehler 1950:459). A secondary Hebrew verb used to denote faith is **בָּתַח** (*batach*). The connotation

here is not so much regarding intellectual belief, but of trust and a committing of one's self subjectively to the object of one's faith (Jepsen 1975:89). The Hebrew concept of faith is seen most vividly in the life of Abraham (cf. Section 5.5.1.2), where faith is depicted as the sole medium of obtaining God's favour and blessing. Faith exemplified in the life of Abraham forms the basis for New Testament writers as they define and implement the concept into the new covenant (cf. Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:7-9; Hebrews 11:8-19).

The New Testament focuses on one word that is central to the motif of faith, the verb *πιστεύω*, along with its cognate noun *πίστις*. Two primary meanings emerge from the verb *πιστεύω*. First, the verb is used in reference to believe what someone says, to accept a statement (particularly of a religious nature) as true (cf. I John 4:1; Matthew 8:13; Luke 8:50) (Bultmann 1968:203). Faith involves the subjective active believing that something is true. In this regard, faith is understood primarily from a soteriological perspective. In corroboration of this view, the writer of Hebrews (cf. 11:6) declares that faith, in the sense of acknowledging certain truths, is essential to salvation (Erickson 1995:939). Second, are the instances, typically identifiable via the use of a preposition (e.g., *ἐν* or *εἰς*), in which *πιστεύω* and *πίστις* imply personal trust as distinct from mere credence or belief (Friberg, Friberg and Miller 2000:313). In contrast to the Old Testament, where the accent is on the faithfulness of God, the New Testament emphasis is placed on the active responding faith of the hearer to the promised final revelation in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Both noun and verb regularly describe the adequate response of humankind to Jesus' word and deed and to the gospel (Lyon 1988:761). It is here that the blessing of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12:3b; Galatians 3:7-9), fulfilled in the soteriological provision of Jesus, is manifested in the life of believers in the new covenant.

While faith is indeed active beyond the scope of initial salvation, it is at all times the subjective acknowledgement of what God has spoken, promised, decreed and commanded. In this sense, faith is not primarily acknowledgment of a body of doctrine, but a conviction about the truth of the gospel so strong

that it radically reorients one's life toward dependence on God even in the most difficult circumstances. Such dependence leads to following God's commands even when they lack logic or human comprehension (Thielman 2005:695). The critical issue at this point is that the object of Christian faith (i.e., God and his revealed will via Jesus Christ) must always be understood and appropriated from a theocentric perspective. Only then is it biblical faith.

It is evident that the biblical concept of faith is at its core soteriological in both promise and fulfilment. However, word of faith theology reduces faith to a formula in which the believer is said to exercise creative ability. Variations may occur among individual proponents of this theology, however, in the main, the formula is comprised of: (1) saying it; (2) doing it; (3) receiving it; and (4) telling it (Hagin 1979b:21). Said differently, one's spoken word, coupled with one's creative faith, initiates the process of obtaining the desires of one's heart. Such a position extricates faith from its biblical context, integrates extra-biblical and non-biblical components (cf. Section 4.3.1), primarily the insertion of mere human will, resulting in an inadequate understanding of the soteriological nature of faith.

5.5.3.3 Application for contemporary praxis

From a Christian perspective, faith is always and essentially faith in Christ, for it is here that faith finds expression through relationship with God. As a result, faith is essential at all levels of Christian living, finding application in theology, doctrine, belief and praxis. At every juncture, belief finds its essence, not in faith itself, nor in formulas (i.e., laws) of faith, but in God who is the initiator of faith. Biblical faith is not merely wishful thinking or the speaking forth of self-motivated commands; rather, it is the result of God's responding to the searching heart (Williams 1988:48). Neither is faith simply sight, but the conviction of things not seen (cf. Hebrews 11:1), the "things" of God—his

reality, his purpose, and his deeds. The focus of faith is ever on God, the source of all good things (cf. James 1:17).

In terms of contemporary praxis, faith is first and foremost soteriological in application. The restoring and reconciling word of God to his people begins, from their perspective, when they respond to his gracious initiative in Christ with faith. Faith is the defining quality of Christian existence, present not only at the beginning of one's reconciliation with God but throughout one's life. (Thielman 2005:690). In this regard, it is faith in the vicarious work of Christ that enables one to access the grace of God on the personal level. Here, one enters the new covenant, accessing the ultimate soteriological fulfilment of not only the Abrahamic covenant, but the culmination of all God's covenants. Faith finds application at this point in: (1) knowledge of who Christ is and what he has done in terms of his capacity as savior; (2) approving of and agreeing with the knowledge imparted by the Holy Spirit regarding Christ; (3) a trust in Jesus Christ as the living person for forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God; and (4) an increase in faith as knowledge increases (cf. Romans 10:17) (Grudem 1994:709-713). As such, this brief treatment contributes to the overall research agenda by offering a balanced biblical and theological assessment of faith.

5.5.4 Prosperity

Although inherently interrelated to and briefly addressed in the assessments of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Section 5.5.1) and faith (cf. Section 5.5.3), the singular concept of prosperity is paramount within word of faith theology. So much so that one of the monikers by which it is known is the prosperity gospel. The concept of prosperity, while not intrinsically negative or evil, becomes within this system the focal point for a large portion of its teaching and emphasis. Prosperity in the broadest sense has to do with being successful in all areas of life (e.g., spiritual, relational, physical, financial,

emotional). However, most who embrace word of faith theology envision financial prosperity as the sure and certain sign of God's blessing (Smith 1992:197). This position is corroborated by its numerous proponents (cf. Capps 1976:109; Savelle 1980:18; et al). Given the magnitude of prosperity within this theological system, a cursory assessment of the subject is warranted.

5.5.4.1 Biblical basis

Prosperity as a theological tenet, along with its grammatical siblings (e.g., prosperous, prospered, prospering, prospers) finds a biblical basis (pro and con) in both the Old and New Testaments. Although defined in much broader terms (cf. Section 5.5.4.2), prosperity is here understood as the possession of material blessings (i.e., wealth, land, financial and material well-being, etc.). In the Old Testament material blessings are employed by God for various purposes. First, they are given as confirmation of God's covenantal promise to build a great nation (cf. Deuteronomy 8:18). Second, the material blessings given by God are to be used didactically, as both positive and negative examples for communal living (Deuteronomy 28:8, 10). Third, Israel is to use the God-given blessings to teach other nations that the source of one's security is in the Lord, not the financial prowess of Israel. Inherent in the concept of material blessing is never the guarantee that every believer in every generation will experience such. This would violate the perennial presence of the poor. Israel is expected to care for the poor and marginalised from the abundance of God's provision (cf. Deuteronomy 15:7-11; 23:20). To do so is a characteristic of ceremonial righteousness (cf. Proverbs 29:7). To negate this responsibility violates the terms of the covenant. At its core, the Old Testament posits that the earth is the Lord's, along with everything in it (cf. Psalm 24:1).

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that one's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions (cf. Luke 12:15). In sharp divergence from word of faith theology, Jesus warns his followers, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19). So strong is the admonition regarding the difference between the gospel of greed and the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord proclaims that no one can serve both God and money (cf. Matthew 6:24). Unfortunately, money is worshiped wherever one longs for riches, is tied to riches, keeps on increasing in possessions and desires to dominate as a result of them (Hengel 1974:30) Paul places a caveat on believers, especially leadership (I Timothy 3:3), regarding the pursuit of wealth, urging them to be free from the inordinate and excessive love of money (cf. Hebrews 13:5). How so? Paul writes that the love of money is the root of evil (cf. I Timothy 6:10). He also warns the believer about supposing godliness to be a route to material riches, stating that covetousness in its primary form is idolatry (cf. Ephesians 5:5-7).

5.5.4.2 Theological assessment

An assessment of the concept of prosperity inevitably leads to the tension between prosperity and poverty. The tendency is to consider the two at odds one with the other, a polarisation of two incompatible motifs; however, four biblical principles apply to both rich and poor believers in relation to their circumstances (Holloman 2003:1043). First, both should have their treasure and hope in eternal, spiritual things and not in temporal, material things (cf. Matthew 6:19-21; II Corinthians 4:18-18). As long as physical and financial security is the main concern and goal in life, one cannot fully trust and serve the Lord as one should. Second, both should trust the Lord in their circumstances. The poor should trust the Lord to provide for their needs (cf. Matthew 6:30, 33), the rich should trust the Lord in humility instead of trusting in their riches (cf. I Timothy 6:17-18). Third, both can have godliness with

contentment which is great gain (cf. I Timothy 6:6-8). Fourth, as faithful stewards, both need divine wisdom to adequately handle their resources (cf. I Corinthians 4:2).

Since the term prosperity is often vague, a matter which predictably lends itself both to a biased definition and faulty application, it is important at this point to offer a more complete definition. The Hebrew term *תָּלַח* (*tsalach*) denotes the idea of “to be in good condition”, “to be successful”, and “to make progress” in a matter (Brown, Driver and Briggs 2001:852). Although God makes certain promises within the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Genesis 24:35), there is no universal promise of abundant material prosperity for all within the nation. Nor is abundant material prosperity the total solution to the problem of poverty, for too much prosperity in one’s life can also become problematic (cf. Proverbs 30:8-9). God integrates the right set of circumstances to facilitate growth and maturity in each believer, which includes the right amount of prosperity for each individual (cf. I Samuel 2:7-8) (Holloman 2003:1042).

Prosperity in the Old Testament is understood primarily in national terms. The law placed exact requirements upon God’s people in terms of giving in various forms, as well as a responsibility to participate in meeting the needs of the poor. However, there was no mandate to enforce economic equality. As such, the Old Testament neither condemns wealth nor exalts poverty as a moral ideal (Kaiser 1997:35). Within national Israel there is no systematic bias towards the poor. Private property is protected by the law. Theft and covetousness are prohibited. The poor and rich alike are entitled to judicial impartiality (cf. Exodus 23:2-3). At the same time, various constraints are imposed upon the possession of wealth. A significant proportion of personal wealth is taken in taxation. Property rights are not absolute, for the people are understood as tenants in a land leased to them by God (cf. Leviticus 25:23; Exodus 19:5). The concept of the sabbath has a moderating effect on the acquisition of wealth. Inherent in Israel’s economic system is a requirement of trust in God as provider (Perriman 2005).

The Greek term *εὐοδοῦσθαι* (*euodousthai*) denotes “to have a prosperous journey”, derived from the term *εὐοδόω* (*euodoó*), which means “to lead along a good path”, “to guide well”, or “to succeed” (Lukaszewski 2006). Although the concept may well include material prosperity, the New Testament connotation focuses primarily on spiritual prosperity (cf. Ephesians 1:7; 3:8, 16; Romans 2:4; 11:33; III John 2). This is evident in the presentation of the gospel (cf. Ephesians 3:8) and in the provision of "spiritual blessings" (cf. Ephesians 3:16), neither of which takes into consideration a guarantee of temporal material blessings. For Jesus, wealth and possessions, while not inherently wrong, have zero value in terms of successfully living the Christian life. They simply do not count in terms of value, significance and as a source of God's approval. Rather, the standard is sufficiency, seen in the visionary dynamic of God (Fee 2006:44). That said, contrary to much of word of faith theology, devout Christians may indeed experience financial poverty; however, what is in view is a maturity toward faithfulness and contentment (Perriman 2005). Even in such circumstances God has promised ample provision for the needs of his people (cf. Philippians 4:19).

5.5.4.3 Application for contemporary praxis

The great American dream of health, wealth, and power arose as a religious philosophy concomitant to the Charismatic renewal of the 1960's, promoting the idea that a Christian can and should live with material abundance and that the avenue to this blessing is the simple exercise of one's faith (Smith 1992:188-189). Such is the pontification of word of faith theology. Scripture, however, presents a different scenario regarding the application of biblical prosperity. Twelve basic themes emerge from Scripture in terms of application (Getz 1990:387-388).

- (1) Reach others with the gospel (cf. Acts 2:47)
- (2) Maintain love and unity in the body of Christ (cf. Acts 4:32)

- (3) Model giving via proper use of material possessions (cf. Acts 4:37)
- (4) Make sacrifices to meet human needs (cf. Acts 4:34-35)
- (5) Give with proper motives (cf. Acts 4:34-36; 5:4)
- (6) Expect accountability from responsible leaders (cf. Acts 2-6)
- (7) Pray for daily sustenance (cf. Matthew 6:11)
- (8) Refuse to be in bondage to materialism (cf. Matthew 6:24)
- (9) Support Christian leaders (cf. Matthew 10:42)
- (10) Implement God's plan for giving (cf. John 14:25-26)
- (11) Responsibly pay incurred debts (cf. Romans 13:8)
- (12) Live in the will of God (cf. Acts 2-6).

Prosperity is seen first and foremost soteriologically, realising fulfilment in the vast array of spiritual riches in Christ. While the Bible makes no claim that every believer in every circumstance will enjoy abundant financial and material prosperity, clearly, the promise of provision is woven throughout its pages. Early in the biblical text, God is portrayed as the one who provides (cf. Genesis 22:14).

5.6 Conclusion

In this section the following topics are briefly reiterated: (1) the aim of the chapter; (2) a summary of each section; (3) the relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda; and (4) a brief summation.

5.6.1 Aim of this chapter

Per Section 5.1, the LIM theological research model utilised for this study is comprised of three basic modules. The aim of this chapter is to address Module 2 by offering biblical and theological foundations needed to critique

specific tenets of word of faith theology. While the delimitations of this study do not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject matter, the two-fold evaluation (exegetical analyses and theological assessment) offered in this chapter adequately addresses the core of word of faith theology.

5.6.2 Summary of each section

Chapter 5 is comprised of two primary components. First, an exegetical analysis of three biblical passages central to word of faith theology is offered: (1) Section 5.2 examines Romans 4:17; (2) Section 5.3 examines III John 2; and (3) Section 5.4 examines Mark 11:24. Second, Section 5.5 offers a theological assessment of four biblical tenets crucial to word of faith theology: (1) Section 5.5.1 examines the Abrahamic covenant; (2) Section 5.5.2 examines the atonement; (3) Section 5.5.3 examines the tenet of faith; and (4) Section 5.5.4 deals with the issue of prosperity.

5.6.3 Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda

For several reasons Chapter 5 holds relevance to the overall research agenda of this study. First, the chapter comprises one of several components (cf. Section 1.8), each of which is juxtaposed and contrasted in Chapter 6 per its similarities and dissimilarities with the others, and its importance in determining pastoral implications for the Church of God. Second, the chapter engages one of the five primary objectives of this research, namely, to explore the biblical and theological foundations needed to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology. Finally, each of the five primary objectives derived from the main research problem (cf. Sections 1.2 and 1.3) is engaged in a single chapter; therefore, each chapter finds relevance in and of itself, in that it contributes to the success of the overall research agenda.

5.6.4 Summary

The topic of this research is introduced in Chapter 1. The literature review in Chapter 2 provides a situation analysis per the history of research. A contextual analysis of the research is offered in Chapter 3 by evaluating the faith tradition of the Church of God. Then, Chapter 4 presents a historical analysis regarding the word of faith movement and specific tenets of its theology. Chapter 5 sets forth biblical and theological foundations in order to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology. To move the research forward, Chapter 6 will now assess the implications of word of faith theology for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

6.1 Introduction

Practical theology is intent on being the theory of practice. Although intimately concerned with praxis in worship and faith, its approach to praxis is not purely pragmatic, but critical-analytical (Van Wyk 1995:101). Such an approach encompasses a critical, reflective activity whose task it is to evaluate and call into question assumptions and models found in practice (Ballard 1995:117). Per the LIM theological research model, Chapters 2-5 engage the topic of this research by offering critical-analytical reflection of the subject matter via the following: (1) a situation analysis (literature review) in Chapter 2; (2) a contextual analysis in Chapter 3; (3) a historical analysis in Chapter 4; and (4) a biblical and theological analysis in Chapter 5.

At this juncture in the research, the practical theological objective is inherently transformational, i.e., it seeks not only to understand, but via practical recommendations to offer correction to areas of praxis that warrant such (Maddox 1990:51). Practical theology moves from practice to theory and back to practice. The questions wrestled with stem from real life (cf. Smith 2011). Consider the following sampling of real life scenarios experienced by the researcher.

