

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” (Part One)

Introduction:

Tricia Tillin provides a concise critique of the Faith Movement that appears to have been influenced by expert anti-word-faith proponents such as Hendrik Hanegraaff (Christianity in Crisis) and Daniel R. McConnell (A Different Gospel).¹ Though her critique is concise and easy to follow, this response will demonstrate that it is filled with errors and inaccuracies. There is no doubt that Ms. Tillin's research on this subject was prejudiced by previously available anti-word-faith literature.

Furthermore, this response will expose Ms Tillin's own doctrinal errors and theological bias. In the introduction to the tract under dispute, Ms. Tillin readily admits that the "positive confession" teaching (as she labels it) brought transformation to dead churches, victory into the lives of Christians and increased their faith in the truths of the Scriptures when it came to the United Kingdom. In spite of this positive fruit, she still insists on labeling the teaching as "cultic."

This raises several questions: Is God the author of "cultic practices?" If not then that means Satan is credited with bringing the faith movement to the UK. If this is true then when did Satan, who is only known for wielding *death and destruction* rather than *life* (John 10:10; Heb. 2:14), bring *life* to those dead churches? Satan, whose agenda is to bring *defeat* into our lives, (Eph. 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 5:9, 10; Rev. 12:9-11) is now bringing *victorious living*? Satan, whose intent is to *keep people from* knowledge of God's Word (Hos. 4:6; Mark 4:15) is now *increasing God's people's faith in Scripture*? Perhaps Tillin has forgotten the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who told us that a kingdom divided against itself shall not stand (see Matt. 12:22-29).

It is unfortunate that Tillin and those like her are demonstrating the same characteristics we see in the Pharisees of Jesus' day. In Matthew 12:22-29 Jesus brought healing and deliverance to one that was demon possessed. The Pharisees of Jesus' day recognized that a true deliverance had taken place but credited this to Satan's power. Another example is found in John 9:10-24. Jesus healed a man born blind from birth. The Pharisees acknowledged the miracle as genuine and even encouraged the man to praise God for it, but continued their attacks upon Jesus. Concerning Jesus, they said that "this man is not of God" (v. 16) and "this man is a sinner" (v. 24).

One should easily detect the parallel between Tillin's introductory critique and that of the Pharisees' critique of Jesus. She admits that the Faith movement brought life to dead churches, a new life of victory, a deeper faith in the Scriptures, but then she questions the genuineness of the conversions and healings that came as a result of the "positive confession" teaching. Some of the Pharisees in Jesus day questioned whether

¹ In her online article titled, "My Word of Faith Testimony," Tillin says, "I learned as I studied the origins of the Movement, about a teaching called 'New Thought' that led to Christian Science, and then fed into the Faith Movement through E.W. Kenyon." She then claims, "I checked out the Kenyon books and confirmed for myself what others had pointed out ..." Statements like this enables one to detect the source of her influence. Where else could she have received this "insight" from since it was McConnell and Hanegraaff who popularized the false claims that Kenyon's theology was influenced by New Thought metaphysics?

the man that the Lord healed of blindness had actually ever been blind in the first place (vv. 17-24). Therefore, Tillin is repeating the skepticism and tactics of the Pharisees that were responsible for the persecution, suffering, and death of the Lord Himself.

Tillin's pharisaic tactics are evidenced in her introduction. Like so many other critics, she accuses the movement of incorporating Christian Science and New Thought teachings into its theology. This is due to the so-called "Kenyon Link" that has been made popular by D.R. McConnell (*A Different Gospel*). Bruce Barron, a sympathetic critic of the Faith Movement wrote, "Kenyon received his education in New England, causing some researchers to suspect *though no direct connection has been proved*, that he was influenced by the mind-science teachings that flourished there in the late nineteenth century"²(Italics are mine).

A perusal of Kenyon's own writings will demonstrate no sympathy with metaphysical cults like Christian Science or New Thought. On the contrary, the unbiased researcher without an agenda to destroy the reputation of Kenyon will find that he was strongly, if not violently, opposed to them.

The current faith teachers also dispute the mind-science accusations. Dr. Frederick K.C. Price answered these accusations by explaining the difference between faith in God's Word and the preposterous ideas of the metaphysical cults:

"Well! That sounds like Science of mind, or *Mind Science*." No, it is not. It may sound like it, but it is not the same. In *mind science*, and metaphysical cults, there are some similarities. They look pretty close to being the same thing, but they are not, because what we are talking about is based on God's Word, and what they are talking about is based on what you have in your head.³ (Italics are his)

Unfortunately, not much weight has been given to the Faith Teachers' distinction of their theology and that of the cults that they are being falsely compared to. Therefore, we are grateful that some critics of the faith movement such as Robert Bowman acknowledge that the accusation is inaccurate. Bowman feels that this Kenyon-Connection is fallacious. He writes:

Thus, however strongly we may disagree with Kenyon's theology, it is simply not right to classify it with the metaphysical theologies of New Thought, Christian Science, or other similar cults. This does not mean that one cannot conclude that Kenyon's theology was seriously defective or even heretical. It does mean that Kenyon's theology cannot be understood wholly or even principally in terms of New Thought.⁴

Bowman is certainly no fan of the Faith Movement. His book was written to provide his own personal "expose" of areas he believes are aberrant. While I disagree with most of Bowman's conclusions, I appreciate the fact that a critic of the movement is opposed to the belief that it is completely rooted in metaphysical cult theology.

Thankfully, more thorough research has been done to refute this *guilt by association* tactic. We highly recommend reading the book, [E. W. Kenyon and His](#)

² Barron, Bruce **The Health and Wealth Gospel** (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1987), p. 61

³ Price, Frederick K.C. **Faith, Foolishness, or Presumption** (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1979), p. 16

⁴ Bowman, Robert M. **The Word-Faith Controversy** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), pp. 54, 55

[Message of Faith: The True Story](#) by Joe McIntyre and [E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister](#) by Geir Lie. In these books you will find a thorough refutation of the "New Thought" accusation.

