

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings
A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject
Word-of-Faith Teachings”

Reason 10: It Focuses On Meeting The Needs of Others and Being
World Changers

Tillin’s final “reason” for rejecting the Faith Movement is due to her claim that it focuses on self and the world instead of God and Heaven. It is well to focus on the after-life because what we do in this life certainly has an effect on our eternity (Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 3:12-15).

However, it is difficult to concentrate on the eternal rewards of the afterlife when one is abound with problems in this life. Many Christians have lacked the faith to live victoriously in this present life due to lack of Bible knowledge on the subject (Hos. 4:6). We fault the *scarcity* of teaching in the Evangelical church concerning God’s provision for His people in this life. The late Calvinist author, A. W. Pink wrote:

It is not sufficiently realized that the Bible has far, very far, more to say about this present life than it has about the future one, that it makes known the secrets of temporal felicity as well as everlasting bliss. Granted that the latter is of immeasurably more importance than the former, yet the one is the prelude to the other, and unless God be our satisfying Portion here, He certainly will not be so hereafter. In their zeal to tell men how to escape from Hell and make sure of Heaven, many evangelical preachers have had all too little to say upon our conduct on earth, and consequently many who entertain no doubt whatever that they will inhabit a mansion in the Father's house, are not nearly so much concerned about their present walk and warfare as they should be; and even though they reach their desired haven, such slackness results in great loss to them now and will do so for ever.¹

Pink seems to lament the overemphasis of the after-life within the Evangelical church as compared to how we are to live for the Lord in life while still on earth. Such an emphasis can lead one to believe that God Himself has little to no concern about His people’s state of affairs while they are on this planet, in spite of the contrary teaching of Scripture (Matt. 6:25-33). Pink further writes:

The teaching of Holy Writ is the very reverse of the plan followed by many an "orthodox pulpit": it not only gives much prominence to, but in Old and New Testament alike its main emphasis is on, our life in this world, giving instruction how we are to conduct ourselves here now. In like manner, there has been a grievous departure from the Analogy of Faith in the presentation of the attitude of God and His conduct towards men. Few indeed who have stressed the sovereignty of God have given even a proportionate place to His governmental dealings, either with nations or with individuals, the elect or the reprobate. Yet for every passage in His Word which speaks of God's eternal counsels, there are scores which describe His time dealings, and for every verse which alludes to God's secret or decretive will, there is a hundred which describe His revealed or preceptive will. Blessed indeed is it to ponder God's predestinating grace; equally important is it that we study those principles which regulate His providential dealings with us. The governmental ways of God, that is His dealings with us in this life, both in

¹ Pink, Arthur W. **Practical Christianity**, Chapter 13: *Enjoying God's Best*, Accessed at <http://www.pbministries.org/books/> (Last accessed: 24 February, 2004).

our spiritual and temporal affairs, are determined by something more than an arbitrary sovereignty.²

As an anti-calvinist, I have been strongly opposed to the teachings of Pink and other Calvinists in their understanding of God's sovereignty, but I find little that I can disagree with in the above statements. Pink unintentionally helps us to understand why faith teachers place more emphasis on appropriating God's provision for this life than they do on teaching Christians about Heaven. The Bible itself puts more emphasis on this, so the faith teachers are simply placing their emphasis where God Himself has placed it. God's promises are primarily for our present life (Gal. 2:20; 1 Pet. 3:10; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4). Relating to his readers the Father's concern for both our present life and the after life, Paul wrote:

*For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that **now is**, and of that which is to come.*
(1 Tim. 4:8; see also Psalm 84:11)

Godliness is profitable for the life that *now is* as well as that which is to come. While born-again Christians have the assurance of Heaven already, they still must deal with everyday life until they get there. There is no escaping the everyday affairs of this life while pondering on the wonders of the after-life. We are never told to *neglect* this life for concentration of the after-life. We are told not to become *entangled* with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:4).