- (1) A parishioner is given the results of a medical exam. The diagnosis is cancer. The parishioner offers a testimony during a prayer group stating, “I refuse to accept the diagnosis. I confess my healing”.

- (2) A parishioner shares with the pastor that God has given them a revelation regarding his will for their life. This is supposedly confirmed by a word from the Lord via a large media ministry. Unfortunately, the purported revelation is not in agreement with Scripture.
- (3) The pastor preaches a sermon on the importance of correctly interpreting the Bible, giving several examples of how certain passages are interpreted incorrectly and the aberrant doctrine(s) that follow. A parishioner engages the pastor by sharing what their favourite media minister teaches regarding the passage, taking the side of the latter, even though it directly contradicts sound exegesis.

As noted from the above real life scenarios, even a cursory assessment of faith and practise within contemporary classical Pentecostalism reveals the influence of particular tenets of word of faith theology. Lederle (2010:157) suggests that during the 20th century “Three Waves” of Pentecostal movement were experienced: (1) classical Pentecostalism; (2) denominational Charismatic renewal; and (3) new independent Charismatic churches. He argues that while each has a part to play in moving the Pentecostal vision forward into the 21st century, “the baton of global leadership has passed to the word of faith movement. The mantle of leadership of the whole Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has fallen on these faith ministries” (Lederle 2010:204-205). While this assertion may be more subjective than factual, it does reveal the influence of word of faith theology on Pentecostalism at large.

Engaging this influence in contemporary congregational life can be a formidable task for pastoral leadership. With this in mind, Chapter 6 addresses the final question of the main research problem (cf. Section 1.2), “what are the pastoral implications of word of faith theology”? The topics of assessment in Sections 6.2—6.6, as well as the preliminary questions that emerge in each, are cited by Bowers (2004b:10-12) in his brief treatment of

the prosperity gospel as needing further research. This chapter expands these areas of concern to encompass aspects of word of faith theology in general. Per a practical theological paradigm, this chapter attempts to interpret the contemporary obligations of the research by assessing, developing and engaging the following concerns: (1) the scriptural validity of word of faith theology; (2) the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching; (3) the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology; and (4) the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology.

Since not every study ends with implementation, the researcher must at times be content with offering practical recommendations (Smith 2008:207). That said, in order to bring the research to culmination, each section of this chapter: (1) assesses a particular component of word of faith theology; (2) reflects on a single implication of the particular component for pastoral ministry (per the model cited in Section 3.4) in the Church of God; and (3) offers a practical recommendation for effectively addressing the observed implication. The recommendations set forth in this research are not designed as a corrective for word of faith theology as a whole. Such has been offered by others (cf. King 2001; Vreeland 2001, et al). Rather, the recommendations offered here are designed specifically to facilitate those in pastoral ministry in the Church of God to effectively engage specific implications of word of faith theology.

6.2 An assessment of the scriptural validity of word of faith theology

First, it should be understood that not all tenets of word of faith theology are problematic. Indeed, there are aspects of the movement that are commendable. First, although the hermeneutical approach and presuppositions brought to the text are often faulty and inadequate (assessed further in Section 6.2.1), word of faith theology holds a high view of Scripture.

This is admirable. Second, while extreme in many of its methods of appropriation, word of faith theology affirms the biblical concepts of healing, provision for need, faith and the authority of the believer. When these concepts are understood and appropriated with biblical balance, they are indeed relevant for contemporary praxis. Third, there is a confident belief in an omnipotent God. This too is commendable. Fourth, a word of faith perspective of specific major tenets of Christianity (e.g., virgin birth, necessity of the new birth) falls within the parameters of orthodoxy. What is problematic in word of faith theology is not that basic doctrines have been subtracted, but that certain questionable doctrines and aberrant teachings have been added (Moo 1997:57).

A second observation is that word of faith theology is often difficult to engage from a pastoral perspective, because the concepts of faith, healing, provision, etc., are motifs also found within classical Pentecostal theology. Pentecostals have traditionally affirmed these motifs as being relevant for contemporary believers (cf. Arrington 1993:264-265; Duffield and Van Cleave 1983:397-398; Hollenweger 1988:356-360). While similarities exist between aspects of word of faith theology and classical Pentecostal theology, the dissimilarities create substantive pastoral-theological concerns.

Third, one of the most critical pastoral concerns is in regard to the scriptural validity of particular aspects of the word of faith message. A solid biblical and theological foundation is essential for all areas of doctrine and praxis. With this in mind several questions emerge. First, to what extent does word of faith theology arise from Scripture? Second, are there other plausible sources of this theology? Engaging these questions involves assessing the origins of word of faith teaching (cf. Sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1). Moreover, one may hold a high view of Scripture and claim scriptural validity, but there is the issue of correct hermeneutics. This section involves an assessment of the hermeneutical approach commonly utilised by word of faith proponents.

6.2.1 An assessment of hermeneutics

Many of the beliefs propagated by word of faith theology are the result of inadequate hermeneutics. Said differently, the method of interpreting the biblical text is highly subjective and arbitrary. Bible verses are quoted in abundance without attention to grammatical indicators, semantic nuances, or literary and historical context. The result is a set of ideas and principles based on distortion of textual meaning (Sarles 1986:337). An assessment of hermeneutics as applied by word of faith proponents reveals at least five primary concerns: (1) context of Scripture; (2) linguistic and grammatical data; (3) eisegesis; (4) ambiguous translations; and (5) revelation knowledge. These concerns are briefly evaluated per their relevance to this research.

6.2.1.1 Context of Scripture

The issue of context (both historical and covenantal) is absolutely essential in order to correctly interpret Scripture. When context is extracted from the hermeneutical process, aberrant and bizarre doctrines, beliefs and praxis often result. Context in and of itself is not an end; rather, it is a means to an end. The component clauses of a passage do not stand alone and are not to be interpreted alone. This is true of the words in a single clause, as well as the statements that make up the passage under consideration. Here, the general illuminates the particular (Bromiley 1979:62). In contrast to the more familiar fundamentalism that regards Scripture as a body of inerrant propositional truth, the word of faith movement has developed a fundamentalism of promise. When this occurs, it requires only a little exegetical ingenuity and selectivity to apply the myriad promises of prosperity, healing, etc., in the Old Testament directly to the circumstances of the church today (Perriman 2003:88). Indeed, this is precisely what word of faith theology does. Anything that God taught Abraham will work just as well today as it did several thousand years ago (cf. Copeland 1974:17; Price 1990a:38). Here,

statements and promises are taken from their context, converted into supposed universal spiritual laws, then used for successfully managing one's material and spiritual life (cf. Copeland 1979b:40-42).

Such an approach is problematic for at least two reasons (Perriman 2003:88-90). First, there is the basic issue that not all terms and conditions of each Old Testament covenant applies to the Gentile church; therefore, if a believer is not subject to the Mosaic law, is there any reason to believe that the provisions of the Mosaic covenant hold validity for contemporary Christians? No! This is mere selectivity in terms of context. Second, there is the issue of whether or not the church inherits all the provisions offered to Israel. For example, if the church has not inherited the land promised to Abraham, on what basis can it legitimately claim the wealth that accrued from that land? If a contemporary believer does not birth a great nation or enjoy offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, how can he or she selectively claim the material wealth promised to Abraham, while discarding the other aspects of the covenant. Such a hermeneutic is faulty, inadequate and problematic on many fronts.

6.2.1.2 Linguistic and grammatical data

Once a particular passage has been chosen, a substantive hermeneutical approach involves several components of the grammatico-historical method (Bruce 1989:565-566). True interpretation endeavours to understand the truths of a scriptural text by a careful grammatical-theological analysis over and against its historical background. First, a literary analysis is employed to determine what genre of language is being engaged, because different genres have different methods of interpretation. Second, a lexical analysis enables one to ascertain the historical use of words, how they were used in specific contexts, and how they might have evolved in usage to the present time. Third, a grammatical analysis allows the interpreter to understand words

as they stand in relation to each other. Here, matters of gender, tense, function within the sentence structure, etc., provide the interpreter with invaluable information for correctly interpreting Scripture. A fourth and important component is passage comparison, in which similarities and dissimilarities offer valuable insight into understanding the text.

Word of faith teachers often define biblical words by all their lexical possibilities rather than choosing the meaning most relevant to the context. Similarly, they often define words the same way in every context in which they appear. In an attempt to interpret the text, a limited (if any) understanding of the original languages often leads to a misunderstanding and faulty interpretation. For example, in his interpretation of Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is” (KJV), Kenneth E. Hagin (1975:20), writes that the emphasis is on the first word, “Now”. He argues that “Now faith is, now faith is. If it’s not now [present tense], it’s not faith”. However, the word translated now is the conjunction δέ, not the adverb νῦν, and has no temporal significance. Hagin’s son takes it a step further by declaring that anything recorded in the past tense is an accomplished fact that believers should claim and experience now. The failure to employ acceptable linguistic and grammatical data to the hermeneutical process, whether intentional or otherwise, creates numerous problematic areas for praxis.

6.2.1.3 Eisegesis

Correctly understanding the Bible involves exegesis, i.e., a critical interpretation of the biblical text. Exegesis is a pulling out or extracting from the original biblical texts, the meaning the people at the time of the text’s composition (author, editor, audience, readers) would have most likely understood (Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard 2004:97). Unfortunately, the biblical text is often approached by word of faith proponents in terms of eisegesis rather than exegesis. Unlike exegesis, which seeks to understand

the plain meaning of the biblical text, eisegesis superimposes on the text the presupposition(s) of the interpreter. Eisegesis is a reading into the text rather than gleaning from the text.

An example of this is found in the way III John 2 is used by word of faith teachers to validate their emphasis on prosperity. The KJV renders the passage, “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health”. Correct exegesis pulls from the passage the original intent of the author—a health wish—a common tool in the epistolary writing of that time (cf. Section 5.3). Eisegesis, in this instance, reads into the text the presupposition that God wills all Christians, in all generations, in all circumstances, to enjoy divine health and material prosperity. Word of faith theology then posits this as a spiritual law, not to be prayed for, but to claim on the basis of faith. Such an interpretation is indeed problematic. It is clear that exegesis, not eisegesis, is fundamental in matters of correct doctrine and praxis. Fee (2006:9-10) corroborates this position by arguing that the “plain meaning” of the text is always the first rule, as well as the ultimate goal of all valid interpretation.

6.2.1.4 Ambiguous translations

Although word of faith proponents will at times reference the original languages in support of a particular argument or thesis, faulty assumptions often arise from the use of ambiguous English translations of the Bible. Such translations can be misleading. A large portion of word of faith theology’s written material emerged between 1960 and 1990; therefore, the King James Version is perhaps the most utilised translation among its adherents. Although other translations are certainly utilised, the KJV continues to be a favourite translation. Without the use of additional study aids, such ambiguous and misleading translations often impede a correct understanding of the text. Obsolete word meanings and antiquated grammatical structures pose innumerable problems for the interpreter. Whether intentional or otherwise,

ambiguous translations of the Bible allow for a selectivity of Scripture that appears to validate certain aspects of word of faith theology.

A case in point is one of the main proof texts for the movement, John 10:10, where Jesus states, “the thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (KJV). The Greek word translated “more abundantly” is *περισσὸν*, translated in the NIV as “to the full”. This promise of abundant life or life to the full has nothing to do with material extravagance. On the contrary, life in John’s gospel is equivalent to the synoptic theme of the kingdom of God, literally meaning life in the age to come. John 10:10 references the life that God has in and of himself; and it is the gift to believers in the present age (Barrett 2009:214-215). Although the KJV use of the word abundant appears to imply plenty, such an idea is totally foreign to the context of John 10 as well as to the entire corpus of Jesus’ teaching. Here, the importance of context, linguistic and grammatical data, as well as proper exegesis in clarifying ambiguous translations is evident.

6.2.1.5 Revelation knowledge

In addition to the vulnerabilities of the previously cited approaches to word of faith hermeneutics, a further concern evokes criticism from both inside and outside the movement—the practice of revelation knowledge. The phrase can be traced to the writings of E. W. Kenyon (cf. Section 4.2.3), who taught that two kinds of knowledge exist, sense knowledge and revelation knowledge. The former involves that which is understood via the human senses (e.g., sight, smell, et al), while the latter is ostensibly obtained via Scripture. However, as Farah (1981:10-12) observes, in word of faith praxis revelation knowledge is realised in an overtly subjective manner, often negating or even discrediting the need for solid biblical exegesis, then facilitated by such teaching and practices as positive confession, denial of adversity, creative

faith, etc. Word of faith proponent, Charles Capps (cf. 1982a) offers a rejoinder to Farah's scholarly critique by stating, "He's a good example for you of head knowledge...He's so educated beyond his intellect that he don't [sic] know how to control what he's learned...He's put out all revelation knowledge...This is what happens when people get highly educated".

The peril is increased exponentially when alleged revelation knowledge is given precedent over the biblical text. When this occurs, the Bible is viewed merely as a book of divinely established laws that function like incantations or faith formulas that govern access to health, prosperity and creative ability (Kelsey 1979:1-11). Such an approach, unfortunately, does not allow God to speak authoritatively and prophetically to the human condition or to the sinful origins of carnal impulses (e.g., materialism, greed, pride, covetousness) (Bowers 2004b:31).

6.2.2 Pastoral implication

This cursory assessment of the scriptural validity of word of faith teaching as observed via the five hermeneutical concerns reveals the necessity of a solid biblical hermeneutic for correct doctrine and praxis. This poses a significant implication for Church of God pastors. Interpreting correct orthodoxy and orthopraxy requires adequate hermeneutical skills that are the result of substantive biblical and theological training. However, the extensive survey conducted in 2002 by the Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care (cf. Section 3.4), the most comprehensive research on Church of God pastoral ministry conducted to date, reveals some alarming data. The survey provided a reality-based perspective on pastoral ministry in the denomination, along with an assessment of its God-given mission and vision (Bell 2004:13-14). The survey revealed the following levels of theological training among Church of God pastors: (1) 16% had no formal theological training; (2) 9% had some theological training; (3) 41% had a denominational certificate (typically

comprised of 39 semester hours) of theological training; (4) 18% had a Bible college degree; (5) 11% had graduate level theological degrees; (6) 3% had earned a doctor of ministry degree; and (6) 2% had earned either a doctor of philosophy or doctor of theology degree (Bell 2002:21).

The pastoral implication per this section is the need for further theological educational opportunities at all academic levels. This is necessary in order for Church of God pastors to receive adequate biblical and theological training. Such training will facilitate the Church of God pastor in remaining relevant in an ever changing society and ministering to an increasingly diverse demographic.

6.2.3 Practical recommendation

Since the pastoral role involves the task of exegete/educator (cf. Section 3.4.2), Church of God pastors need to assist their parishioners in assessing word of faith claims to scriptural faithfulness. Formal theological training is certainly not the sole criterion for effective pastoral ministry; however, adequate theological training will indeed equip the Church of God pastor with the research skills, tools and resources necessary to produce substantive instruction in matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

In order to achieve this goal, it is recommended that the Church of God: (1) ensure that its educational institutions provide the appropriate training opportunities for those called to pastoral ministry; (2) utilise both traditional and non-traditional methodologies of instruction; (3) encourage both formal and informal preparation; (4) offer continuing education opportunities for the purpose of integrating the most current and relevant methods; and (5) establish a minimum level of academic training for each level of ministerial credentialing. Inherent within this recommendation is the hope that each

current and prospective Church of God pastor will become intentional in preparing him/herself for effective pastoral ministry.