Tillin is not satisfied to merely accuse the faith teachers of borrowing from well-known cults. In her introduction she also accuses them of being tools of Satan to trap Christians into the "New Age" movement and ushering in the kingdom of the Antichrist. The similarities between Tillin's accusation against the Faith Movement and the Pharisees' accusations against Jesus are striking (Matt. 12:22-29; John 9:10-24). Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, it seems that Word-Faith critics are constantly looking for something by which they can bring an accusation (Matt. 12:10; Mark 3:2; Luke 11:54; John 8:6).

Charismatic Bible teachers Mark and Patti Virkler have written a book titled "*Am I being Deceived?*" Their book marks the distinctions between New Agers, Christians, and modern day Pharisees. They write, "Pharisees do not seek ongoing, direct contact with the Living God, and call those who do seek and experience such, either New Agers or demonized."⁵

The Virkler's note that Pharisees appear to base their "ministries" on *negativity*. They seem to have more fear of the "Antichrist" than faith in God's power and promises:

Pharisees are extremely negative, because they are using all the principles of faith in reverse. They believe in satan's power rather than God's power in this present age. They speak of the works of the antichrist, rather than the works of the risen Christ. They set their eyes on the antichrist, rather than fixing their eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2).⁶

This appears to be an accurate description of Tillin's anti-word-faith tract. She is using "fear tactics" to dissuade her readers from embracing Word-Faith teachings by falsely insinuating that they could possibly assist in setting up the antichrist's kingdom. Such inflammatory language goes beyond the bounds of mere doctrinal disagreement. It also appears to demonstrate more faith in the ability of the devil than in God's ability to protect His people.

Bob and Gretchen Passantino warns against this false association that so many discernment ministries make between New Age cults and other groups that they disagree with. While they do not excuse ministries for careless statements, they do believe that an application of what they call "witch hunt techniques" can enable anyone to declare another as a "New Age" heretic.⁷

Tillin's tract is full of such tactics. These papers (part one and two) will present ten reasons to accept Word-of-Faith teachings. Our "reasons" will be used as counter-points to Ms. Tillin's reasons to reject said teachings. These counter-points will expose the fallacies of Tillin's own reasons.

⁵ Virkler, Mark & Patti **Am I Being Deceived?** (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos Publisher, 2001), p. 45

⁶ Ibid, p. 39

⁷ Passantino, Bob and Gretchen **Witch Hunt** (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers). I highly recommend reading pages 128 to 136. The Passantinos do an excellent job demonstrating the absurdities of labeling groups and individuals "New Age" simply because of some similarities. They show that a person can even attack the Bible itself if such a tactic is taken too far. It is ironic that the Passantinos are close friends with Hendrik Hanegraaff who has used the exact same tactics against faith teachers that they dispute in their book.

1. Reason: It Rejects “Cold Intellectualism.”

Most faith teachers do not reject technical knowledge of original Bible languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) and certainly they make proper use of them. Neither do most of them totally reject other sciences of Bible study (exegesis, homiletics, hermeneutics, exposition, etc.). Nevertheless, many faith teachers reject a dependence upon intellectual knowledge that denies the place of the Holy Spirit in illuminating Scripture and its meaning to the believer.⁸

Faith teachers believe that the Holy Spirit gives insight and meaning to God’s Word in this day and age and that He speaks directly to the believer to enable him or her to understand it (John 16:13). Faith teachers refer to this as *revelation knowledge*. Their understanding of this is derived from Eph. 1:17, 18:

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and **revelation in the knowledge of him**: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

Other passages of Scripture make a case for this biblical principle (2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 1:9, 10; 1 Pet. 1:13; Rev. 1:1). The word "revelation" is not a *mystical* word. It simply means to "reveal." Revelation knowledge is therefore “revealed knowledge” (Deut. 29:29; Matt. 16:17). Yet, Revelation knowledge is NOT *extra-biblical revelation*. Instead it is *a revelation of His Word – the Bible*. Hagin states that:

There are no revelations outside of the Word. Any revelation you have that comes from the Spirit of God is in line with the Word of God. People get off into the devil’s territory when they leave the Word. They say they are following the Spirit, but you can’t follow the Holy Spirit apart from the Word.⁹

Therefore, *revelation knowledge* is God revealing to us insights directly from the BIBLE itself (Luke 24:25-27). The Holy Spirit is our helper to guide us into His truth and enable our understanding of Scripture. He will reveal to us truth consistent with the SCRIPTURE itself. The great Chinese preacher, Watchman Nee explained this well when he wrote, “By revelation we mean that today God again breathes on His Word, the Holy Spirit imparts light to me; the anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon this word so that once again I see what Paul saw in his day.”¹⁰

⁸ Many years before the current Faith Movement, R. A. Torrey wrote the following: “The person who has no technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but has spiritual discernment is a far more competent critic of the Bible than the one who has a rare, technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but no spiritual discernment. It is unfortunate that more emphasis is often placed on a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in training for ministry than is placed on the spiritual life and its consequent spiritual discernment.” Torrey, Reuben A. **How To Study The Bible** (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1985), p. 9

⁹ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Triumphant Church** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1993), p. 198

¹⁰ Nee, Watchman **The Ministry of God's Word** (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1971), p.

As Hagin stated, anything apart from Scripture should not be considered “revelation knowledge.” Andrew Murray once wrote, “Every exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit of a special revelation from God.”¹¹ Murray went on to say that this revelation is based on the Holy Spirit revealing the promises of God:

It was the special revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its living power to enter the heart and cultivate the faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. The man who walks on his face to listen while the living God speaks to him will receive the promise. We have God's promises in the Bible with full liberty to claim them. Our spiritual power depends on *God Himself speaking those promises to us.*¹² (Italics are his)

Revelation knowledge is not giving us new information to be added to the canon of Scripture. It is giving us insight consistent *with* Scripture. We believe that the Bible is truly a simple book, written in plain language that can be understood as any other book. Nevertheless, Peter reminds his readers that *some* things in Paul's letters (which he equated to Scripture) are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:15, 16). The Holy Spirit is there to give us understanding of those areas of Scripture that are difficult to comprehend with our intellect.