So we do not deny that the faith teacher place a strong emphasis on this life. However, their teachings do not totally neglect Heaven. Dr. Price says, "Heaven is so far above anything you could ever dream; it is beyond the comprehension of the human mind."³ Price then goes on to explain why more emphasis is placed on victory in this present life:

Sometimes when I think about heaven, I want to go there right now. But then, when I think about what I have learned about faith in the last several years, I want to stay here. I want to stay here and take back what the devil has taken away. I want to help set the captives free: free from fear, free from sickness, free from disease, free from prejudice and hatred, and free from all of the rest of the things that have kept mankind in bondage."⁴

As great as Heaven is, Dr. Price recognizes his need to help people to live victoriously in their present circumstances here on earth. The focus is actually to help others. This brings up another of Tillin's false accusations. Tillin claims that the faith teachers focus on self and the world rather than God. In contrast to this false accusation, Copeland actually teaches that one must rely upon God vice the world in order to have our needs met in this life:

² Ibid.

³ Price, Frederick K. C. **The Way, The Walk, and The Warfare of the Believer** (Los Angeles, CA: Faith One Publishing, 1994), p. 47

⁴ Ibid, pp. 47, 48

God has a highly organized system to meet the needs of every facet of your life. The world's system of meeting our needs works exactly opposite from God's system. God's system is totally adequate. The world's idea of anything is very limited at best and stands 99.9 percent chance of being totally wrong. As believer, we must be careful not to limit God in our individual lives to what the world says is so. The problem with the world and its system of operations is that there is a spiritual mad dog loose in it and his name is Satan.⁵

This is a theme stated throughout Copeland's book on prosperity. Rather than concentrating on the world, faith teachers such as Copeland attempt to teach his listeners to focus on God. Furthermore, the claim that faith teachers focus on self is totally unfounded. Again Copeland writes:

If you know how to use God's ability to receive healing and never use it to help anyone but yourself, then it won't work for you very long. If you can believe God for healing, help someone else get healed. Spread it around! If you know how to believe God financially, start helping the people around you. You will begin to grow as you reach out to others.⁶

When you make it your need to get salvation into the hands of the people, when you make it your purpose to feed the gospel to the unsaved, God will support what you do. This is true prosperity! God has obligated Himself to communicate the message of Jesus Christ to the world.⁷

Concerning what he believes is *true* prosperity, Copeland writes, "True prosperity is the ability to look a man in the eye in his moment of impossibility and take his needs as your own."⁸ This is another running theme throughout Copeland's book. Besides Copeland, Dr. Frederick K. C. Price wrote:

If you will learn how to operate by the power that works in you, you can begin to flow in God's financial plan of prosperity. No, it is not for you to squander and waste on your own lusts, but to be a blessing to the Church and a channel of blessing to other people.⁹

ACUTE, a group of Evangelicals who are somewhat critical of the faith teachers concede that, "It is perhaps a little odd that we constantly bemoan the lack of funds available to the church yet are so wary of a movement that believes that God is willing and able to bless his people financially as they learn to walk in faith and obedience."¹⁰ I not only find it odd, but I think it is quite pathetic.

Lastly, Tillin complains that, "Some of the Word-of-Faith teachers and ministries have been the worst offenders in bringing the Name and the cause of Jesus Christ into disrepute. Ministries that emphasise prosperity have ended up in greed, manipulating believers into giving money they can little afford."

This is hardly a fair accusation considering how the reports of a particular "discernment minister's" financial impropriety have been made public for years. The

⁵ Copeland, Kenneth **Laws of Prosperity** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1974), p. 16

⁶ Ibid, p. 22

⁷ Ibid, p. 30

⁸ Ibid, p. 31

⁹ Price, *The Way, The Walk, and The Warfare of the Believer*, p. 161

¹⁰ Perriman, Andrew (editor) **Faith, Health, & Prosperity** (Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 2003), p. 224

only difference between the *alleged* Word-Faith offenders and the accused “cult-watcher” is the popularity and prominence of their ministries. Nevertheless, this *cult-watcher’s* use of ministry monies for personal gain, large salary, deceptions, fraudulent and excessive fund raising tactics, and refusal of accountability isn’t less disrepute on the body of Christ than that of any Word-Faith ministry who may have erred in a similar way. We will all give account to Christ one day for the deeds done in the body regardless of prominence.