6.3 An assessment of the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching

Several factors comprise the assessment in this section. First, since one of the limitations of this research is ecclesiastical, the research is conducted within the parameters of a classical Pentecostal context, primarily, the faith tradition of the Church of God (cf. Section 1.5). Although the assessments, implications and recommendations offered in this chapter may also have significance for the broader Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical communities, they are directed primarily to those engaged in pastoral ministry within the Church of God. Second, the next area of pastoral concern to be assessed is the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching. This is not an exhaustive treatment of either word of faith theology or Church of God teaching, but focuses on the four biblical tenets engaged in Chapters 3-5. Third, emerging from this area of concern is one overarching question—do these tenets of word of faith theology align with, reinforce and affirm classical Pentecostal doctrine and praxis, or, do they constitute a misrepresentation of the latter? Answering this question is imperative for ascertaining possible implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

6.3.1 An assessment of four biblical tenets

Four biblical tenets, chosen for their prominence within word of faith theology, are assessed throughout this research: (1) the Abrahamic covenant; (2) the atonement; (3) faith; and (4) prosperity. These tenets are assessed from a Church of God perspective in Chapter 3, from a word of faith perspective in Chapter 4, and per their biblical and theological foundations in Chapter 5. The

purpose of this section is not to replicate the assessments in Chapters 3-5; rather, it is to assess each of the four tenets as to whether or not word of faith theology maintains essential theological continuity with Church of God teaching. However, not all word of faith proponents hold the same position regarding the four tenets. For this reason the theology set forth by two of its leading luminaries, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, is utilised. In order to maintain objectivity, it should also be noted that not all Church of God pastors are in agreement regarding every detail of the four tenets. Church of God teaching per the four tenets is drawn from recent works and scholarly research by those within the denomination.

6.3.1.1 The Abrahamic covenant

The significance of the Abrahamic covenant in regard to particular aspects of word of faith theology cannot be overemphasized. This covenant is cited by word of faith proponents (cf. Copeland G 1978:4-6; Copeland K 1974:51; Pousson 1992:158; et al) as the biblical foundation for numerous theological assertions. Here, the various facets of God's covenant with Abraham hold equivalent and corresponding application for the contemporary Christian.

According to word of faith theology, one of the primary purposes of this covenant is to bless Abraham with material possessions. Harvey Cox (2001:271) succinctly observes the word of faith perspective on this subject when he writes, "through the crucifixion of Christ, Christians have inherited all the promises made to Abraham, and these include both spiritual and material well-being". Copeland (1974:50-51; cf. Hagin 1963:1) argues that since God established the covenant, Christians too are entitled to its provisions. To support such a claim, Copeland appeals to Galatians 3:14, "the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ". The result is that every Christian also has the promises defined within the covenant. The Galatians 3:13-14 passage is interpreted as meaning that all Christians are

redeemed from the curses listed in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Copeland (1987b:28) corroborates this concept by asserting that, “all sickness and all disease, even those not mentioned there, come under the curse; therefore, we are redeemed from all sickness and disease”.

The Church of God affirms the Bible in its entirety, with the New Testament as the only rule for government and discipline (Minutes 2010:22). With the New Testament as the paradigm for all matters of doctrine and praxis, this becomes foundational for a Church of God perspective regarding the Abrahamic covenant. Here, specific components of the covenant are understood as extending solely to Abraham’s biological posterity (e.g., the promise of a geographical location; the development of a great nation). Yet, other aspects of the covenant extend to all humankind, specifically, that “all peoples on earth will be blessed” through Abraham (cf. Genesis 12:3). This is critical in understanding the issue of continuity between Church of God teaching and word of faith theology. The latter holds this specific aspect of the covenant as referencing primarily material or financial blessing. Indeed, Church of God teaching lifts up the blessing component, however, the issue is in regard to how the blessing is defined and understood. From a Church of God perspective, although God is indeed a God of provision, living under the new covenant implies that one is a spiritual descendant of Abraham. The promise of blessing is understood primarily in soteriological terms.

Recognising the blessing component as primarily redemptive in realisation, as opposed to guaranteed material entitlement, finds validation in several New Testament passages (cf. Galatians 3:7-9; 3:11-14; Romans 11:17-24). The blessing inference reveals that privileges once available only to Israel are now available to Gentiles (Johnson 1999:765). As such, Church of God teaching supports the scriptural validity of the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant establishes the fundamental premise of God’s choice of Abraham, and ultimately his biological posterity, as the primary means of redemptive grace. Fulfilment of this covenant is first seen in Abraham, then through his posterity,

and ultimately through Christ's revelation of the new covenant (cf. Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25). However, the blessing component of the Abrahamic covenant is understood primarily as being fulfilled in redemptive terms, not a guarantee of material entitlement or financial prosperity. Consequently, regarding the Abrahamic covenant, aspects of word of faith theology fail to maintain continuity with Church of God teaching. Clearly, it is an issue of hermeneutics.

6.3.1.2 The atonement

Regarding the atonement, two primary components are essential in assessing word of faith theology in terms of continuity: (1) the nature of the atonement; and (2) the results of the atonement. Regarding the nature of the atonement, word of faith theology suggests that: (1) Christ is re-created on the cross from a sinless deity to a symbol of Satan; (2) redemption is not secured on the cross, but in hell; and (3) Jesus is born again in hell. Hagin (1979c:31) posits that, "spiritual death also means having Satan's nature...Jesus tasted death—spiritual death—for every man". Numbers 21:8-9 and John 3:14 are used to support the position that Jesus assumed the nature of Satan. Corroborating this position, Jesus is referenced as "a sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross" (cf. Copeland 1990). Taken further, word of faith proponents suggest that the cross is inadequate to secure redemption; that Jesus must suffer as a sinner in hell, which means the work of redemption is completed in hell. "Do you think that the punishment for 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 separate from God" (Price 1980:7). Consequently, if Jesus assumes the nature of Satan, he must be born again. Copeland (cf. 1989) alleges that "a twice-born man [Jesus] whipped Satan in his own domain...[and]...you could have done the same thing because you're a reborn man too".

The second component focuses on the results and benefits of the atonement and how those benefits apply to the Christian, particularly the concepts of physical health and healing. Copeland (1996:6) teaches that “the basic principle of the Christian life is to know that God put our sin, sickness, disease, sorrow, grief, and poverty on Jesus at Calvary”. He further suggests that “the first step to spiritual maturity is to realize your position before God. You are a child of God and a joint-heir with Jesus. Consequently, you are entitled to all the rights and privileges in the kingdom of God, and one of their rights is health and healing” (Copeland 1979a:25; cf. Dake 1949:244-245; 1963:282; Hагin 1974:53-54; Price 1976:20; Savelle 1982:9-10).

Word of faith theology mandates divine healing as the right of every Christian and sets forth divine health as the norm for all who understand their rights and authority as a believer. Both tenets result from a word of faith interpretation of the atonement of Christ, and both are taught extensively by word of faith proponents. This approach to physical sickness and disease enjoys wide acceptance among word of faith advocates and has also been assimilated into the doctrine and praxis of many within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic communities.

Per the nature of atonement, did Jesus become sinful? Was he required to be born again? Did Christ’s atoning work on the cross secure redemption? Church of God teaching posits that Christ lived a perfect [sinless] life and died a death of perfect obedience in order to satisfy the requirements of God’s justice—a necessary sacrifice so that humankind could be saved from the penalty and guilt of rebellion against God (Sims 1995:147). Atonement in the Old Testament is based on the efficacy of a sacrificial offering (cf. Genesis4:4; Leviticus 17:2-11). Although the blood of animals is inadequate to cleanse from sin (cf. Hebrews 10:4), it symbolises the perfect sacrifice and his atoning blood (cf. Hebrews 9:11, 15; 10:12). Here, Christ did not become sin in the sense of becoming a sinner; rather, he became the sacrifice who bore the sin of humankind. Church of God teaching posits that the death of Christ

dominates the New Testament as the central event of history and is the only sufficient ground to receive God's forgiveness for sin. To suggest that Jesus had to experience additional suffering in hell is to misunderstand the nature of the atonement. For it was on the cross that Christ pays the full penalty for sin (cf. I John 4:10), decisively defeats Satan (cf. Hebrews 2:14), and publically humiliates the powers of evil (cf. Colossians 2:15) (Arrington 1993:61-79). Here, word of faith theology fails to maintain continuity with Church of God teaching.

Regarding the results or benefits of the atonement, several biblical passages lend support to the relationship between divine healing and the atonement (cf. Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; I Peter 2:24). Like its classical Pentecostal siblings, the Church of God has historically accepted the position that divine healing is one of the provisions in the atonement (cf. Minutes 2010:21). The critical issue at this point is the timing and application of this provision. As the Church of God evolved in its approach to biblical hermeneutics, scholarly research and solid exegesis facilitated a greater understanding of human sickness, suffering, and divine healing (Conn 1996:473). This, of course, inevitably produced a more balanced position in regard to physical health and healing (cf. Alexander 2006:113; 229; Arrington 2003:83; 266). It is understood, based on several biblical references (cf. Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; I Peter 2:24, etc.), that divine healing finds its origin in the atonement of Christ.

Contemporary Church of God teaching regarding divine healing is: (1) God healed individuals throughout human history and does indeed heal in the present time; (2) Christians enjoy the privilege and responsibility to pray for healing, both for themselves and others; (3) divine healing is not relegated to adherence to criteria of human origin (i.e., a set of laws or steps); (4) God heals in many different ways; (5) the provision of divine healing is not synonymous with a guarantee of divine healing, i.e., not everyone is healed in this life; (6) when healing does not occur, God gives the grace to successfully

persevere in the midst of the sickness; and (7) ultimate healing is received in the life to come. Regarding the atonement, aspects of word of faith theology fail to maintain continuity with Church of God teaching.

6.3.1.3 **Faith**

The concept of faith as understood in word of faith theology is essential to the theological system it sets forth. From this perspective, faith is not merely a theocentric act of the will in which one exercises simple trust in God; rather, it is an anthropocentric spiritual force one directs toward God. Here, the concept of creative faith is posited as the logical result of the believer's relationship with God. Based on Hebrews 11:3, which states, "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (KJV); per this theology, since words spoken in faith brought the universe into being, words are ruling the universe today. Just as God created the universe via his spoken word (cf. Romans 4:17; Section 5.2), the believer is purported to have the same creative ability via words spoken in faith (Hagin 1974:74). This belief is central to contemporary word of faith theology (cf. Kenyon 1969:67 Capps 1976:12-13; Copeland 1980:4-5; et al). Hagin (1980:3-4) expands this understanding of faith to include not only Christians, but non-Christians as well, stating that "it used to bother me when I'd see unsaved people getting results, but my church members not getting results. Then it dawned on me what the sinners were doing: They were cooperating with this law of God—the law of faith".

To further validate their view of faith, a questionable rendering of Mark 11:22 (cf. Section 5.4) is suggested. The KJV renders the passage as "have faith in God"; however, based on Kenyon's (1942:103) writings, it is rendered as "have the faith of God". This is purported to include creative ability via the power of words spoken in faith. Hence, there is frequent use of the phrase "the God kind of faith" (cf. Copeland 1974:19; Capps 1976:131). Here, faith and the spoken word are woven together to form the powerful force of positive

confession, which allows one to write one's own ticket with God by: (1) saying it; (2) doing it; (3) receiving it; and (4) telling it (cf. Hagin 1979a:3-5; Copeland 1985c). Based on this faith formula, one need only speak words of faith, that is, make a positive confession, regarding whatever one desires. The spoken word, coupled with creative faith, initiates the process of obtaining the desires of one's heart.

To further validate this view of faith, one that contradicts numerous biblical references (cf. I John 5:14; Romans 8:27, et al), Hagin (1983:10) writes, "It is unscriptural to pray, 'If it is the will of God.' When you put an 'if' in your prayer, you are praying in doubt". In this theological system, faith is often reduced to faith in faith rather than faith in God. The result is a set of principles or laws, that when correctly applied guarantee specific remuneration. For example, John Avanzini (1989:15) posits, "every offering given in obedience and faith will be multiplied back one hundredfold". This example, taken from Jesus' parable of the sower in Mark 4, is used by Avanzini (and myriad others) as a biblical basis to suggest that when one gives an offering in faith, one will receive one hundred times that amount in return. Such assertions are the result of faulty exegesis, and at times, blatant misrepresentation of the biblical text. Further, they serve to reinforce the anthropocentric nature of much of word of faith theology.

In contrast, the Church of God ascribes to the orthodox view of faith as "trust in the person of Jesus Christ, and the truth of His teaching, and the redemptive work He accomplished at Calvary" (cf. Douglas 1999). The Church of God Declaration of Faith emphasises the biblical concept of faith. For example, the importance of faith is set forth in Article 5, which states, "we believe that justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ" (Minutes 2010:21). Article 6 states, "we believe in sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word; and by the Holy Ghost" (Minutes 2010:21). The primary usage in these creedal statements is spiritual in essence.

Indeed, faith is applicable to both orthodoxy and orthopraxy (cf. Hebrews 11:6). At all levels faith finds its essence in God who is the giver of faith. Biblical faith cannot be reduced to mere formulae, that is, neatly packaged sets of principles, for the purpose of personal aggrandisement or material gain. On the contrary, the very nature of biblical faith is designed to enhance the covenant relationship and communion with God. The focus of faith is ever on God, the source of all good things (cf. James 1:17).

The Church of God recognises faith as a biblical concept, soteriologically essential, and indispensable for effectively living the Christian life. A contemporary Church of God perspective regarding biblical faith encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: (1) faith finds its origin in God himself; (2) faith is made available to all people primarily for the purpose of salvation; (3) without faith it is impossible to please God; (4) faith is not defined by a subjective belief in faith itself, that is, faith in faith; (5) faith cannot be reduced to a subjective formula; (6) the object of true biblical faith is God and his eternal promises; and (7) the goal of biblical faith is not mere material remuneration, but a life that is pleasing to God. Regarding faith, aspects of word of faith theology fail to maintain continuity with Church of God teaching.

6.3.1.4 Prosperity

Word of faith theology is perhaps best known for its emphasis and teaching on prosperity, hence, the moniker prosperity gospel. Allowing for differences among its numerous proponents, prosperity typically refers to an earthly life of health, wealth, and happiness as the divine, inalienable right of all who have faith in God and live in obedience to his commands (Starner 2006:393). Luminaries of the movement encourage their followers to pray, and even demand, from God “everything from modes of transportation (cars, vans, trucks, even planes), [to] homes, furniture, and large bank accounts” (cf. Pilgrim 1992:3). Robert Tilton (1983:6) asserts, “I believe that it is the will of

God for all to prosper". Dake (1963:282) offers numerous biblical references to suggest that God's will for every believer is material prosperity. To augment this position, Dake (1949:217) argues that, "poverty...should not exist [because]...God wants you to be prosperous".

Biblical support for material prosperity is garnered first from the Old Testament via a word of faith perspective regarding the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Section 4.5.1). New Testament texts used to support this view are III John 2, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (KJV). Oral Roberts utilised this verse as the master key of his ministry (Harrell 1985:66). Because of Roberts' teaching on prosperity, such phrases as "expect a miracle" and "seed-faith" enjoy widespread popularity (Perriman 2003:64). Another passage used in support of material prosperity is John 10:10, where Jesus proclaims, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (KJV). Prosperity proponents interpret this text as affirming the provision of "financial prosperity and entrepreneurial success" (Lioy 2007:44) for all believers. Here, the abundant life is understood not as righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 14:17); rather, it is understood in terms of material abundance. Corroborating such an interpretation, Fred Price (cf. 1990b) writes, "He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. That's the reason I drive a Rolls Royce. I'm following Jesus' steps".

Numerous word of faith proponents are fixated with the act of giving, specifically monetary giving. To support this fixation, myriad biblical references are utilised (cf. Mark 10:30; Ecclesiastes 11:1; Proverbs 13:22; II Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7; III John 2; et al), most all of which are taken out of context. Gloria Copeland (1978:54) asserts, "Give \$10 and receive \$1,000; give \$1,000 and receive \$100,000...in short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal". According to prosperity proponents, believers are to appropriate the promise of Proverbs 13:22, "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (KJV) (cf. Proverbs 28:8; Job 27:13-17; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Isaiah 61:5-6). As

with the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement and faith, aspects of word of faith theology regarding prosperity have been assimilated into the praxis of some within the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic communities.