This is the basic premise promoted by the faith teachers. Kenneth Copeland wrote that “Knowledge that's been revealed directly to your heart by the Spirit of God. I call it revelation knowledge.”¹³ Copeland does not teach that this is knowledge gained by “inward self meditation”¹⁴ as the Gnostics do. Copeland fully believed that one should meditate on God's Word: “Determine that you're going to meditate the Word until you get a revelation like that.”¹⁵ Emphasizing the importance of God's word in the revelation process, Copeland writes, “Once you get a revelation from the Word of God, hang onto it. Don't focus on anything else.”¹⁶ In a similar vein, Kenneth Hagin wrote, “We can find direction in God's Word. If we will listen to the Holy Spirit, He will open the Word of God and direct us.”¹⁷

Like Andrew Murray, the Faith teachers focus on the fact that God reveals His Word to the believer, which enables him or her to walk in the power of God's promises. Faith teachers are adamant concerning the need for any so-called revelation to be consistent with Biblical revelation. Hagin said, “I tell my students that if they can't find where the Bible says something, they shouldn't say it either.”¹⁸

The above statements refute Tillin's erroneous and false statements like the following: “... this revelation knowledge is limited to the few who can receive it; the less intelligent are at a disadvantage. This is elitism.” Contrary to this false accusation, the

¹¹ Murray, Andrew **With Christ In The School of Prayer** (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), p. 93

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Copeland, Kenneth and Gloria **From Faith to Faith: A Guide to Daily Victory** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1990), September 2 devotional titled “Go For Revelation Knowledge.”

¹⁴ Gjorgjievski, Borce T. **Gnosticism: Origins, Beliefs, And Modern Tendencies** (1998-2001), Examining pp. 3-4

¹⁵ Copeland, *From Faith to Faith*, September 2

¹⁶ Ibid, January 11

¹⁷ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Human Spirit** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1985), p. 24

¹⁸ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Learning to Flow with the Spirit of God** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1986), p. 20

faith teachers believe (along with the writers of Scripture) that *all believers* can have Biblical truth *revealed* to them.

Tillin's charges of "gnosticism" are also proven to be erroneous in light of the above quotes. Furthermore, the faith teachers themselves have disputed Gnostic influences in the church. Frederick K. C. Price said, "God does not intend for His word to be a mystery to us."¹⁹ Price further writes:

The Bible does not have "secret" knowledge, in the sense that only a few have the right "code" or the right "key to unveil its truths." This was one of the beliefs of gnosticism – only a group of "elite," special, above-average people could *really* understand what the Bible said.

However, God's mysteries are open to anyone who will let the Bible interpret itself and who will take the time to read, pray over what is read and study it. By "interpreting itself," I mean looking up all the other references where a certain word or subject is mentioned and seeing what it means in those contexts.²⁰

Note that Price is not reacting to the type of false charges against faith teachers that Tillin makes, but against others in the church teaching a need for secret codes to interpret the Bible. Furthermore, a comparison of Gnostic teachings and our knowledge of genuine Word-Faith doctrine will expose the fallacies of Tillin and those like her.

Gnostics taught that one could receive special knowledge by searching within himself. Faith Teachers teach that *revelation knowledge* can only come through meditation upon God's Word (Josh 1:8; Ps. 1:2) and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal this word to you. Gnostics elevated their type of knowledge above the Word of God. Faith Teachers elevate the Word of God above any knowledge that one might gain, regardless of the source.²¹

Finally, Tillin's accusation that faith teachers reject "sense knowledge" has some merit. Yet, this is not a rejection borrowed from "gnosticism." The distinction between "faith" and "sense knowledge" has been a belief held among a number of Evangelicals that no one would consider to be "Word-Faith." In his famous devotional, Oswald Chambers wrote, "Nothing that Jesus Christ ever said is common sense, it is *revelation sense*, and it reaches the shores where common sense fails."²² (Italics are mine).

¹⁹ Price, Frederick K. C. **The Victorious Overcoming Life** (Los Angeles, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center, 1993), p. 69

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Gjorgjievski, *Gnosticism*, Examining pp. 3-4, anyone who has impartially examined Word-Faith doctrine in comparison to Gnostic heresy will quickly discern the distinctions. This paper can be found on the internet

²² Chambers, Oswald **My Utmost For His Highest** (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1993), October 30

2. Reason: It Promotes the Promise-Keeping God Who is Faithful to His Covenant

Arthur W. Pink, who wrote (in my opinion) one of the worst dissertations on God's sovereignty,²³ added some balance to the subject when he later wrote, "It is a very great and serious mistake to conceive of the sovereignty of God as swallowing up all His perfections, and to attribute all His actions unto the mere exercise of His imperial will."²⁴ This seems to be the mistake that Tillin and other Word-Faith critics make when they emphasize God's sovereignty and omnipotence above His faithfulness and integrity.

It's possible that Tillin's understanding of sovereignty leans towards Calvinism, though I cannot be certain of this. Hyper-calvinism rejects the fact that when God created man, He gave him a nearly unlimited amount of autonomy, and made man a co-ruler with Him (Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:5, 6; see also Luke 10:17-20; Rom. 5:17; Eph. 2:6).

By making this decision, God, to some degree, placed limitations on Himself. The Arminian theologian, Jack Cottrell says, "In a sovereign act of self-limitation God thus limited the way in which he would exercise his own authority over the world."²⁵ This demonstrates the Arminian/Wesleyan influence on Word-Faith teachings.²⁶

God has sovereignly chosen to allow men to influence Him by their actions. Those who embrace a hyper-Calvinist view of God's sovereignty deny that the actions of men have an effect on God in spite of the Bible's teaching that He desires to have reciprocal relationships with man (Ex. 32:9-14; 2 Kings 20:1-7; Isa. 1:18-20; 43:25, 26; Jer. 18:7-10; Micah 6:2; Matt. 7:7-11; Mark 11:25, 26; James 1:5; 4:2, 8; and others).

Because God has sovereignly chosen to have reciprocal relationships with men, He has made covenant promises and invites us to claim them (1 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:12; 11:33; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4). He has made these promises dependent upon our faith and prayer (2 Chron. 7:14; Ezek. 36:37; Matt. 7:7-11; 21:21, 22; Mark 9:23; 11:24; Heb. 11:6; James 1:5-7; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14, 15). If we do not pray and believe, we should not expect to receive (Mark 6:5, 6; James 1:5-7; 4:2).