Three documents comprise the teachings of the Church of God: (1) the Church of God Declaration of Faith, which is the denomination's primary creedal statement; (2) the Doctrinal Commitments, an expanded form of the Declaration of Faith that includes biblical references; and (3) the Practical Commitments, a document that translates the biblical and doctrinal components into areas of praxis. Several statements from the Practical Commitments document engage the issue of prosperity. First, "through prayer we express our trust in Jehovah God, the giver of all good things, and acknowledge Him for our needs and for the needs of others" (Minutes 2010:25). Second, "we are to provide for the financial needs of the church by tithes and offerings (Minutes 2010:25-26). Third, "the living of a godly and sober life requires the wise and frugal use of...money...The wise use of money is an essential part of the Christian's economy of life" (Minutes 2010:26). Fourth, "a Christian must...refrain from any activity (such as gambling)...which dominates and enslaves the spirit that has been made free in Christ" (Minutes 2010:30).

While not exhaustive, the above sampling of statements from the Practical Commitments document helps set forth a Church of God perspective regarding prosperity. In summary, the Church of God recognises the biblical concept of prosperity as "success in a matter" or "completion of a journey" (as *εὐοδώ* in its primary usage implies). A contemporary Church of God perspective regarding prosperity encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: (1) God promises to provide for his people; (2) the focus of the Christian is first and foremost spiritual in nature; (3) the motive for giving is not remuneration; (4) modesty, not excess, should govern the Christian's life and lifestyle; (5) an inordinate emphasis on material possessions is contrary to the teachings of Christ; (6) Christian integrity mandates the wise and frugal

assessment of all things material; and (7) Christians who possess great material wealth have a greater responsibility to invest in the kingdom. Regarding prosperity, aspects of word of faith theology fail to maintain continuity with Church of God teaching.

6.3.2 Pastoral implication

It has been suggested that certain word of faith leaders, in response to widespread criticism, have begun to moderate some of their teachings. Through what has been described as an admirable process of maturing and self-correction, it is purported that most of the movement's theological difficulties have been corrected (Hollinger 1997:26). Indeed, there has certainly been an intentional effort from some within the movement to bring balance to extreme positions of doctrine and praxis (cf. King 2001; Vreeland 2001; et al). This is certainly commendable. Such efforts have led Lederle (2010:205-206) to suggest that, "a mere twenty-five years ago it was this very sector of the Charismatic world that was being heralded as heretical and seen as proclaiming a different gospel. Fortunately, that storm has died down. The overstated critique has been silenced".

However, the critique has not been silenced. Research and dialogue regarding the more anomalous aspects of word of faith theology continue to occur (cf. Bowers 2004; Harrison 2005; Alexander 2006; Fee 2006; Jones 2006; Tang 2006; Atkinson 2007; Lioy 2007; Simpson 2007; Beason 2008; Bloodsworth 2009; Hanegraaff 2009; Koch 2009; Wright 2010; Adewuya 2011; Shelton 2011; et al). This too is commendable.

This assessment of the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching, as observed via the four biblical tenets, reveals that aspects of word of faith theology tend to ignore the fundamental shift inaugurated by Jesus in the new covenant, a shift from the outward physical realm to the inward and

spiritual realm (cf. John 4:21, 23-24) (Evans 2005:55). A preoccupation with the temporal replaces Jesus' emphasis on the eternal. Because of their belief in the imminent return of Christ, classical Pentecostals historically avoided a preoccupation with materialism. However, much of word of faith theology focuses not on God's redemptive future for all people; rather, the focus is on an individualistic faith strategy for reclaiming earthly prosperity lost to Satan through the violation of the laws of health and wealth (Perriman 2003:115-116). Consequently, a significant number of believers who feel socially excluded, or are economically deprived, handicapped, lame, marginalised, poor and sick, have come to believe there is no value in bearing the cross of Christ, if there is obviously no material plenty for them (Beason 2008:60). According to Harvey Cox (1999:394), "there was a time when Pentecostals warned themselves and anyone else who would listen not to become entangled and dependent on the things of this world...[e.g., materialism]...Perhaps it is time for a rebirth of that ethic of simplicity...for which the early Pentecostals were so famous".

Indeed, the lack of continuity between aspects of word of faith theology and Church of God teaching poses a significant implication for Church of God pastors. With the Charismatic movement and mass marketing of Christianity came a plethora of theological ideas and polities that have profoundly impacted the Church of God (Alexander 2004:28). The pastoral implication per this section is the need for consistent expository preaching and teaching. The expository method is understood as "the communication of a biblical concept or an extended portion of Scripture arrived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context" (Robinson 2001:20). Such an approach will equip parishioners with a better understanding of Church of God orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

6.3.3 Practical recommendation

One facet of the pastoral role involves the task of mentor (cf. Section 3.4.1). Here, the pastor leads his parishioners in the process of spiritual maturity and commitment to Church of God doctrine and praxis. It is imperative for pastors to assist their parishioners in understanding both Church of God orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Via the biblical and theological training recommended in Section 6.2.3, pastors will be better equipped to effectively design and implement substantive preaching and teaching that will facilitate this recommendation.

To achieve this goal, it is recommended that Church of God pastors: (1) ensure that parishioners are given appropriate instruction in matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy; (2) utilise both traditional and non-traditional methodologies of instruction; (3) implement this recommendation via various venues, i.e., seminars, Sunday School, teaching sessions, etc.; and (4) establish a minimum level of orientation for prospective members. Inherent within this recommendation is the objective that parishioners will develop not only a modicum of spiritual maturity, but also a commitment to biblical doctrine and praxis as set forth by the Church of God. The goal at this point is not blind adherence to denominational polity, but a commitment to biblical principles as understood through the lens of a classical Pentecostal perspective.

6.4 An assessment of the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology

The third area of pastoral concern is the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology. Several questions emerge from this area of concern. First, how does word of faith theology inform and impact the mission of the church? Second, how is discipleship cultivated and integrated into the missional mandate of the gospel? Third, what paradigm of kingdom

living is set forth? For many who embrace a word of faith rubric, following Christ is not about self-denial and cross bearing, as Jesus suggested (cf. Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:25-33; Matthew 16:24-28); rather, the emphasis is about learning how to reign as kings in this life (Bowers 2004b:41).

6.4.1 An assessment of biblical discipleship

All Christians are in a “general sense disciples of Jesus” (cf. Matthew 28:19; John 8:31-32; Acts 4:32; 11: 26) (Calenborg 1981:245-246). In its most basic form discipleship is understood as commitment to a lifestyle of following the person and teachings of Jesus. Holloman (2003:1025-1028) offers an orthodox view of effective biblical discipleship, citing eleven key ingredients: (1) denial of self (cf. Luke 9:23); (2) taking up one’s cross daily (cf. Luke 9:23); (3) continuing to follow Christ (cf. Luke 9:23); (4) relinquishing all one’s possessions to Christ (cf. Luke 14:33); (5) continuing in Jesus’ word (cf. John 8:31-32); (6) practicing prayer according to Jesus’ teaching (cf. Matthew 6:6, 9-13); (7) abiding in Jesus (cf. John 14:20); (8) loving Jesus supremely (cf. Matthew 10:37); (9) loving others (cf. John 13:35); (10) serving others (cf. John 13); and (11) making disciples of others (cf. Matthew 28:19). As observed from these ingredients, biblical discipleship is costly indeed.

Digressing from an orthodox view of discipleship, word of faith theology exhibits a tendency to reinforce and encourage a consumerist, materialistic and self-aggrandising approach to Christian living. The discipleship emphases of the classical Pentecostal movement—pursuit of a sanctified life and empowerment for service—have been morphed in word of faith theology into a justification and appropriation of North American affluence (Bowers 2004:41). Per the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology, numerous points of dissimilarity exist. This assertion is further illustrated by assessing the following: (1) media and discipleship; (2) faith and

discipleship; (3) healing and discipleship; and (4) wealth and discipleship (cf. Bowers 2004b:41-46).

6.4.1.1 Media and discipleship

Electronic mass media is a major contributing factor to the global influence of the word of faith message, particularly US-based religious media (Phiri and Maxwell 2007; cf. Folarin 2007:71). As a result, many within classical Pentecostalism are increasingly being discipled not by pastors or church discipleship programmes, but by religious media (Bowers 2004:4-5). Superstitious, and often deficient in biblical literacy, religious media easily persuades many to believe and hope for things that: (1) reflect America's affluence as a nation; (2) express selfishness; and (3) manifest individualism (Schultze 2003:131-132). Religious media is especially influential in the form of radio, television, and most recently the Internet.

First, radio as a form of mass media is significant in the propagation of the word of faith message, in that it laid the foundation for the subsequent media forms of television and the Internet. Christian radio programming not only seeks to convert people to Christianity but also to provide teaching and preaching opportunities that inevitably influence discipleship. Second, television, and specifically the advent of religious television (much of which is word of faith in orientation), profoundly impacted the rapid dissemination of the word of faith message. Third, the Internet has also facilitated the word of faith message by providing a potential global audience of multiple millions. Religious programming in these venues celebrates affluence via a never ending flow of celebrities. Consequently, such religious media has become the venue where many find a worldview that reflects their values, in that it produces a consumer-oriented spirituality (Fore 1987:24; Hull 1988:39).

A large portion of contemporary religious programming is problematic for at least two reasons: (1) it threatens to replace the local church as the central place of religious life for many people; and (2) since it cannot do all that Christ commissions the local church to do, religious programming as one's sole source of discipleship produces a sub-Christian spirituality (Godfrey 1990:164-165). Said differently, even if the doctrinal emphases of such programming are not errant (as they often are), they will certainly be incomplete. As a result, the American attraction for all things positive produces at the popular level a belief that the emphases of the word of faith message such as health, wealth, success, prosperity, etc., can be realised en masse. Hence, religious media is influencing the discipleship process far beyond its own ranks. Historically, Pentecostals were suspicious that mass media could be a seductive lure, tricking people into the empty values of the consumer market culture. It appears they were right (Cox 1999:394).

6.4.1.2 Faith and discipleship

Although there are similarities between biblical faith and faith as understood in word of faith theology, the latter exhibits an extra-biblical dimension. Here, the dynamics of faith are often more akin to the subjective use of an amulet, talisman or charm than an objective confident reliance on God's sovereign ability. There is also the reality that much of what passes for faith is little more than presumption (Farah 1980:205). Faith often becomes a human-initiated mind-over-matter or mind-over-reality phenomenon that is expressed as a speech-act (Bowers 2004:42). However, biblical discipleship involves the submission of human initiative and will to the sovereign purposes of God. These purposes are not always in agreement with human desire or will. The process of biblical discipleship is never understood as aligning God's action with human desire. It is at the core the submission and alignment of human desire with God's sovereign will (cf. Matthew 26:36-39). Nor does God place himself in a position in which his sovereignty is limited or obstructed by human

will or desire. To do so would violate the very concept of sovereignty, replacing an attribute held only by God with human subjectivism.

The problematic nature of a word of faith view of faith and discipleship is further complicated by the assertion that much of word of faith theology has been moderated, corrected, and brought into balance. Although this appears to be the consensus of some, none of its major doctrines have been retracted, nor any of its hundreds of publications been reedited to reflect such correction. Consequently, the same literature that divided the Charismatic renewal in the United States in the 1970's and 1980's is now doing the same in other parts of the world (McConnell 1995:193). Here too the issue of discipleship poses implications for pastoral ministry.

6.4.1.3 Healing and discipleship

Scripture is replete with references to healing. Indeed, persons in both the Old and New Testaments experienced physical, mental and emotional healing. There is also a dimension of healing that is to be realised in the on-going ministry of Christ's church (cf. James 5:14-16). From a biblical perspective, healing is understood as the work of God's sovereignty. In the embryonic period of classical Pentecostalism, there were numerous views regarding healing, many of which were faulty. This was due primarily to a lack of sound biblical exegesis. However, recognising that the basis of healing is not primarily an issue of faith but of God's sovereignty, classical Pentecostal views regarding healing have matured. It is not faith healing, but divine healing that God provided in the atonement (cf. Sims 1995:83).

However, word of faith theology posits healing as the right of every believer, guaranteed in the atonement of Christ, and realised via positive confession. Here, a subjective approach is set forth in which God is obligated to appropriate healing at the discretion of one's confession. However, many

have not received the healing they confessed and have been left disillusioned and, in some cases, spiritually devastated. Even a few word of faith proponents recognise the “pitfall of pastoral problems” posed by this view (Vreeland 2001:17). Consequently, those believers who do not experience healing through faith are often left with guilt and confusion (Bowers 2004b:43). Typically, at this point, clergypersons are called upon to provide pastoral care. Moreover, since not every case of physical malady in the New Testament was accompanied by healing (cf. II Corinthians 12:7-10; II Timothy 4:20), the issue of healing and discipleship poses implications for pastoral ministry.

6.4.1.4 Wealth and discipleship

Without a doubt, the subject of wealth in its various forms (e.g., money, land, possessions, materialism) is much debated. In one sense, emphasising wealth can be understood as rightly affirming the sufficiency and abundance of God’s blessings and provisions for believers; however, in its extreme forms, it encourages a covetous spirit, promotes a self-centred practice of giving, and serves to legitimise the extravagant prosperity of the rich, while perhaps implicitly justifying the oppression of the poor (Bowers 2004b:44). Even a cursory reading of Scripture reveals that God’s interaction with his people involves provision for temporal needs (cf. Philippians 4:19). Such provision is appropriated according to God’s will, as well as the believer’s adherence to biblical principles regarding wealth. For this reason, believers reside within all socio-economic levels. Scripture repeatedly offers caveats regarding riches, at least the exorbitant pursuit of such, while revealing God’s concern and care for the poor. Per the teachings of Jesus, although poverty per se is not glorified and wealth is not condemned, wealth and possessions are understood from a soteriological perspective as having zero value, a sentiment also shared in the Pauline letters (Fee 2006:43-45).

In his book *the Midas touch*, Kenneth Hagin argues for balance and sound teaching regarding money and wealth. Ironically, in the same book, he suggests that Jesus was not poor, because he walked in prosperity according to the Abrahamic covenant (Hagin 2000:65). Word of faith theology posits an entitlement mentality regarding wealth. Since all believers are Christians and since Christians are spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham, then all believers inherit the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Section 4.5.1). Consequently, all Christians are entitled to material wealth. Gloria Copeland (1978:35) corroborates this view when she writes, “treat any symptom of lack just as you would treat a symptom of sickness. The very moment a symptom of lack shows up in your life, take authority over it. Command it to flee from you in the name of Jesus and stand your ground”. Because Christians reside in such a diversity of socio-economic contexts, such a view is indeed problematic for the one who would truly follow Christ. This view wealth and discipleship also poses implications for pastoral ministry.

6.4.2 Pastoral implication

At its core, biblical discipleship is about pursuing Christ. After conversion, one's life is no longer considered one's own (cf. I Corinthians 6:19-20). The goals, aspirations, objectives and desires of the believer are to become secondary, while the primary focus of life is to pursue the will of God in one's life (cf. Philippians 3:10-11). Consequently, biblical discipleship is theocentric in orientation. However, the assessment of the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology, as observed in media, faith, healing and wealth, reveals a migration toward an anthropocentric orientation. Media is often utilised as a means of projecting the American attraction for affluence, thus becoming anthropocentric in orientation. The same is true of faith, which is often understood in terms of a subjective means to an end. Healing is also anthropocentric in orientation when understood in terms of a guaranteed entitlement appropriated at the discretion of a positive confession. Wealth too

fits this paradigm, since as a believer one is entitled to the material benefits of the Abrahamic covenant.

This assessment has revealed that the relationship between word of faith theology and discipleship poses a significant implication for Church of God pastors. The pastoral implication per this section is the need for effective discipleship, facilitated by effective discipleship methodologies. The Scripture never references a non-discipling pastor, because God has called pastors to the indisputable task of discipleship (Quinn 1995:322). Effective discipleship will equip parishioners with a biblical worldview that is theocentric in orientation. It will also facilitate a better understanding of Church of God orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

6.4.3 Practical recommendation

The need for effective discipleship is crucial in terms of facilitating the Church of God pastor to fulfil the role of shepherd (cf. Section 3.4.3). Most academic Pentecostal theology is closely connected to practical theology, in that its constructive orientation almost demands that the results of academic endeavours be placed into dialogue with the practice of ministry (Thomas 1998:311). Therefore, Church of God pastors need to disciple their parishioners via biblically sound discipleship methodologies. As the practical recommendation cited in Section 6.2.3 is employed (i.e., a more adequate level of theological training), the Church of God pastor will be equipped to develop and implement effective discipleship strategies.