To encourage our participation in these reciprocal relationships, God has bound Himself by covenant to perform the very promises that He has made (Psalm 89:33-36; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:12-19). Because of His holiness and integrity, God cannot lie (Ps. 89:35). Therefore, once He makes a statement, He is bound to its performance when His conditions are met (Num. 23:19). God makes a binding oath concerning His promise in order to strengthen our faith:

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Heb. 6:17, 18)

²³ Pink, Arthur W. **The Sovereignty of God**, Accessed at <http://www.pbministries.org/books/>

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

²⁵ Cottrell, Jack **What The Bible Says About God The Ruler** (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1984), p. 119. It is to be noted that Cottrell is critical of some elements of faith teaching (see pp. 146-150).

²⁶ For example, Hagin writes, "Years ago I read a statement John Wesley made and it stayed with me. Wesley said, 'It seems God is limited by our prayer life – that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him.'" See Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Art of Prayer**, 1992, p. 57

Verse 18 in the New Living Translation says, “*God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind.*” An oath is “a statement by which people give assurance that they have spoken the truth or by which they obligate themselves to perform certain actions.”²⁷ God binds Himself to His promises and actually performs them (Jer. 1:12; Luke 1:38-45; Rom. 4:21). Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist and, ironically, a Calvinist, said the following:

Moreover, on the throne of grace, God is again bound to us by His promises. The covenant contains in it many gracious promises, exceeding great and precious promises. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt. 7:7). Until God said that word or a word to that effect, it was at His own option to hear prayer or not, but it is not so now. If true prayer is offered through Jesus Christ, His truth binds Him to hear it. A man may be perfectly free, but the moment he makes a promise he is not free to break it; and the everlasting God will not break His promise. He delights to fulfill it.²⁸

Tillin accuses the faith teachers of proclaiming the Creator as “... a weak 'faith-being' who is at the mercy of His own universal laws.” Yet, God has settled His Word in Heaven and has magnified it above His very name (Psalm 119:89; 138:2). The critics who adhere to a meticulous view of God’s sovereignty believe that God is “above” keeping His Word. In His sovereignty He can decide not to keep His promises and do the opposite of that which He promised. Yet, God has said that He cannot lie; therefore He is obligated to perform His Word when conditions are met.

If mere humans did what the “sovereignty” doctrine does with God, we would not call them *sovereign* but *liars, covenant breakers, unreliable, and unpredictable*. Yet, when these things are attributed to God, we prefer to call this “sovereignty.” Spurgeon wrote, “When I come to God in Christ, to God on the mercy seat, I need not imagine that by any act of sovereignty God will set aside His covenant. That is impossible.”²⁹

Word-Fathers believe that God is true to His Word and that, though He is *sovereign*, He is also a *Covenant Keeping God*. Copeland acknowledged that, “God is sovereign. But a sovereign God has given us His sovereign promise.”³⁰ This principle of sovereignty and covenant cooperation is seen in Ezekial 36:37: “*Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*” Boldly claiming God’s promises does no damage to His omnipotence and sovereignty since He was the One who established this procedure.

This boldness in taking God at His Word and claiming His promises has been referred to as the *law of faith* (Rom. 3:27; Heb. 11:6). Because faith is associated with power, some faith teachers speak of the “force of faith” (Mark 11:23; Eph. 1:19). Due to

²⁷ Achtemeier, Paul J. (Editor) **Harper’s Bible Dictionary** (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 716

²⁸ Spurgeon, Charles **The Power of Prayer in a Believer's Life** (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books), pp. 27-28

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Copeland, Kenneth **You Do Have a Say**, Found [here](#). Commenting on John 5, Kenneth Hagin wrote concerning God’s sovereignty, “You see, God initiated something on His own. *He is a sovereign being*. If He wanted to send an angel down there by an act of *His divine sovereignty*, trouble the waters, and heal somebody that way, He could. He didn't have to write to someone on earth to endorse it!” (**Seven Things You Should Know About Divine Healing**, p. 57)

the Faith teachers' belief that we can hold God to His promises and boldly claim them, Tillin and others accuse them of teaching "laws which even God has to obey in order to create and run His universe."

Yet it was God who *sovereignly* obligated Himself to His promises and made them conditioned upon our faith and prayer. God Himself has established the *laws of reciprocity*, which are mentioned throughout Scripture (Job 4:8; Prov. 1:31; 11:18; Hosea 8:7; 10:12; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:7-9; James 3:18).

The Word-Faith proponents are not the first to advocate this understanding of faith. The 19th Century revivalist, Charles G. Finney, taught that God worked by "laws" that He established:

God establishes and manifests his own truth, to make man know and see that he is the God of truth, by coming out and demonstrating it by his conduct. He has limited his operations; they are controlled by certain laws both of nature and of grace. He has wisely limited himself to a certain order and way of doing things. Now, let me say, in the next place, that he likes to rebuke infidelity. His heart is greatly set upon the results which he has promised--those things which must result from his coming forth and demonstrating his truth. He holds us responsible for placing ourselves in such a position as to come within the conditions, the fulfilment of which are indispensable to his coming forth, in the established and revealed order of things, to establish his truth before the world.³¹

Some years later, a respected Baptist preacher, F. B. Meyer, wrote in a similar vein:

... it is necessary, before these laws of the spiritual world operate on our behalf, that we should definitely and by faith appropriate them. There is no promise which does not require to be claimed ... so we must not complain that the laws of the spiritual world do not bring us help unless by faith we appropriate their service.³²

Even strong Calvinists such as A. W. Pink were forced to recognize the supernatural laws that God has established. Pink wrote, "It is an unalterable law of the Divine government that as we sow, so shall we reap. That principle is enunciated and illustrated all through the Scriptures." Pink made it clear that to understand this was not an infringement upon God's sovereignty:

The formation and the effectuation of God's eternal decrees are in no wise affected by man: he can neither delay nor hasten them. But the present government of this world by God is, in large measure, affected and determined by the actions of men (His own people included), so that in this life they are, to a very considerable extent, made to reap according as they sow, both in spirituals and in temporals.³³

Because He is *the Lord of Recompenses and rewards* (Jer. 51:56; Heb. 11:6), He is obligated to reward men's actions when they are consistent with His conditions.