Individual discipleship methodologies are numerous. The purpose of this recommendation is not to delineate a particular strategy, and thereby restrict the pastor to a single method. Rather, it is to suggest ingredients to any and all strategies that will lead to effective biblical discipleship. To achieve the objective of biblical discipleship, it is recommended that Church of God

pastors implement the following criteria per each discipleship strategy: (1) ensure that the strategy is solidly based in Scripture; (2) in implementing the strategy, utilise both traditional and non-traditional methodologies of instruction; (3) verify that the strategy is theocentric as opposed to anthropocentric; (4) integrate within the strategy the truth of Colossians 1:6-10; and (5) confirm that the strategy contains the component of God's sovereignty.

6.5 An assessment of the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology

The fourth area of concern is the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology. From this area of concern emerges a single question—does the presence of word of faith theology cause a realignment of spiritual and pastoral authority? Many adherents of word of faith theology exhibit gnostic-like tendencies that lead them to consider themselves and their media teachers to be on a superior level of spiritual revelation and maturity than other believers (Bowers 2004b:11-12). Perriman (2003:200) observes that, often, word of faith teachers reflect a quasi-divinity for themselves and their adherents that leads to attitudes of spiritual superiority and contempt for believers, leaders, and pastors who do not share their views. Consequently, when a pastor fails to espouse word of faith theology, his authority as a spiritual leader is rejected by word of faith adherents, who then transfer that authority to their favourite media personality. The researcher has personally observed such practice as cited in the examples in Section 6.1. This often results in an annulment of accountability to the local church. When this occurs, the issues of discipleship and church governance are complicated, and the unity and faith of the congregation are often endangered. As such, implications for pastoral ministry occur.

The Church of God is becoming more intentional in facilitating a healthy concept of pastoral authority. The Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care is a ministry of the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, the major USA seminary of the Church of God. The seminary holds both regional and ATS accreditation. Believing that healthy pastors develop healthy congregations, the purpose of the CPLC is to cultivate and sustain pastoral excellence and holistic ministry leadership in all areas of church life in the following ways: (1) conducting pastoral leadership research; (2) publishing well-researched and context relevant print and Internet pastoral leadership resources; (3) development of a national network of pastoral covenant groups; (4) identification and training of pastoral coaches and mentors; (5) providing ministry consultants to pastors and congregations; (6) partnership with congregations, pastors, districts, and denominational leaders to provide clergy assessment, renewal, and formation experiences; and (7) collaborate with national, international foundations, pastoral development projects in order to serve the needs of the larger Pentecostal movement and Christian community (About Us 2011). Utilising this paradigm, Church of God pastors are encouraged to pursue excellence via the following: (1) consistent practice of spiritual disciplines; (2) maintenance of the pastor's physical, emotional, family, and financial health; (3) ministering and leading in community with other pastors and believers; (4) effectively preaching and teaching the Word; (5) discipling, giving compassionate care, and providing spiritual direction for people who are hurting; (6) effectively leading and administering people in local church ministry; and (7) multiplication of ministry through mentoring and coaching others in a shared journey of development (About us 2011).

6.5.1 An assessment of pastoral authority

An assessment of the subject of pastoral authority involves defining the concept; that is, what pastoral authority is not and what it is. Pastoral authority is not an authoritarian or dictatorial posture regarding the pastoral office. This

is neither healthy nor scriptural (cf. I Peter 5:2-4). Such an approach produces serious ramifications for both pastors and parishioners. As evidenced in the Shepherding-Discipleship controversy, this posture regarding pastoral authority has proven toxic and destructive (cf. McConnell 1995:187-188). Indeed, as McMahan (1994:49) observes, pastoral authority can be abused and distorted, and some attempt to manipulate it for selfish gain; however, pastoral authority is rooted in the authority of God (cf. Isaiah 6; Amos 7; Ezekiel 2; Romans 10). A biblical understanding of pastoral authority includes not only the responsibility to transmit knowledge and information, but also the process of guiding and leading parishioners in all matters of doctrine and praxis. Consequently, pastoral authority is not defined by dominance or control; rather, it is understood as a mentoring and training process that affects the lives of parishioners (McMahan 1994:75). From this perspective, the following components of pastoral authority are assessed: (1) spiritual leadership; (2) limitations; and (3) fellowship issues.

6.5.1.1 Example of pastoral authority (spiritual leadership)

Biblical pastoral authority is never defined in terms of dominion. Rather, it is the “exercise of one’s spiritual gifts under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given them toward the end of glorifying Christ” (Gangel 1989:31). This is expanded to include spiritual leadership, which is understood as “the development of relationships with the people of a Christian institution or body in such a way that individuals and the group are enabled to formulate and achieve biblically compatible goals that meet real needs” (Means 1989:59).

The key ingredients to effective spiritual leadership are the call of God upon one’s life and the heart of a servant (cf. Mark 10:42-45). The concept of pastoral authority via spiritual leadership finds its origin within the biblical text. First, the entire story of God’s dealings with his people is actually God’s

involvement with a particular person whom he used to accomplish his will (e.g., Exodus 3). Second, the New Testament spells out in clear terms that God had a designated leadership for his church (cf. Matthew 10:1-42; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 12:8; I Timothy 3:5). Third, certain charges addressed to individuals in the New Testament indicate that some were to exercise leadership in the church (cf. I Timothy 5:17-25; Titus 1:5-9). Fourth, the church has received special exhortations regarding treatment of church leaders (cf. I Corinthians 16:16; I Thessalonians 5:12-13) (Montoya 1995:284-285).

Clearly, God's plan for new covenant believers includes leadership responsibilities per certain individuals. Within the context of the church, the pastor is called upon to offer definitive leadership. When this God-given leadership is circumvented, it poses implications for pastoral ministry.

6.5.1.2 Extent of pastoral authority (limitations)

Certain limitations exist within the function of pastoral authority. These limitations correspond with three biblically defined responsibilities of the pastoral role.

- (1) The responsibility and authority to teach and shepherd the church (cf. Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Peter 5:1-4)
- (2) The responsibility and authority to protect the church from false, aberrant and heretical orthodoxy and orthopraxy (cf. I Corinthians 14:29; I Timothy 4:1-6, 16; Titus 1:9-13)
- (3) The responsibility and authority to oversee the entire ministry program of the church (cf. I Thessalonians 5:12; I Peter 5:1-2).

The limitations of pastoral authority fall within the guidelines of the above responsibilities. As such, pastoral authority does not empower one in all

matters pertaining to the lives of parishioners. Nor does it authorise the pastor with unlimited powers of enforcement. One exception to the latter is regarding church discipline, in which the pastor may be called upon to employ excommunication, with the ultimate goal of restoration (cf. I Corinthians 5:1-4). It is evident that biblical pastoral authority is not defined in terms of unlimited power or control. Limitations do indeed exist. However, such limitations do not excuse failure on the part of parishioners to honour God-given authority. When true pastoral authority is compromised, it poses implications for pastoral ministry.

6.5.1.3 Ecumenical nature of pastoral authority (fellowship issues)

Another area of concern is the relationship between fellowship issues and word of faith theology. Here, pastoral authority is called upon to offer wisdom in matters of fellowship between adherents of word of faith theology and classical Pentecostals. Emerging from this concern are several questions. First, how is a pastor to respond to those ministries, churches and believers that espouse word of faith theology? Second, if word of faith teaching is found to be biblically aberrant, what implications follow for fellowship with its adherents? Third, what are the theological boundaries for Christian fellowship where word of faith theology is concerned? “There can be little room for compromise with the faith movement on its theological excesses or its all-too-prevalent faulty practice of care where suffering persons are concerned” (Bowers 2004b:48).

The very nature of theological inconsistencies between word of faith theology and Church of God teaching poses implications for pastoral ministry. As such, this may indeed warrant limited fellowship between the two in certain contexts. Per the more extreme word of faith ministries, pastoral authority may warrant a caveat to parishioners regarding participation in such ministries or in the use of their instructional materials.

6.5.2 Pastoral implication

Correctly understood, biblical pastoral authority involves shepherding the flock of God and watching over them, never lording over those entrusted to one's care but serving as an example (cf. I Peter 5:2-3). It is about facilitating within parishioners, through effective mentoring, the goals and objectives of the Christian life. Pastoral authority is derived from God's authority, in that the pastoral role is ordained by God to shepherd those endeavouring to represent God to the world (McMahan 1994:58). Pastoral authority is realised via spiritual leadership, a trait that finds ample biblical support. There are also limitations involved. Pastoral authority is not an all-encompassing corrective. The ecumenical nature of pastoral authority often requires a course of action regarding fellowship issues with those of varying theological perspectives.

This assessment has revealed that the relationship between word of faith theology and pastoral authority poses an implication for Church of God pastors. The pastoral implication per this section involves the nature of the pastor's relationship with parishioners. Healthy pastoral relationships facilitate effective discipleship. This ultimately leads to a better understanding of Church of God orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

6.5.3 Practical recommendation

The need for healthy pastoral relationships is crucial in terms of facilitating the Church of God pastor to fulfil the role of mentor (cf. Section 3.4.1). With the assimilation of word of faith theology by some constituents in the Church of God, especially via Christian media, the pastoral role is critical to understanding, translating and informing parishioners of the implications of such teaching. Effective mentoring requires a commitment to the Church of God—that is, the belief that the doctrine, polity, theology and praxis of the

denomination find their origin in Scripture and therefore warrant such a commitment.

In addressing issues of pastoral authority as the result of word of faith theological differences, it is recommended that Church of God pastors implement the following: (1) maintain a basic rapport and mutual respect; (2) refrain from caustic remarks about prominent word of faith luminaries; (3) avoid direct frontal assault from the pulpit; (4) promote direct personal Bible studies guided by the pastor; (5) implement preaching and teaching that addresses key biblical themes without inserting a polemical agenda; and (6) continue to disciple core leaders of the local church in Church of God doctrine and praxis to help maintain and guard the continuing health of the church fellowship (Bowers 2004b:47).

6.6 Conclusion

In this section the following topics are briefly reiterated: (1) the aim of the chapter; (2) a review of each section; (3) the relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda; and (4) a brief summation.

6.6.1 Aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to engage Module 3 of the LIM theological research model (cf. Section 1.6) by addressing the contemporary obligations (practical recommendations) of the research. The delimitations of this study do not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the contemporary obligations, however, the assessment offered in this chapter adequately addresses the primary pastoral implications of word of faith theology per the four tenets examined throughout the research.

6.6.2 Review of each section

Chapter 6 is comprised of three primary components. First, an assessment is offered of four specific areas of pastoral concern per their relationship with word of faith theology. Focusing on five selected issues, Section 6.2 assesses the scriptural validity of word of faith theology. Focusing on the four tenets evaluated throughout this research, Section 6.3 assesses the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching. Utilising four specific areas of concern, Section 6.4 assesses the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology. In Section 6.5, the relationship between word of faith theology and pastoral authority is assessed. Second, per each of the four areas of assessment, an implication for pastoral ministry in the Church of God is set forth. Third, per each implication, a corresponding practical recommendation is offered that effectively addresses the observed implication.

6.6.3 Relevance of this chapter to the overall research agenda

Chapter 6 holds relevance to the overall research agenda of this study for several reasons. First, the chapter comprises one of several components (cf. Section 1.8) essential for successfully completing the research project. Second, the chapter engages one of the five primary objectives of this research, namely, to understand and address the pastoral implications of word of faith theology. Finally, each of the five primary objectives derived from the main research problem (cf. Sections 1.2 and 1.3) is engaged in a single chapter; therefore, each chapter finds relevance in and of itself in that it contributes to the success of the whole.

6.6.4 Summary

The topic of this research is introduced in Chapter 1. The literature review in Chapter 2 provides a situation analysis per the history of research. A contextual analysis of the research is offered in Chapter 3 by evaluating the faith tradition of the Church of God. Chapter 4 presents a historical analysis regarding the word of faith movement and specific tenets of its theology. Chapter 5 sets forth biblical and theological foundations in order to critique specific tenets of word of faith theology. Chapter 6 assesses the implications of word of faith theology for pastoral ministry in the Church of God.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The research conducted for this dissertation involved a contextual study of pastoral ministry within the demographic of classical Pentecostalism, specifically, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, USA). Pastors assume a tremendous responsibility when they accept the task of shepherding, mentoring and instructing parishioners on Christ's behalf (cf. Titus 1:9). As a result, those who serve in pastoral ministry should be tenacious in their pursuit of biblical orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Paul's pastoral admonition to "watch your life and doctrine closely" (I Timothy 4:16) sets the tone for the pastoral task. Per this scriptural mandate, the working hypothesis of this research was that certain tenets of word of faith theology have negative pastoral implications. Therefore, the main purpose of this research was to engage a biblical and theological analysis of specific tenets of word of faith theology and their pastoral implications within the context of the Church of God.

This final chapter presents a synthesis of the entire study by: (1) offering a summary of the research; (2) offering recommendations for further study; (3) indicating how the research makes a contribution to the discipline of practical theology; and (4) offering a conclusion to the research project.

7.2 Summary of research

The dissertation was governed by the main research question, "what are the major pastoral implications of word of faith theology within the context of the

Church of God”? Answering this question involved the utilisation of the LIM research model (Woodbridge and Song 2007). This research model is structured around three critical concerns: (1) interpreting the world as it is; (2) interpreting the world as it should be; and (3) interpreting contemporary obligations.

The first module offered an interpretation of the world as it is via situational, contextual, and historical analyses of the research topic. A situational analysis was offered in Chapter 2 in which a literature review was conducted of the current state of scholarship regarding word of faith theology. The analysis included primary sources, critical evaluations from both inside and outside the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith traditions, as well as more favourable treatments of word of faith theology. In order to integrate the various strands of thought a synthesis of the assessed literature was offered. The relevance of the literature review was discussed, citing several areas of deficiency in the current scholarship. The analysis demonstrated the need for further examination of word of faith theology, specifically in regard to pastoral implications within the Church of God.

Chapter 3 involved a contextual analysis of the research topic by examining the faith tradition of the Church of God from the following perspectives: (1) a historical and contemporary assessment of the Church of God; (2) an evaluation of specific tenets of biblical theology within the Church of God; (3) an analysis of the pastoral role within the Church of God; and (4) an appraisal of four biblical tenets from a Church of God perspective.

Chapter 4 was comprised of a historical analysis of the research topic that examined word of faith theology from the following perspectives: (1) an assessment of the origins of the word of faith movement; (2) an analysis of the development of word of faith message; (3) an evaluation of prominent contemporary proponents of word of faith theology; and (4) an appraisal of four biblical tenets from a word of faith perspective.

Chapter 5 moved the research forward by implementing the second module of the LIM research model, interpreting the world as it should be. To facilitate this objective, Chapter 5 involved a biblical and theological evaluation of particular aspects of word of faith theology per the following: (1) an exegetical analysis of three passages central to word of faith theology (cf. Romans 4:17; III John 2; Mark 11:24); and (2) a biblical and theological assessment of four biblical tenets (cf. the Abrahamic covenant; the atonement; faith; prosperity).

Module 3 of the LIM research model, interpreting contemporary obligations, was addressed in Chapter 6. Here, an assessment of the implications of specific tenets of word of faith theology for pastoral ministry in the Church of God was offered per the following: (1) an evaluation of the scriptural validity of word of faith theology; (2) an appraisal regarding the continuity of word of faith theology with Church of God teaching; (3) an analysis of the relationship between biblical discipleship and word of faith theology; and (4) an assessment of the relationship between pastoral authority and word of faith theology. In each of the four areas, a pastoral implication was offered, along with a practical recommendation for addressing the observed implication.

In Chapter 7, a conclusion of the research is given. After a brief introduction to the chapter, a summary of the research is set forth. This is followed by recommendations for further study, along with the value of the research to the field of practical theology. The chapter ends with concluding remarks.

7.3 Recommendations for further study

This research is but a small component of a much larger ecclesiastical motif—the task of pastoral ministry. Inherent in this task are the themes of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The recommendations offered in this research are the result of inquiry into specific aspects of these themes. Emerging from this inquiry are

additional questions that warrant consideration. The following are recommended for further study.