³¹ Finney, Charles G. **Proving God**, Sermon found at http://www.gospeltruth.net/1849-51Penny_Pulpit/500619pp_proving_god.htm (Last accessed: 17 February, 2005)

³² Meyer, F. B. **Devotional Commentary on Philippians** (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1979), p. 251

³³ Pink, *Practical Christianity*

3. Reason: It Recognizes The Full Redemptive Work of Christ

Tillin's third reason to reject Word-Faith teaching has been referred to as the Jesus-Died-Spiritually *doctrine* (or *heresy*, depending on who is making the reference). Often, the acronym JDS is used as a synonym or a summary of the teaching. Tillin correctly makes reference to some controversial aspects that should be addressed by concerned Christians. However, while addressing legitimate concerns she errs in several ways.

Her first error is her misrepresentation that JDS is exclusively a Word-Faith teaching. Different facets of this teaching have been held by a number of respected Christian leaders throughout church history. For example, the great reformer, Martin Luther wrote:

He found Himself in a state of condemnation and abandonment . . . He actually and in truth offered Himself to the eternal Father to be consigned to eternal damnation for us. His human nature did not behave differently from that of a man who is to be condemned eternally to hell. On account of this love of God, God at once raised Him from death and hell, and so He overcame hell.³⁴

Luther was not alone in his understanding of Christ's redemptive work. Other historical church leaders have held similar views. Even some *Evangelical* leaders today who would be insulted to be identified with the Word-Faith Movement have embraced certain facets of JDS. Robert Boyd, in his *World's Bible Handbook*, writes the following:

If punishment is not mere physical death, what is it? Christ received the same type of punishment the rich man in Luke 16 experienced, cut off from God and godly men, abandoned to the torments of hell fire, and gloated over by Satan.³⁵

From the non-charismatic tone of this book, it is highly unlikely that Boyd had been influenced by Word-Faith doctrine.³⁶

Another error is Tillin's attempt to paint a picture to her readers that JDS teaching is a staple in the faith movement. This is a false picture. One must not forget that this is a "faith" movement and/or a "Word-Faith" or "Word-of-Faith" movement. These titles insinuate that the emphasis of the movement is upon the *faith* of the believer and the integrity of God's Word. It is not the "Jesus Died Spiritually" movement, even if some of its advocates have taught on this perspective of Christ's redemptive work.

This brings us to yet another erroneous conclusion by Ms. Tillin's, which is the assumption that all Word-Faith advocates adhere to this teaching, or all aspects of it as presented by her. Michael Bruno, a Word-Faith teacher who wrote a book in response to Hanegraaff's *Christianity in Crisis*, clearly states his disagreement with JDS at some points:

³⁴ Luther, Martin *Commentary on Romans* (1515-1516); edition of J. Ficker, Leipzig: 1908, 218 ff). accessed at <http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ499.HTM>

³⁵ Boyd, Robert *World's Bible Handbook* (Iowa Falls, Iowa: World Bible Publishers, Inc., 1991), p. 468

³⁶ Boyd is more likely to have been influenced by Independent Baptists due to their own versions of JDS teaching. For example, Billy Graham and the late J. Sidlow Baxter have taught views similar to Boyd's. For more on this see Evans, W. Glyn (Editor) *Christ is Victor* (Vally Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977).

Mr. Hanegraaff twists much regarding different teachers of faith sharing that Jesus indeed suffered in hell. As many, I do not advocate this position. However, I am not going to say that my position is necessarily correct. Those advocating this position have a definite rationale for their beliefs that certainly demands attention. They simply believe that Jesus continued to suffer before his being raised.³⁷

One might argue that Bruno is not a well-known or prominent faith teacher. Regardless of such objections, Bruno's statement proves that one can be aligned with the Faith Movement, adhere to its core doctrines, and even defend them without embracing every single aspect.

One other error we need to address. Tillin seems opposed to some very Scriptural aspects of the teaching and assumes that hers is the *orthodox*, or accepted view. All opposed to her view is labeled "heresy." Though strongly disagreeing with the so-called "Word-Faith" view of JDS, Robert Bowman wrote concerning the criticisms of this doctrine: "While some of these criticisms have been helpful, it has usually been overlooked that at least some aspects of the Word-Faith doctrine are biblical."³⁸

I have my own personal reservations with certain aspects of the JDS teaching, nevertheless, I believe that it's basic premise is derived from an understanding of the full redemptive work of Christ as related in Scripture. Many in the church believe that all that was needed to purchase our salvation was done at the cross. On the other hand, the faith teachers see Scripture as teaching that the cross was the beginning of the redemptive process.

The cross is where Christ died the death that we deserved, became sin and bore the curse for us (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). However, the Bible is clear that He descended into Hades (Matt. 12:40; Eph. 4:8-10). The Scripture gives some implication that He may have suffered there (Acts 2:24-31), while other passages support an argument for merely preaching to the spirits that were there (1 Pet. 3:18, 19). He rose from the dead for our justifications (Rom. 4:25). Without His resurrection there is no basis for salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10). Some believe that due to having become sin for us, it was necessary for Him to undergo a new birth (Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:18-19). He then ascended to the Father where He presented His blood into the Holy of Holies for our eternal redemption, which is in Heaven itself (Heb. 9:12-24).

Regardless of whether or not anyone accepts or rejects any facet of this teaching, one must accept this fact: **THE FAITH TEACHERS BELIEVE THAT OUR SALVATION IS A BLOOD-BOUGHT SALVATION.** Another Word-Faith apologist, Ted Rouse, writes, "To say that Christ went to hell as the scriptures teach, does not take away from the precious Holy blood of the sin offering, the blood of the sacrifice."³⁹

Tillin and other Word-Faith critics claim that faith teachers teach that "When He died, His blood did not atone." This is another false accusation by Ms. Tillin. While the faith teachers do not stop at the cross, they certainly believe that Christ purchased our

³⁷ Bruno, Michael **Christianity in Power** (Slippery Rock, PA: Abba Ministries, 1994), p. 147. I share Rev. Bruno's perspective on this though I have sought to understand and defend the major Word-Faith view.

³⁸ Bowman, *The Word-Faith Controversy*, p. 163. In his critique of the faith teachers and JDS, Bowman also seems prejudiced by his own theology. For example, he does not take 2 Corinthians 5:21 or Matthew 27:46 literally and disputes with the faith teachers for doing so.

³⁹ Rouse, Ted **Faith and the Pharisees** (Tulsa, OK: Insight Publishing Group, 1999), p. 196.

eternal redemption when He presented His blood into the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:12-24). Here are just a few statements from them:

All the ages of eternity will remember the heroic battle that Jesus wrought in order to prove to humanity that God was just and He could on legal grounds justify the ungodly, because His only Begotten Son had redeemed them with His own blood. (E. W. Kenyon)⁴⁰

Now we can understand that we were Justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption God wrought in Christ, Whom He has set forth to be a sin substitute on the ground of Faith and His blood. (Kenyon)⁴¹

The New Covenant began functioning on the Day of Pentecost. It was not established in Heaven until Jesus carried His blood into the Holy of Holies and poured it out there as the red seal upon the document of our redemption. (Kenyon)⁴²

... He was on His way to enter into the heavenly Holy of Holies to present His blood as eternal offering or sacrificing for our sins. (Kenneth E. Hagin)⁴³

He entered in once and for all to obtain an eternal redemption for us. His blood is the guarantee, so to speak, of our redemption. (Hagin)⁴⁴

“... God has the only eraser of sins in the universe – the blood of Jesus.” (Frederick K. C. Price)⁴⁵

A number of commentators agree that eternal redemption was purchased upon Christ’s ascension into Heaven. One the most prominent is the devotional writer, Andrew Murray:

We are apt to think only of the fulfillment of the type of Aaron, the blood-shedding on earth. The Epistle does not speak of it. Where it mentions the blood, it is in connection with the resurrection and entrance into Heaven, as it works in the power of an endless life.⁴⁶

I suspect that Kenyon’s own understanding of Christ’s redemptive work was influenced in part by Andrew Murray’s writings. Regardless, one cannot justly accuse Kenyon or any of the faith teachers of denying that the blood purchased our salvation. Furthermore, the Bible has never made an understanding of what happened between Christ’s death and resurrection a prerequisite for salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10), therefore, this debate over JDS is nothing more than “majoring on the minors.”

⁴⁰ Kenyon, E. W. **New Creation Realities** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society), p. 42

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 47

⁴² Kenyon, **What Happened Between the Cross and the Throne**, p. 51

⁴³ Hagin, **The Present Day Ministry of Jesus Christ** (Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1983), p. 3

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 4

⁴⁵ Price, Frederick K.C. **The Victorious Overcoming Life** (Los Angeles, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center), p. 94

⁴⁶ Murray, Andrew, **The Holiest of All** (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1894), p. 297

4. Reason: It Advocates Our Union In Christ

Tillin's fourth reason for rejecting the Faith movement is due to her belief that "It elevates man to equality with Jesus." She further claims that as, "A consequence of the 'Jesus-died-spiritually' doctrine is that all born-again Christians stand in the same place of power and authority as Jesus - *not by virtue of their unity with Him*, but in themselves, as men filled with the Spirit." (Emphasis mine)

We can add another *false accusation* to Ms. Tillin's expanding list. While Ms. Tillin claims that the faith teachers do not teach that their "equality" is the result of their unity with Christ, the late Kenneth E. Hagin did in fact teach just that:

In the New birth, *we are brought into vital union with Jesus Christ*. All that most people think they have in the new birth is forgiveness of sins. They don't know about *being in union with God*.⁴⁷ (Emphasis mine)

Friends, we are sons of God. We are children of God. We are born of God. *We are in union with God*⁴⁸ (Italics are Hagin's)

Christ is the Head; we are the Body. We are one with Christ, joined with Him in a living union.⁴⁹

Understanding this "equality" as a result of our union helps us to better grasp what faith teachers are saying. They are certainly not saying that you and I are equal to God in His power attributes (omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence), nor are they implying that we are deities worthy of worship as God is. In their own language, they are addressing a fundamental Bible truth, which is our union in Christ.

Some discernment ministries have chided the late Kenneth E. Hagin for teaching that man was "created on terms of equality with God." Yet, viewing his statement in context, we will see that Hagin does not fail to recognize man's subordinate position to God. In a chapter ironically titled *Ruling and Reigning in Union with God*, Hagin writes:

We are accepted by God to reign as kings in life. We are no longer servants in the realm of spiritual death, but we have passed out of death, Satan's realm, into the realm of the heavenlies. Man was never made to be a slave. *He was made to reign as king under God*. *He was made on terms of equality with God*, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority.⁵⁰ (Emphasis mine)

Hagin further writes, "*God made man His understudy*. He made him king, to rule over everything that had life. Man was master. Man lived in the realm of God. *He lived on terms of equality with God*."⁵¹ While Hagin uses the phrase "terms of equality with God," he is never insinuating that man is equal with God in power, authority, or essence. Hagin recognizes man's subordination when he uses such phrases as "king under God" and "God's understudy."

⁴⁷ Hagin, Kenneth E. *Zoe: The God-Kind of Life* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1989), p. 40

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 45

⁴⁹ Hagin, Kenneth E. *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), p. 106

⁵⁰ Hagin, *Zoe*, p. 35

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 36

The late U. S. President Woodrow Wilson is quoted as saying, "You cannot be friends upon any other terms than upon the terms of equality."⁵² President Wilson's desire to have friends on "terms of equality" did not make his friends "presidents" or equal to such a position. Jesus Himself tells us that our relationship is more than master to servant – it is also friendship with Him (John 15:13-15). There must be some level of equality in friendship. Though Jesus elevates us to the level of friends and thereby gives us some terms of equality, we still recognize Him as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The Scriptures recognize these "'terms of equality' while remaining subordinate" relationship that comes as a result of our union in Christ:

In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17; The Amplified Bible)

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me ... I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:21, 23)

God has brought us back to life together with Christ Jesus and has given us a position in heaven with him (Eph. 2:6; God's Word translation)

Concerning our position in "Heavenly places, the following comment by Martin Luther is very interesting:

Observe, what great transcendent comfort we have in that God awakens in us also the same power he exercises in Christ, and bestows upon us equal authority. As he made him sit in heavenly places, above all power and might, and everything that can be named; so has he invested us also with the same power, that those who believe have all power over heaven and earth.⁵³

Luther seems to use similar language as Hagin to describe a principle of Scripture. We could cite several more scriptures to make this point (Rom. 8:16, 17, 29; 1 Cor. 3:9; Heb. 2:11; Col. 2:10-12; Matt. 21:21, 22; John 14:12). However, it might interest the reader to see how other church leaders besides Luther have described this union in Christ:

We hold that a man is justified by faith. This is an infinite righteousness, and one that swallows up all sins in a moment, for it is impossible that sin should exist in Christ. On the contrary, he who trusts in Christ exists in Christ; he is one with Christ, having the same righteousness as he. (Martin Luther)⁵⁴

⁵² From **Citizenship & Character: Equality Quotes.** Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), 28th president of US (1913-1921).