First, one of the limitations of this research was ecclesiastical. The research was conducted within the parameters of the Church of God faith tradition (cf. Section 1.5). The implications and recommendations set forth in this dissertation address primarily the Church of God. To widen the scope of this research, it is recommended that similar research be conducted within other Evangelical faith traditions. For example, what implications does word of faith theology hold for those in the Wesleyan tradition? Are there implications for those in the Reformed tradition? Because word of faith theology contains similarities with Evangelicalism, at least in terms of language, other faith traditions would perhaps benefit from such research.

Second, this research also contained a historical limitation (cf. Section 1.5). The word count requirement of the dissertation did not allow for an exhaustive examination of either word of faith theology or its proponents. As a result, the focus was limited to specific persons, historical and contemporary, who were instrumental in the development and dissemination of word of faith theology. Because of its expanding global influence, primarily via mass media, it is recommended that further study be conducted per the biblical and theological implications of word of faith theology. Can its various components be developed into a systematic theology? How does the emphasis on material prosperity align with the missional mandate of the great commission of Christ? In terms of praxis, what are the similarities and dissimilarities between the various streams of word of faith theology? Research in these and other areas would expand the field of knowledge and facilitate a greater understanding of word of faith theology.

Third, the biblical and theological analysis of word of faith theology offered in this research was directed specifically toward those persons serving in pastoral ministry. From a very specific reference point—word of faith

theology—the recommendations offered in this research were proposed to facilitate those in pastoral ministry to effectively engage the themes of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Similar research focusing on different target groups would possibly reveal implications unique to the particular group(s). For example, what are the implications of word of faith theology for specific ethnic or socio-economic groups? Further research within a specific demographic could certainly be beneficial to those constituents.

7.4 Contribution of this research to practical theology

Practical recommendations for pastoral ministry are far too numerous to be given exhaustive treatment in a single study. Therefore, this dissertation does not engage the entire scope of practical theology; rather, it is but one facet of the whole. Although the study was confined to the limited context of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, USA), the research also covered a literature review that focused on the word of faith movement, as well as a biblical and theological assessment of specific tenets of word of faith theology. In addition, the research affirmed the hypothesis that specific tenets of word of faith theology do indeed have negative implications for pastoral ministry in the Church of God. These findings logically fit within the parameters of practical theology. It is the intent and hope of the researcher that the findings of this research, the proposed implications and recommendations, will facilitate more effective pastoral ministry (based on Christian ethics), not only in the context of this study, but in the larger Christian community as well.

Since one objective of doctoral level research is to contribute new data to the fund of general knowledge (cf. Vyhmerister 2001:185), it is the opinion of the researcher that this objective has been achieved. Per the literature review conducted in Chapter 2, no major research was found that: (1) was conducted within the context of the Church of God; and (2) attempted to identify the pastoral implications of word of faith theology within that context. The

combination of these two components allowed for the contribution of new contextual data to the field of practical theology.

7.5 Conclusion

For the past two and a half decades the researcher has served in pastoral ministry in the Church of God. During this time the negative influence of specific tenets of word of faith theology has been observed. In every parish the researcher has served, the need has arisen for a pastoral response to word of faith theology. As a Christian pastor, the researcher is very much concerned about matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. According to Starner (2006:395), “the church’s constant theological task is retrospection and repair”. This is certainly true regarding specific tenets of word of faith theology. The researcher is of the opinion that upon implementation of the recommendations offered in this study, Church of God pastors will be able to effectively engage the observed implications.

SOURCES CITED

Abelman R and Neuendorf K 1985 (Win). How religious is religious television programming? *Journal of Communication* 35:106

About us 2011. Online article: http://www.cplc.cc/xhtml/about_us.htm, 2011-09-22.

Adams J 1931. *The epic of America*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company.

Adewuya J 2011. The effects of the prosperity gospel in Africa. In Synan V (ed), *Spirit-empowered Christianity in the 21st century*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Ahonen T 2010: Cell phones: The seventh mass media. Online article: <http://cellphones.org/blog/the-seventh-mass-media>, 2011-03-23.

Air worship 1931. Online article:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,741032,00.html>, 2011-03-23.

Akin D 2001. 1, 2, 3 John. In Clendenen E (ed), *the new American commentary* (vol 38). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

Alexander K 2004. Our congregations. In Bowers J (ed), *portrait and prospect: Church of God pastors face the 21st century*. Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

_____. 2006. *Pentecostal healing: models in theology and practice*. Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing.

Alexander P 2003. Finis Jennings Dake. In Burgess S (ed), *the new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Allen L 1986. Romans. In Bruce F (ed), *the international Bible commentary* (rev ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Amplified Bible (AMP) 1987. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Anderson A 2004. *An introduction to Pentecostalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Anderson C 1991. *Contrasting strains of metaphysical idealism contributing to New Thought*. Santa Barbara, CA: Society for the Study of Metaphysical Religion.

Anderson G 2004. The Scofield study Bible: Scofield's use of the critical text and the AV. *Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record* 566:21-27.

Anderson R 2001. *The shape of practical theology: empowering ministry with a theological praxis*. Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity.

Avanzini J 1989. *30, 60, hundredfold: your financial harvest released*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.

Archer K 2009. *A Pentecostal hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and community*. Cleveland, TN: CPT Press.

Armstrong J 2001 (ed). *Reforming pastoral ministry: challenges for ministry in postmodern times*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Arrington F 1988. Historical perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic hermeneutics. In Burgess S and McGee G (eds), *dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

_____. 1992. *Christian doctrine: a Pentecostal perspective* (vol 1). Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

_____. 1993. *Christian doctrine: a Pentecostal perspective* (vol 2). Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

_____. 1994. *Christian doctrine: a Pentecostal perspective* (vol 3). Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Articles of faith. Online article: <http://www.iphc.org/beliefs>, 2010-12-10.

Atkins G 1923. *Modern religious cults and movements*. New York, NY: Revell.

Atkinson W 2007. The nature of the crucified Christ in word-faith teaching. *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31:169-184.

Aune D 2003. Epistolography. In *the Westminster dictionary of New Testament and early Christian literature and rhetoric*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.

Ballard P 1995. Practical theology as an academic discipline. *Theology* XCVIII (782):112-122.

Barackman F 1998. *Practical Christian theology* (3rd ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.

Baradell S 1992 (6 Feb). Robert Tilton's heart of darkness. *Dallas Observer*, 19-20.

Barker G 1981. 1, 2, and 3 John. In Gaebelein G (ed), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (vol 12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Barna G 2006. *The state of the church: 2006*. Ventura, CA: The Barna Group, Ltd.

Barrett C 2009. *The gospel according to St. John: an introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text* (2nd rev ed). London, UK: SPCK Publishing.

Barron, B 1987. *The health and wealth gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

_____ 1990. Faith movement (word movement). In Reid D (ed), *dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Beason F 2008. *The prosperity gospel and its effects on the church: a perspective*. Cleveland, TN: Derek Press.

Beckford R 2001. Theology in the age of crack: crack age, prosperity doctrine and being there. *Black Theology in Britain*. 4:9-24.

Bell K 2004. Church of God pastors: who we are. In Bowers J (ed), *portrait and prospect: Church of god pastors face the 21st century*. Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

Berg R 1999. 1-3 John. In Arrington F and Stronstad R (eds), *full life Bible commentary to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Billheimer P 1996. *Destined for the throne* (rev ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House.

Bjornstad J 1986. What's behind the prosperity gospel? *Moody Monthly* 87:19-21.

Black C 1998. The first, second, and third letters of John: introduction, commentary, and reflections. In, *the new interpreter's Bible* (vol XII). Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Bloodsworth R 2009. A theological analysis and assessment of the prosperity gospel. Master's thesis, Denver Seminary. Denver, Colorado.

Boerma C 1979. *The rich, the poor, and the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster.

Bowers J 2004a. *Portrait and prospect: Church of God pastors face the 21st Century* (ed). Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

_____ 2004b. *You can have what you say: a pastoral response to the prosperity gospel*. Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

_____ 2004c. *Pastoral excellence: Pentecostal style*. Online article: <http://www.ptseminary.edu/PubRes/PastoralExcellence.html>, 2011-08-26.

Bowman R 2001. *The word-faith controversy: understanding the health and wealth gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Braden C 1966. *Spirits in rebellion: the rise and development of new thought*. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press.

Branstetter Z 2003. *Robert Tilton: From downfall to windfall*. Online article: <http://www.trinityfi.org/press/tulsaworld02.html>, 2011-03-28.

Bristol C 1948. *The magic of believing*. New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.

Bromiley G 1979. The interpretation of the Bible. In Gaeblein F (ed), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (vol 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Brooks J 1992. Mark. In Dockery D (ed), *the new American commentary* (vol 23). Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman.

Brown M 1997. בְּרִית. In VanGemeren W (ed), *new international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis* (vol 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Brown RE 1982. The epistles of John: a new translation with introduction and commentary. In Collins J (ed), *the anchor Bible commentary* (vol 30). New York, NY: Doubleday.

Brown RM 1965. *The spirit of Protestantism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Brown W 2006. Man is not a little god: an evaluation of the word-faith teaching of the deification of man. Paper presented to Dallas Theological Seminary, October 2006. Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas.

Brown F, Driver S and Briggs C 2001. *The enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Electronic edition: *Libronix Digital Library System* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007).

- Bruce F 1980. *New Testament history*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- _____ 1989. Interpretation of the Bible. In Elwell W (ed), *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- _____ 1990. The letter of Paul to the Romans (rev ed). In Morris L (ed), *the Tyndale New Testament commentaries* (vol 6). Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity.
- Bultmann R 1968. Πιστεύω. In Kittel G and Gerhard F (eds), *theological dictionary of the New Testament* (vol vi). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Burgess S (ed) 2002. *The new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Byassee J 2005. *Be happy: the health and wealth gospel*. Online article: www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3219, 2011-04-3.
- Calenberg R 1981. The New Testament doctrine of discipleship. Doctoral Dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary. Winona Lake, IN.
- Camery-Hoggatt J 1999. Mark. In Arrington F and Stronstad R (eds), *full life Bible commentary to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Campbell D 2004. Galatians. In Walvoord J and Zuck R (eds), *the Bible knowledge commentary*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook.
- Cannon S n.d. *The presumptuous teaching of the word-faith movement*. St. Louis, MO: Freedom Outreach.
- Capps C 1976. *The tongue: a creative force*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.

- _____ 1979 (Oct). When ye pray, believe. *Charisma*, 55.
- _____ 1982a. Taped correspondence. In McConnell D, *a different gospel* (rev ed). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- _____ 1982b. *Authority in three worlds*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.
- Carroll L 1966. Apostles and the reformation. In Horton W (ed), *the glossolalia phenomenon*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.
- Cedar P 1991. The unique role of the pastor. In Cedar P, Hughes K, and Patterson B, *mastering the pastoral role*. Portland, OR: Multnomah.
- Church of God executive council minutes 1953. 3-15:23-24.
- Church of God is*. Online article:
http://www.churchofgod.org/about/church_is.cfm, 2010-10-01.
- Clark E 1949. *The small sects of America* (rev ed). Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury.
- Cole R 1989. Mark (rev ed). In Morris L (ed), *Tyndale New Testament commentaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cole V 2006. Mark. In Adeyemo T (ed), *Africa Bible commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Coleman S 1993. Conservative Protestantism and the world order: the faith movement in the United States and Sweden. *Sociology of Religion* 54:353-373.
- Conn C 1979. *Pillars of Pentecost*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

- _____ 1996. *Like a mighty army: a history of the Church of God* (Definitive ed). Cleveland, TN: Pathway.
- Copeland G 1972. *God's will for you*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications.
- _____ 1978. *God's will is prosperity*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.
- _____ 2010. *Live long, finish strong: the divine secret to living healthy, happy and healed*. Nashville, TN: Faithwords.
- Copeland K 1974. *The laws of prosperity*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1976. Faith in your faith. *Believer's voice of victory*. 4:1-3.
- _____ 1979a. *Healed...to be or not to be*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1979b. *Walking in the realm of the miraculous*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1979c. *Welcome to the family: a guide to salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and healing*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1980. *The power of the tongue*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1985a. *Prosperity: the choice is yours*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.

- _____ 1985b. Christianity: a series of decisions (audio recording). Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1985c. *Inner image of the covenant* (audio cassette #01-4406). Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1987a. *Covenant blood*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1987b. *Our covenant with God*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications.
- _____ 1989. *Substitution and identification* (audio cassette #00-0202). Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1990. *What happened from the cross to the throne* (audio cassette #02-0017). Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1991. *West Coast Believer's Convention* (audio recording). Kenneth Copeland Ministries.
- _____ 1996. The *troublemaker*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications.
- _____ 1999. *You are healed*. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications.

Cowan MA 2000. *Introduction to practical theology*. Accessed from www.loyno.edu, 2010-07-15.

Cox H 1999. Pentecostalism and the global culture: a response to issues facing Pentecostalism in a postmodern world. In Dempster M, Klaus B and Petersen D (eds), *the globalization of Pentecostalism: a religion made to travel*. Carlisle, UK: Regnum.

_____ 2001. *Fire from heaven: the rise of Pentecostal spirituality and the reshaping of religion in the 21st century*. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press.

Crews M 1990. *The Church of God: a social history*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Cross J 1962. *Healing in the church*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Cullen J 2003. *The American dream: a short history of an idea that shaped a nation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Dake F 1949. *God's plan for man*. Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc.

_____ 1950. *Bible truths unmasked*. Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc.

_____ 1963. *The Dake annotated reference Bible*. Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc.

_____ 2006. *The Dake annotated reference Bible*. Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Publishing. Electronic edition: WORDsearch (Austin, TX:2006).

Daystar Television Network. Online article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daystar_Television_Network#cite_ref-0,
2011-03-26.

DeArteaga W 1992. *Quenching the Spirit: examining centuries of opposition to the moving of the Holy Spirit*. Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House.

deSilva D 2004. *An introduction to the New Testament: contexts, methods and ministry formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Dictionary.com. Online reference: <http://dictionary.reference.com>, 2010-11-27.

Dollar C. *The first begotten son*. Online article:

<http://www.creflodollarministries.org/BibleStudy/Articles.aspx?id=18>,
2011-04-14.

Douglas J (ed) 1999. *New international Bible dictionary* (rev ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Duffield G and Van Cleave N 1983. *Foundations of Pentecostal theology*. Los Angeles, CA: LIFE Bible College.

Dumbrell W 2009. *Covenant and creation: a theology of Old Testament covenants*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Dunning H 1992. 1, 2, and 3 John. In Carpenter E (ed), *Asbury Bible commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Eddy P and Beilby J 2008. Atonement. In Dyrness W and Karkkainen V (eds), *global dictionary of theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Enns P 1989. *The Moody handbook of theology* (rev ed). Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Electronic edition: *Libronix Digital Library System* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007).

Enroth R 1983. *A guide to cults & new religions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Erickson M 1995. *Christian theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Essex K 1999. The Abrahamic covenant. *The Masters Seminary Journal* 10:191-212.

Eusebius 1998. *Ecclesiastical history* (rev ed). Translated by Cruse C. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Evans C 2001. Mark 8:27-16:20. In Metzger B, Hubbard D and Barker G (eds), *word biblical commentary* (vol 34b). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Evans G 2000. Spiritual deviations: the gospel of prosperity. *Affirmation and Critique* January:55-58.

Ezeigbo J 1989. A biblical evaluation of the health and wealth gospel. Master's thesis, Capital Bible Seminary. Lanham, Maryland.

Farah C 1980. *From the pinnacle of the temple: faith or presumption?* Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Logos Publishers.

_____ 1981. A critical analysis: the 'roots and fruits' of faith formula theology. *Pneuma* 3:3-21.

_____ 1982. *This cancer kills: a critical analysis of the roots and fruits of faith formula theology*. Portland, OR: Charis Life.

_____ 1987. America's Pentecostals: what they believe. *Christianity Today* 31:22-26.

Farina J 1990. Transcendentalism. In Reid D (ed), *dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Ferraiuolo P 1994 (Jan). Scholars scrutinize popular Dake's Bible. *Christianity Today*, 50.