⁵³ Luther, Martin **The Sermons of Martin Luther Vol. II** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1906), p. 361

⁵⁴ Dillenberger, John **Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings** (New York: Anchor Books (Doubleday), 1962), pp. 87, 88. The sermon was titled "Two Kinds of Righteousness."

It is plain that to be in Christ justified, is far more than pardon or even reconciliation; it includes being counted as just, and put upon the same standing as Christ, before God. (Arthur T. Pierson)⁵⁵

Two words are used in the New Testament to describe sonship. One word means a born son. But the other word means much more. The second word for sonship is almost always applied to Christ's sonship, and is rarely used of anybody else but Jesus; but it is also used to denote those who enter into union with Christ. Not only are they born the children of God, but they are accepted in the same sense in which Christ is: that is, they have not only the sonship of the new birth, but the place of Christ Himself. (A. B. Simpson)⁵⁶

The men cited above believe we have the same righteousness that Christ has, the same standing before God that He has, and the same acceptance and place that Christ has. Such phrases could be defined as “terms of equality.” Yet, these same men believe in Christ’s Lordship over the church. So did Kenneth Hagin. In the same book in which he uses the phrase “terms of equality,” Hagin also exalts the Lordship of Christ:

Receiving Jesus is an act of the will of man, acting on the Word. You know that you're without an approach to God, without eternal life; and you just look up to God and say, "I know that." But it is not enough just to take Jesus as your Savior. You also must acknowledge His lordship over your life.⁵⁷

The above should clear up any misunderstanding of Hagin’s statement. Hagin’s understanding of “terms of equality” is no different than the statements made by Luther, Pierson, or Simpson’s. Hagin recognized Jesus as *Lord* and thus, our subordinate position.

Copeland has also garnered some controversy for similar statements. One critic quotes a statement that Copeland made on his television broadcast: “Let this mind be in Kenneth Copeland, Oh my goodness, Ah! that thinks its not robbery to be called equal with God.”⁵⁸ While this statement is definitely controversial, we should approach it in the light of Copeland’s theology as a whole. Copeland, like Hagin, certainly recognizes his subordinate position before Christ:

We will never get anywhere shaking our fists in God's face. But when we get before Him and say, I love you. ***You are the King of my life***. I will go anywhere You tell me to go, and I will do anything You tell me to do," God will respond compassionately.⁵⁹

Despite the controversy that is generated through such phrases as “equality with God,” one must, in fairness, examine *all* that is being taught before passing judgment. Critics should stop overreacting to statements that seemingly conflict with *their* doctrinal beliefs.

⁵⁵ Pierson, Arthur T. **In Christ Jesus**. From Chapter 1, Epistle to the Romans. Originally published in 1898. Now available on <http://www.posword.org>

⁵⁶ Simpson, Albert B. **The Christ Life** (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, Inc., 1980), p. 30

⁵⁷ Hagin, *Zoe*, p. 29

⁵⁸ Kenneth Copeland, Believer's Voice of Victory, Monday 29th January 2001 [GOD TV] As quoted by WoF critic David McCallister of the Belfast Berean (www.belfastberean.co.uk/copeland3.htm)

⁵⁹ Copeland, Kenneth **Believer's Voice of Victory** (Magazine) Vol. 31 No. 4 (Fort Worth, Texas, April 2003), p. 3

5. Reason: It Recognizes That God Has Made Man A Significant Being

Tillin's fifth reason for rejecting the Faith Movement is the claim that this movement makes man a god. In her explanation of this point, she presents some truth with some distortion of facts. First, Tillin broad-brushes the movement by painting all of its advocates with the "little gods" doctrine. Not all consider themselves to be "gods." Additionally, Tillin goes to an opposite extreme in actually rejecting Scriptural truth, while claiming that the truth that she is rejecting is contrary to Scripture.

For example, Tillin rejects the idea that man possessed God's nature when he was created and presents the idea as unscriptural. A number of Biblical scholars would disagree with her. Many accept the fact that man being created in God's "image" and "likeness" (Gen. 1:26-28) is indicative of him possessing God's nature.

Keil and Delitzsch were respected scholars who wrote an Old Testament commentary. Commenting on Gen. 1:26-28 they wrote, "The image of God consists.... in the fact, that the man endowed with free self-conscious personality possesses, *in his spiritual as well as corporeal nature*, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine life"⁶⁰ (Italics mine).

G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), who was a popular pastor at the Westminster Chapel in London, stated that the passage is teaching that man was created to be "like God":

The final fact as to *the nature of man is that he is made in the image and likeness of God*. That is not the same thing said twice over. By the words "image" and "likeness", two separate ideas are conveyed. "Image" suggests the fact that he is the one by whom God is represented. "Likeness" suggests the fact that he is in himself like God.⁶¹ (Emphasis mine)

In his popular paraphrase of the Scriptures, Eugene Peterson's *The Message* provides an interesting interpretation of Gen. 1:26, 27:

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth." God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. (The Message)

One can readily see from the evidence provided that not everyone shares Tillin's perspective on this issue. Neither do many share her denial that man received a satanic nature after the fall. W. B. Godbey, a scholar in the Holiness tradition, wrote, "the posterity of fallen humanity having received the Satanic nature through the beguilement of the serpent, or the spiritual children of the devil."⁶²

⁶⁰ Keil, Johan (1807-1888) and Delitzsch, Franz **Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament**, E-Sword Edition

⁶¹ Morgan, Campbell G. **The Westminster Pulpit (Volume V)** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1906-1916), p. 329

⁶² Godbey, William Baxter **Godbey's New Testament Commentaries Volume VII -- Matthew-John (Part 2)(Harmonized)** (Spokane, WA: Holiness Data Ministry)

A number of scripture passages such as Eph. 2:1-5, John 8:44, Matt. 13:38, 2 Cor. 6:15, and 1 John 3:9, 10 allude to this. Commenting on John 8:44, Vincent Wilson, a New Testament Greek scholar wrote, “Of your father. Very suggestive, implying community of nature....”⁶³ The popular Matthew Henry Commentary says concerning the above passages: “They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example.”⁶⁴ The Amplified Bible brings more clarity in its rendition of 1 John 3:10:

By this it is made clear who take their nature from God and are His children and who take their nature from the devil and are his children: no one who does not practice righteousness [who does not conform to God's will in purpose, thought, and action] is of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother (his fellow believer in Christ). (Amplified Bible)

God makes the clear distinction between those who are born of Him and those who are born of Satan himself. We will possess the nature of the one that has birthed us. In spite of Ms. Tillin’s objections, when we receive the new birth, we also receive God’s very nature. The late Bible expositor, R. A. Torrey, wrote, “The New birth is the impartation of a new nature, even God's own nature, to the one who is begotten again.... In the new birth God imparts to us His own wise and holy nature....”⁶⁵

No passage makes this any more clear than 2 Pet. 1:4. In this passage we are told that through God’s promises we “*might be partakers of the divine nature.*” The New Testament in Modern English by J. B. Phillips renders this as, “*to share in God's essential nature*”⁶⁶ How much clearer can this be? There are a number of scholars and respected church leaders who support this understanding of 2 Pet. 1:4.

Nevertheless, does all of the above imply that God created man as a “god” or even a “little god?” Hagin wrote, “In the beginning, Adam had the dominion over this world, and in that sense, Adam was made the ‘god’ of this world.”⁶⁷ Many of Hagin’s critics equate such a statement with blasphemy. On the other hand some more charitable critics of the Faith Movement such as the Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals (ACUTE) are willing to give him a fairer hearing:

However, we should be careful not to overreact to Hagin’s claim that ‘Adam was the god of this world’. On the one hand, there are a number of things that this sort of statement clearly does not mean. It does not mean, for example, that humans were not created or that they possess any of the infinite attributes of deity or that they are worthy of worship. On the other, the statement is connected in Hagin’s argument to the thought of Adam’s dominion over the earth... What Hagin appears to mean by the phrase, therefore, is that Adam’s dominion over the earth was derived from and compatible to God’s greater sovereignty as creator.⁶⁸

⁶³ Vincent, Marvin, **Vincent's Word Studies** (Online version available at <http://www.godrules.net>)

⁶⁴ Henry, Matthew **Matthew Hery's Commentary on the Whole Bible**, E-Sword edition

⁶⁵ Torrey, R. A. **What The Bible Teaches** (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898-1933), p. 327

⁶⁶ For other renditions of 2 Pet. 1:4, read the Contemporary English Version and the Jewish New Testament. Also, the Good News Bible presents an interesting translation of 1 John 3:9.

⁶⁷ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Triumphant Church** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1998), p. 8

⁶⁸ Perriman, Andrew (editor) **Faith, Health, & Prosperity** (Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 2003), p. 117

ACUTE understands that Hagin was not saying that Adam or his posterity were deity. In another book Hagin writes, “We’re not gods, but we’ve been given the right to use Jesus’ Name and to act on His behalf.”⁶⁹

Others have made reference to Adam as a “little god.” Differing from Hagin, Myles Munroe says, “He has created us to be His offspring. Therefore, He calls us ‘little gods.’” Munroe based his statement on Psalm 82:6. Yet, Munroe clarifies his teaching:

Now this does not mean that we are equal to God or that we are deity. Adam and Eve could fulfill their purpose only if they were relying on, and in constant communion with, the God of the Garden.⁷⁰

Benny Hinn has also attempted to clarify his “little gods” statements. In response to his critics on a TBN broadcast, Hinn said, “We’re not God, we’re the *children* of God. We’re God-like in our spirit man....”⁷¹ It is clear that Hinn is not deifying man, yet some may still be troubled by his belief that man is “god-like” in spirit. The late Baptist preacher, A. J. Gordon (1836-1895) made a similar statement:

But now God comes with the veritable promise that they shall, through faith, be made god-like, sharers of His nature and conformed to His image. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," is the promise of the gospel. And this means not simply that our natural life shall be prolonged into endless duration; but that we shall be endowed with a supernatural life; that God's own immortal nature and being shall be communicated to us through regeneration.⁷²

This respected Baptist minister believed that by faith we become “god-like.” Whether one agrees or disagrees with this teaching, one should at least recognize that statements of this kind are not an invention of the Word-Faith teachers. Some centuries before Gordon, the great reformer, Martin Luther, preached the following:

This is what I have often said, that faith makes of us lords, and love makes of us servants. Indeed, by faith we become gods and partakers of the divine nature and name, as is said in Psalms 82,6: "I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." But through love we become equal to the poorest. According to faith we are in need of nothing, and have an abundance; according to love we are servants of all. By faith we receive blessings from above, from God; through love we give them out below, to our neighbor. Even as Christ in his divinity stood in need of nothing, but in his humanity served everybody who had need of him. Of this we have spoken often enough, namely, that we also must by faith be born God's sons and gods, lords and kings, even as Christ is born true God of the Father in eternity; and again, come out of ourselves by love and help our neighbors with kind deeds, even as Christ became man to help us all.⁷³

It seems that the advocates of the “little gods” doctrine are in good company.

⁶⁹ Hagin, *The Name of Jesus*, p. 106

⁷⁰ Munroe, Myles **Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer** (New Kingsington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002), p. 33

⁷¹ Spencer, James R. **Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church** (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1993), p. 108

⁷² Gordon, A. J. **Partakers of the Divine Nature** This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/>

⁷³ Luther, Martin **The Sermons of Martin Luther Vol. II** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), pp. 73, 74

Conclusion to Part One

This concludes part one. In part two, we will give five more reasons to accept the Word-Faith teachings, countering the last five reasons that Tillin gives for rejecting them. We believe that these reason will build your faith and enable you to combat the doubt and unbelief promoted through pharisaic, heresy hunting strategies.