Faupel W 1996. *The everlasting gospel: the significance of eschatology in the development of Pentecostal thought*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press.

Fee G 1994. *Gospel and Spirit: issues in New Testament hermeneutics*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

_____ 2002. *New Testament exegesis* (3rd ed). Philadelphia, PA: Westminster.

_____ 2006. *The disease of the health and wealth gospel*. Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing.

Fitzmyer J 1993. Romans. In Collins J (ed), *the anchor Yale Bible commentaries* (vol 33). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Folarin G 2007. Contemporary state of the prosperity gospel in Nigeria. *Asia Journal of Theology* 21(1):69-95.

Fore W 1987. *Television and religion: the shaping of faith, values and culture*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

Frame R 1991 (Oct). Best-selling author admits mistakes, vows changes. *Christianity Today*, 44-45.

France R 2002. The gospel of Mark: a commentary on the Greek text. In Marshall I and Hagner D (eds), *the new international Greek Testament commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Friberg T, Friberg B and Miller N 2000. *Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Gangel K 1989. *Feeding and leading*. Wheaton, IL: Victor.

Gause H 1973. *Church of God polity*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Geisler N 2005. *Systematic theology* (vol 4). Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.

Geracie P 1993. A biblical and historical examination of the positive confession movement. Master's thesis, Western Seminary. Portland, Oregon.

Getz G 1990. *A biblical theology of material possessions*. Chicago, IL: Moody.

Godfrey W 1990: The tv church. In Horton M (ed), *the agony of deceit: what some tv preachers are really teaching*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Goen, C (ed) 1972. *The great awakening*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gongwer J 2007. The theological poverty of the prosperity gospel. Doctoral dissertation, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. Cordova, Tennessee.

Gorman M 2001. *Elements of biblical exegesis* (rev ed).Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Gottschalk S 1973. *The emergence of Christian Science in American religious life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Grady J 2010. *The Holy Spirit is not for sale: rekindling the power of God in an age of compromise*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books.

Grassmick J 2004. Mark. In Walvoord J and Zuck R (eds), *the Bible knowledge commentary* (New Testament ed). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook.

Green J 1992. Mark. In Carpenter E (ed), *Asbury Bible commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Grudem W 1994. *Systematic theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Gundry R 1993. *Mark: a commentary on his apology for the cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

_____ 1994. *A survey of the New Testament* (3rd ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Haas C, De Jonge M and Swellengrebel J 1972. *3 John: a translator's handbook on the letters of John*. New York, NY: United Bible Societies.

Hagin K 1963. *Redeemed from poverty, sickness, death*. Garland, TX: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.

_____ 1974. *New thresholds of faith*. Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.

_____ 1975. *What faith is*. Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.

- _____ 1978. *Healing belongs to us*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 1978. *Ministry of a prophet*. Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.
- _____ 1979a. *How to write your own ticket with God*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 1979b. *Seven things you should know about divine healing*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 1979c. *The name of Jesus*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 1980. Having faith in your faith. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 1983. *Exceedingly growing faith*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- _____ 2000. The Midas touch: a balanced approach to biblical prosperity. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library.
- Hagin K W 1983. *Faith worketh by love*. Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.
- Hanegraaff H 2009. *Christianity in crisis: 21st century*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Hargrave V 1966. Glossolalia: reformation to the twentieth century. In Horton W (ed), *the glossolalia phenomenon*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.
- Harley G 1991. Emma Curtis Hopkins: forgotten founder of New Thought. Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University. Tallahassee, Florida.
- Harrell D 1975. *All things are possible: the healing and Charismatic revivals in modern America*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

- _____. 1985. *Oral Roberts: an American life*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Harrison E 1976. Romans. In Gaebelein F (ed), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (vol 10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Harrison M 2005. *Righteous riches: the word of faith movement in contemporary African American religion*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hendricks W 1984. The theology of the electronic church. *Review and Expositor* 81 (Winter):64.
- Hengel M 1974. *Property and riches in the early church*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Hickey M 1984 (Aug). Dreams can come true. *Time With Him*, 16.
- Hiebert D 1987. Studies in 3 John, pt. 1: an exposition of 3 John 1-4. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (April-June):53-65.
- Hinn B n.d. *Double portion anointing* (audio recording). Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center.
- _____. 1990a. *Praise the Lord* (8 Nov). Trinity Broadcasting Network.
- _____. 1990b. *Our position in Christ* (audio recording). Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center.
- _____. 1990c. *Prophecy for the '90's* (1 Jan) (audio recording). Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center.

- _____ 1990d. *The person of Jesus* (2 Dec) (audio recording). Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center.
- _____ 1991. *Rise and be healed*. Orlando, FL: Celebration Publishers.
- _____ 1999. *Praise the Lord* (19 Oct). Trinity Broadcasting Network.
- _____ 2000a. *This is your day* (29 Mar). Benny Hinn Ministries.
- _____ 2000b. *Praise the Lord: praise-a-thon* (2 Apr). Trinity Broadcasting Network.
- _____ 2011a. Online article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benny_Hinn, 2011-4-9.
- _____ 2011b. Online article:
<http://www.bennyhinn.org/aboutus/articledesc.cfm?id=1386>, 2011-04-9.
- Higgins J, Dusing M and Tallman F 1994. *An introduction to theology: a classical Pentecostal perspective* (2nd ed). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
- Hladky K 2006. Modern day heroes of faith: the rhetoric of Trinity Broadcasting Network and the emergent word of faith movement. Master's thesis, Miami University. Oxford, Ohio.
- Hocken P 2003. Charismatic movement. In Burgess S and Van Der Maas E (eds), *the new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Hodges Z 2004. 3 John. In Walvoord J and Zuck R (eds), *the Bible knowledge commentary* (New Testament ed). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook.

Holiness 2002. Online article:

<http://churchofgod.org/index.php?page=holiness-2002&phpMyAdmin=EyPnWE74if52AvqTJ13%2COH6xVv>, 2011-01-3.

Holloman H 2003. Training for godliness: discipleship and disciplines for sanctification. In Swindoll C and Zuck R (eds), *understanding Christian theology*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Horton M 2010. *Joel Osteen and the glory story: a case study*. Online article:
<http://erictyoung.com/2010/07/28/joel-osteen-and-the-glory-story-a-case-study-by-michael-s-horton-ph-d/>, 2011-04-30.

Horton W 1964. *Pentecost: yesterday and today*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Hollenweger W 1988. *The Pentecostals* (reprint ed). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

_____. 1997. *Pentecostalism: origins and developments worldwide*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Hollinger D 1997. Enjoying God forever: a historical/sociological profile of the health and wealth gospel. In Moo D (ed), *the gospel and contemporary perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.

Holloman H 2003. Handling our circumstances: how God's providence works in sanctification. In Swindoll C and Zuck R (eds), *understanding Christian theology*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Hughes R 1966. Pentecostal view of the ecumenical movement. *Church of God Evangel* 10-1:9.

Hughes R and Laney J 1990. *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale.

_____ 1977. Call to the ministry. In Fisher R (ed), *the Challenge of the Ministry*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

_____ 1986. The uniqueness of Pentecostal preaching. In McClung G (ed), *Azusa street and beyond: Pentecostal missions and church growth in the twentieth century*. South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing.

_____ 1989. *Church of God distinctives* (rev). Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Hull B 1988. *The disciple making pastor*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

Hunt D 1985. *The seduction of Christianity: spiritual discernment in the last days*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House.

Jacobsen D 2003. *Thinking in the Spirit: theologies of the early Pentecostal movement*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Jenkins C 2007. *Humbard helped to shape modern ministry*. Online article: <http://www.ohio.com/news/9942121.html>, 2011-03-25.

Jepsen A 1975. נבָת. In Botterweck J and Ringgren H (eds), *theological dictionary of the Old Testament* (vol 2). Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans.

Johns J 2002. What pastors do. In Bowers J (ed) 2002. *portrait and prospect: Church of god pastors face the 21st century*. Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

Johnson V 1999. Romans. In Arrington F and Stronstad R (eds), *full life Bible commentary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Jones D 2006. *The bankruptcy of the prosperity gospel: an exercise in biblical and theological ethics*. Online article: <http://bible.org/article/bankruptcy-prosperity-gospel-exercise-biblical-and-theological-ethics>, 2011-04-15.

Jones P 2009. 1, 2, and 3 John. In Nash R (ed), *Smyth & Helwys Bible commentary*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing.

Judah J 1967. *The history and philosophy of the metaphysical movement in America*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster.

Kaiser W 1997. The Old Testament case for material blessings and the contemporary believer. In Moo D (ed), *the gospel and contemporary perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.

Karleen P 1994. *The handbook to Bible study* (rev ed). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Electronic edition: *Libronix Digital Library System* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007).

Kasali D 2006. Romans. In Adeyemo T (ed), *Africa Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Keener C 1993. *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Kelsey K 1979. *The use of Scripture in recent theology*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress.

Kenyon E 1942. *The two kinds of faith: faith's secrets revealed*. Seattle, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society.

_____ 1943. Jesus the healer. Seattle, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society.

_____ 1945. *New creation realities: a revelation of redemption*. Seattle, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society.

_____ 1969. *In his presence*. Seattle, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society.

Kim S 1989. A biblical critique on the prosperity gospel of Paul Yonggi Cho. Master's thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary. Dallas, Texas.

King James Version (KJV) 2002. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

King L 2005. *Interview with Joel Osteen*. Online article:
<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0506/20/lkl.01.html>, 2011-04-3.

King P 2001. A practical-theological investigation of nineteenth and twentieth century faith theologies. Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa. Johannesburg, South Africa.

Kinnebrew J 1988. The Charismatic doctrine of positive confession: a historical, exegetical and theological critique. Doctoral dissertation, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. Cordova, TN.

Kistemaker S 1996. Exposition of James, epistles of John, Peter, and Jude. In, *New Testament commentary* (vol 11). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Klein W, Blomberg C and Hubbard R 2004. *Introduction to biblical Interpretation* (rev ed). Dallas, TX: Word.

Koch B 2009. The prosperity gospel and economic prosperity. Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University. Bloomington, Indiana.

Kruse C 2000. The letters of John. In Carson D (ed), *the pillar New Testament commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Kuiper B 1987. *The church in history*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Lakewood church. Online article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lakewood_Church#cite_note-0, 2011-04-4.

Landrus H 2002. Hearing 3 John 2 in the voices of history. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11.1:70-88.

Lane W 1974. The gospel according to Mark. In Bruce F (ed), *the new international commentary on the New Testament* (vol 2). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Latourette K 1953. *A history of Christianity*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Lederle H 2010. *Theology with Spirit: the future of Pentecostal & Charismatic movements in the 21st century*. Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit.

Leedy D 1993. *Practical research: planning and design*. New York, NY: MacMillan.

Leon H 1995. *The Jews of ancient Rome* (rev ed). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Lie G 2000. The theology of E. W. Kenyon: plain heresy or within the boundaries of Pentecostal-Charismatic orthodoxy? *Pneuma* 22:85-114.

Lieu J 2008. I, II, & III John: a commentary. In Black C, Boring M and Carroll J (eds), *the New Testament library*. Louisville, KY: Westminster.

Life Christian university. Online article: http://www.lcus.edu/best_choice.php, 2011-04-4.

Lioy D 2007. The heart of the prosperity gospel: self or the savior? *Conspectus* 4:41-64. Online journal: <http://www.satsonline.org/userfiles/Lioy,TheheartoftheProsperitygospel.pdf>, 2010-07-15.

Lombard J and Daffe J 2005. *Speaking in tongues: initial evidence of Spirit baptism?* Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Lukaszewski A (ed) 2006. *The Lexham syntactic Greek New Testament: expansions and annotations*. Electronic edition (version 0.7): *Libronix Digital Library System* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007).

Luhrmann D 2003. Faith: New Testament. In Fahlbusch E (ed), *the encyclopedia of Christianity* (vol 2). Translated by Bromiley G. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Luther M 1896. *Luther's primary works* (vol 12). Translated and edited by Wace H and Buchheim C. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton.

Lyon R 1988. Faith. In Elwell W (ed), *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (vol 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

MacArthur, J 1992. *Charismatic chaos*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

_____ 2005. *Pastoral ministry: how to shepherd biblically*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Mackay J 1969. *Christian reality and appearance*. Richmond, VA: John Knox.

Maddox R 1990. The recovery of theology as a practical discipline.
Theological Studies 51.6:650-672.

Mangum R and Sweetnam M 2009. *The Scofield Bible: its history and impact on the Evangelical church*. Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster Publishing.

Mann C 1986. Mark: a new translation with introduction and commentary. In Albright W and Freedman D (eds), *the anchor Bible* (vol 27). New York, NY: Doubleday.

Martens E 1981. *God's design: a focus on Old Testament theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Matta J 1987. *The born-again Jesus of the word-faith teaching*. Fullerton, CA: Spirit of Truth Ministry.

Mayhue R 1995. For what did Christ atone in Isaiah 53:4-5? *The Masters Seminary Journal* 6.2:121-141

McConnell D 1982. The Kenyon connection: a theological and historical analysis of the cultic origins of the faith movement. Doctoral dissertation, Oral Roberts University. Tulsa, OK.

_____ 1988. *A different gospel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

- _____ 1995. *A different gospel* (updated ed). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- McLeod M 1994. A theological and biblical critique of the atonement theology of the faith movement. Master's thesis, Trinity Western Seminary. Langley, British Columbia, Canada.
- McMahan O 1994. *Becoming a shepherd: contemporary pastoral ministry*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.
- Mead F and Hill S 2001. *Handbook of denominations in the United States* (11th ed). Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Means J 1989. *Leadership in Christian ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Merrill E 1991. A theology of the Pentateuch. In Zuck R (ed), *a biblical theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.
- Metzger B 2003. *The New Testament: Its background, growth, and content* (3rd ed). Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Meyer D 1965. *The positive thinkers: a study of the American quest for health, wealth and personal power from Mary Baker Eddy to Norman Vincent Peale*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Meyer J 1991. *Trophies of God's grace* (part 1) (audio recording). Fenton, MO: Joyce Meyer Ministries.
- _____ 2002. *Eight ways to keep the devil under your feet*. New York, NY: Warner Faith.

_____. Online article: <http://www.joycemeyer.org/AboutUs/JoyceBio.aspx>,
2011-04-4.

Michaelis W 1967. εύοδος. In Kittel G and Friedrich G (eds), *theological dictionary of the New Testament* (vol V). Translated by Bromiley G. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Mickelsen A 1987. Romans. In Harrison E (ed), *the Wycliffe Bible commentary: the New Testament*. Chicago: IL: Moody.

Miller E 1992. *Questions that matter: an invitation to philosophy*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Miller P (ed) 1957. *The American transcendentalists, their prose and poetry*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Minutes of the 5th general assembly of the Church of God 1910. Cleveland,
TN: Pathway.

Minutes of the 25th general assembly of the Church of God 1930. Cleveland,
TN: Pathway.

Minutes of the 42nd general assembly of the Church of God 1948. Cleveland,
TN: Pathway.

Minutes of the 56th general assembly of the Church of God 1956. Cleveland,
TN: Pathway.

Minutes of the 73rd general assembly of the Church of God 2010. Cleveland,
TN: Pathway.

Mission and vision: Online article:

<http://churchofgod.org/mission-and-vision&phpMyAdmin=EyPnWE74if52AvqTJ13%2COH6xVv1>, 2010-10-09.

Mitchell M 2008. Letters of John. In Sakenfield K (ed), *the new interpreters dictionary of the Bible* (vol 3). Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Mitchem S 2007. *Name it and claim it? prosperity preaching in the black church*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.

Moo D 1996. The epistle to the Romans. In Fee G (ed), *the new international commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

_____. 1997. Divine healing in the health and wealth gospel. In Moo D (ed), *the gospel and contemporary perspectives: viewpoints from Trinity Journal*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.

Montoya A 1995. Leading. In MacArthur J (ed), *rediscovering pastoral ministry*. Dallas, TX: Word.

Moriarty M 1992. *The new Charismatics: a concerned voice responds to dangerous new trends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Morris L 1884. Atonement. In Elwell W (ed), *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Morris R 2009. *Christian ethics: where life and faith meet*. Bloomington, IN: Crossbooks.

Mounce R 1989. Gospel. In Elwell W (ed), *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

- _____ 1995. Romans. In Clendenen E (ed), *the new American commentary* (vol 27). Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman.
- Mouton J 2001. *How to succeed in your master's & doctoral studies: a South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.
- Munsey S 2008. *Seven blessings of the Passover*. Munster, IN: Steve Munsey Ministries.
- Murray J 1987. *The covenant of grace: a biblico-theological study*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing.
- Nelson P 1981. *Bible doctrines*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House.
- Neuman H 1990. Cultic origins of word-faith theology within the Charismatic movement. *Pneuma* 12:32-55.
- New American Standard Bible* (NASB). 1995. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.
- New English Translation* (NET) 2006. Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. Available: www.bible.org.
- New International Version* (NIV) 2011. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- New Living Translation* (NLT) (2nd ed) 2004. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale.
- New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) 1989. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Newman B and Nida E 1973. *Romans: a translator's handbook on Paul's letter to the Romans*. New York, NY: United Bible Societies.

Oates W 1982. *The Christian pastor* (rev ed). Philadelphia, PA: Westminster.

Oden T 1983. *Pastoral theology: essentials of ministry*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Oehler G 1950. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Orr R 1986. The letters of John. In Bruce F (ed), *the international Bible commentary* (rev ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Osteen J 2004. *Your best life now: 7 steps to living at your full potential*. Nashville, TN: FaithWords.

_____ 2007. *Become a better you: 7 keys to improving your life every day*. New York, NY: Free Press.

_____ 2010. *It's your time: activate your faith, achieve your dreams, and increase in God's favor*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Ostling R 1986 (Feb). Power, glory and politics. *Time* 62-69.

Our 16 fundamental truths. Online article:

[http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm
#12](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm#12), 2010-12-10.

Our statement of faith. Online article:

<http://cogic.net/cogiccms/default/cogic-history/what-we-believe>, 2010-12-10.

Packer J 1989. Faith. In Elwell W (ed), *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Painter J 2002. 1, 2, and 3 John. In Harrington D (ed), *Sacra Pagina series* (vol 18). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

Pastoral excellence: Pentecostal style. Online article:

<http://www.ptseminary.edu/PubRes/PastoralExcellence.html>, 2010-10-31.

Peale N 1952. *The power of positive thinking*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Perkins P 1995. The gospel of Mark. In Keck L (ed), *the new interpreter's Bible* (vol VIII). Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Perriman A 2003. *Faith, health and prosperity*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press.

_____ 2005. *A framework for a biblical theology of wealth and poverty*. Online article: <http://www.opensourcetheology.net/node/763>, 2011-08-15.

Phiri I and Maxwell J 2007. *Gospel riches: Africa's rapid embrace of prosperity Pentecostalism provokes concern—and hope*. Online article: www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/july/12.22.html, 2011-3-23.

Pilgrim D 1992. Egoism or altruism: a social psychological critique of the prosperity gospel of televangelist Robert Tilton. *Journal of Religious Studies* 18:1-2.

Pinnock C 2009. The work of the Spirit in the interpretation of Holy Scripture from the perspective of a Charismatic biblical theologian. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18:157-171.

- Polhill J 1995. First, second, and third John. In Mills W and Wilson R (eds), *Merger commentary on the Bible*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- Postman N 1985. *Amusing ourselves to death: public discourse in the age of show business*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Pousson E 1992. *Spreading the flame*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Price F 1976. *Is healing for all?* Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.
- _____. 1980. *Ever Increasing Faith Messenger*. Inglewood, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center.
- _____. 1990a. *Prosperity on God's terms*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.
- _____. 1990b. *Ever increasing faith* (9 Dec). Trinity Broadcasting Network.
- _____. 1991. God's plan for prosperity. In Hayford J, Matsdorf G and Horner J (eds), *Spirit-filled life study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Price J 1971. *Interpreting the New Testament* (2nd ed). Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Purves A 2001. *Pastoral theology in the classical tradition*. Louisville, KY: John Knox.
- Quimby P 1921. *The Quimby manuscripts*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers.
- Quinn S 1995. Discipling. In MacArthur J (ed), *rediscovering pastoral ministry*. Dallas, TX: Word.

Rawlinson A 1960. *The gospel according to St. Mark*. London, UK: Methuen.

Reel F 1979. *The networks*. New York, NY: Scribner & Sons.

Rensberger D 2006. Conflict and community in the Johannine letters.
Interpretation 60 (3):278-291.

Reyburn W and Fry E 1997. *A translator's handbook on Genesis*. New York, NY: United Bible Societies.

Radio religion 1946. Online article:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,934406,00.html>,
2011-03-23.

Riss R 2003a. Kenneth Copeland. In Burgess S (ed), *the new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

_____ 2003b. Kenneth E. Hagin. In Burgess S (ed), *the new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Ritschl D 2003. Faith. In Fahlbusch E (ed), *the encyclopedia of Christianity* (vol 2). Translated by Bromiley G. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Robison J 2003. *Another view of the prosperity gospel*. Online article:
www.charismamag.com/display.php?id=7460, 2011-03-23.

Robinson H 2001. *Biblical preaching* (2nd ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Roebuck D 2011. Online article:

<http://www.faithnews.cc/2011/06/15/establishing-the-church-of-god>,
2011-02-10.

Rogers C 1951. *Client-centered therapy: its current practice, implications and theory*. Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin.

Rowe S 1997. *Second coming*. Online article:

<http://www.dallasobserver.com/1997-11-06/news/second-coming>,
2011-03-25.

Ruthven J 2006. Covenant. In Burgess S (ed), *encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ryrie C 1990. I, II, III John. In Pfeiffer C and Harrison E (eds), *the Wycliffe Bible commentary: New Testament*. Chicago, IL: Moody.

Sailhamer J1990. Genesis. In Gaebelein F (ed), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (vol 2). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Sarles K 1986. A theological evaluation of the prosperity gospel. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143:329-350.

Savelle J 1980. *Godly wisdom for prosperity*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.

_____. 1982. *If Satan can't steal your joy*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House.

Schneider K 2009. *Oral Roberts, fiery preacher, dies at 91*. Online article:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/16/us/16roberts.html?_r=1, 2011-02-25.

Schultze Q 2003. *Televangelism and American culture: the business of popular religion*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Scott J 1980. יְמָנָה. In Harris R (ed), *theological wordbook of the Old Testament* (vol 1). Chicago, IL: Moody.

Severin W and Tankard J 2001. *Communication theories* (rev ed). New York, NY: Longman.

Shaal C 1977. Development of proper ministerial attitudes. In Fisher R (ed), *the challenge of the ministry*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Shelton J 2011. A pendulum swing between prosperity and suffering: what is the role of faith? In Synan V (ed), *Spirit-empowered Christianity in the 21st century*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Short S 1986. Mark. In Bruce F (ed), *the international Bible commentary* (rev ed). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Sigstedt C 1952. *The Swedenborg epic: the life and words of Emmanuel Swedenborg*. New York, NY: Bookman.

Simmons D 1985. A theological and historical analysis of Kenneth E. Hagin's claim to be a prophet. Master's thesis, Oral Roberts University. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

_____. 1997. *E. W. Kenyon and the postbellum pursuit of peace, power, and plenty*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Simmons W 1999. Galatians. In Arrington F and Stronstad R (eds), *full life Bible commentary to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Simpson W 2007. The significance of Andrew Perriman's "faith, health and prosperity" in the word of faith debate. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16(1): 64-96.

Sims J 1995. *Our Pentecostal heritage: reclaiming the priority of the Holy Spirit*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Slay J 1996. *This we believe*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Smail T, Walker A and Wright N 1994. *The love of power or the power of love: a careful assessment of the problems within the Charismatic and word-of-faith movements*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.

Smalley S 1984. 1, 2, 3 John. In Hubbard D and Barker G (eds), *word biblical commentary* (vol 51). Waco, TX: Word.

Smith D 1991. First, Second, and Third John. In Mays J (ed), *interpretation: a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press.

Smith DL 1992. *A handbook of contemporary theology*. Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint.

Smith H 1987. America's Pentecostals: where are they going? *Christianity Today* 31:27-30.

Smith K 2008. *Academic writing and theological research: a guide for students*. Johannesburg, SA: South African Theological Seminary Press.

_____ 2010. *The pastor as interpretive guide*. Online article:
<http://www.satsonline.org/content/pastor-interpretive-guide-kgs>, 2010-09-25.

_____ 2011. The pastor as practical theologian. Online article:
<http://www.satsonline.org/content/pastor-practical-theologian-0>, 2011-09-10.

Smith KS 1995. Mind, might, and mastery: human potential in metaphysical religion and E. W. Kenyon. Master's thesis, Liberty University. Lynchburg, Virginia.

Song A 2005. *Theological Research Methodology*. Rivonia, SA: South African Theological Seminary.

Spancer J nd. *The Jesus of the Dake annotated reference Bible*. Online article: <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/d47.html>, 2011-03-22.

Spencer J and Bright S 2004. *Dake's dangerous doctrine*. Online article: <http://www.equip.org/articles/dake-s-dangerous-doctrine>, 2011-03-22.

Sproul R 1990. A serious charge. In Horton M (ed), *the agony of deceit: what some tv preachers are really saying*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Spurling R 1920. *The Lost Link*. Turtletown, TN: Self-published.

Stamps D 2009 (ed). *Fire Bible: global study edition*. Springfield, MO: Life Publishers.

Starner R 2006. Prosperity theology. In Burgess S (ed), *encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*. New York, NY: Berkshire Publishing.

Stauffer E 1956. *New Testament theology*. Translated by Marsh J. New York, NY: MacMillan.

Stott J 1988. The letters of John (rev ed). In Morris L (ed), *Tyndale New Testament commentaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Stowers S 1986. *Letter writing in Greco-Roman antiquity*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster.

Strecker G 1996. The Johannine letters: a commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John. Translated by Maloney L. In Koester H (ed), *hermeneia: a critical and historical commentary on the Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

Success-N-Life. Online article: <http://www.roberttiltonlive.com/paybills.html>, 2011-03-27.

Sullivan S 2000. Design and evaluation of a college theological course on the false doctrines and practices of the word of faith movement. Doctoral dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary. Dallas, Texas, USA.

Swaggart J 1987 (Sep). In memory: Finis Jennings Dake 1902-1987. *The Evangelist*, 44.

Sweeney J 2010. 1-3 John. *Trinity Journal* 31 (1):147-149.

Swindle H and Pusey A 1992A (13 Aug). Tilton ends syndication of his Sunday services. *Dallas Morning Star*, 1A; 28A.

_____ 1992B (12 Jul). Tilton bankrolled '83 tv license bid, source and files say. *Dallas Morning Star*, 1A; 29A.

Synan H 2003. Classical Pentecostalism. In Burgess S and Van Der Mass E (eds), *the new international dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements* (rev). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

_____(ed) 2011. *Spirit-empowered Christianity in the 21st century*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Tang A 2006. *Examining the theology of the word-faith movement*. Online article: <http://www.kairos2.com/word-faith.htm>, 2010-08-22.

Televangelism. Online article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Televangelism#cite_note-1, 2011-03-23.

Thatcher T 2006. 3 John. In Longman T and Garland D (eds), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (rev ed) (vol 13). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Thielman F 2005. *Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Thomas J 1996. *Ministry and theology: studies for the church and its leaders*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

_____. 1998. *The devil, disease and deliverance: origins of illness in New Testament thought*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press.

_____. 2000. Reading the Bible from within our traditions: a Pentecostal hermeneutic as test case. In Green J and Turner M (eds), *between two horizons: spanning New Testament studies and systematic theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

_____. 2005. Healing in the atonement: a Johannine perspective. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14:23-39.

Tickle P 2008. *The great emergence: how Christianity is changing and why*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Tilton R 1982. *Dare to be a success*. Dallas, TX: Word of Faith Publications.

_____ 1983. *God's word about prosperity*. Dallas, TX: Word of Faith Publications.

Time 2005. Online article:

<http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101050207/photoessay/18.html>,
2011-04-5.

Tubbs S 2004. Online article:

http://www.sptimes.com/2004/06/17/Floridian/Selling_God_to_the_ma.shtml, 2011-04-5.

Tucker R 1989. *Another gospel: cults, alternative religions, and the new age movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Unger M 1971. Divine healing. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128.243-244.

Van Biema D & Chu J 2006. *Does God want you to be rich?* Online article:
www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1533448,00.html, 2010-07-15.

Van Wyk A 1995. From applied theology to practical theology. *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 33.1:85-101.

Verbrugge V (ed) 2000. *The NIV theological dictionary of New Testament words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Vest L 1994. *Spiritual balance: reclaiming the promise*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Viola F and Barna F 2008. *Pagan Christianity? exploring the roots of our church practices* (rev ed). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale.

Volf M and Bass D (eds) 2002. *Practicing theology: beliefs and practices in Christian life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Volf M 2010. Foreword. In Zahnd B, *Unconditional? the call of Jesus to radical forgiveness*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Vreeland D 2001. Reconstructing word of faith theology: a defence, analysis and refinement of the theology of the word of faith movement. Paper presented at the 30th annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 9 March 2001. Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Vyhmeister N 2001. *Quality research papers for students of religion and theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Wacker G 2001. *Heaven below: early Pentecostals and American culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker P 1965. *The ministry of church and pastor*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Walker J 1977. Preparation for the ministry. In Fisher R (ed), *the challenge of the ministry*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.

Watson D 1986. A rhetorical analysis of 3 John: a study in epistolary rhetoric. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51:479-501

Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary 1989. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Wenham G 1994. Genesis. In Carson D (ed), *new Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Wessel W 1984. Mark. In Gaebelein F (ed), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (vol 8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Wessel W and Strauss M 2010. Mark. In Longman T and Garland D (eds), *the expositor's Bible commentary* (rev ed) (vol 9). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

What we believe. Online article:

http://www.foursquare.org/about/what_we_believe/spirit_filled_life,
2010-12-10.

White P 2003 (11-3). *Praise the Lord: praise-a-thon*. Trinity Broadcasting Network.

_____ 2004a. *He loves me, he loves me not* (rev ed). Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

_____ 2004b (2-6). *Praise the Lord: praise-a-thon*. Trinity Broadcasting Network.

_____ 2005 (4-5). *Praise the Lord: praise-a-thon*. Trinity Broadcasting Network.

_____ 2008. Online article:

<http://www.paulawhite.org/content/view/172/88888897>, 2008-06-19.

_____ 2011a. *Paula's life story*. Online article:
<http://www.paulawhite.org/pages/meet-paula/paulas-life-story>, 2011-04-5.

_____ 2011b. *The day of atonement*. Online article:
<http://www.paulawhite.org/atonement>, 2011-03-23.

White R 1987 (11 Oct). Congregation keeps the faith with spellbinding Benny Hinn. *Orlando Sentinel*, F-6.

Williams R 1988. *Renewal theology: systematic theology from a Charismatic perspective* (vol 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

_____ 1992. *Renewal theology: systematic theology from a Charismatic perspective* (vol 3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Withrow L 2007. Success and the prosperity gospel: from communication to transformation, a Wesleyan perspective. *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6:15-41.

Witmer J 2004. Romans. In Walvoord J and Zuck R (eds), *the Bible knowledge commentary* (New Testament). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications.

Wolf H 1989. Abraham. In Elwell W (ed), *Evangelical dictionary of theology* (6th printing). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Woodbridge N and Song A 2007. *A model for practical theology*. Unpublished paper for use at the South African Theological Seminary.

Woolever C and Bruce D 2002. *A field guide to U. S. congregations: who's going where and why*. Louisville, KY: Westminster.

Wright CC (ed) 1975. *A stream of light: a short history of American Unitarianism*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Wright C 2010. Lausanne theology working group statement on the prosperity gospel. *Evangelical Review of Theology* 34:99-102.

Wuthnow, R 1988. *The restructuring of American religion: society and faith since World War II*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Youngblood R 1995 (ed). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary* (rev ed). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Zweig S 1932. *Mental healers: Franz Anton Mesmer, Mary Baker Eddy, Sigmund Freud*. Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing.