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A bold and revealing look at the biblical and historical basis of the ***Word of Faith*** *movement.*

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

UPDATED EDITION

D. R. McConnell

Foreword by Hank Hanegraaff
Author of *Christianity In Crisis*

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HENDRICKSON PUBLISHERS

A Different Gospel: Updated Edition
© 1988, 1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
P. O. Box 3473
Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473

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ISBN 978-1-56563-132-8

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McConnell, D. R.
A different gospel: biblical and historical insights into the Word of Faith movement / Dan R. McConnell. — Updated ed.
p. cm.
Revision of thesis (master's—Oral Roberts University, 1982) originally submitted under title: The Kenyon connection.
Includes bibliographical references (p.).
ISBN 1-56563-132-3
1. Faith movement (Hagin)—Controversial literature. 2. Hagin, Kenneth E., 1917– . 3. Kenyon, Essek William, 1867–1948. I. Title
BR1643.5.M329 1995
289.9—dc20

94-49586
CIP

Table of Contents

Preface to the Original Edition ix
Foreword by Hank Hanegraaff xi
Introduction: Charismatics at the Crossroads xv
Notes xx

PART 1: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MODERN FAITH MOVEMENT

1 The True Father of the Modern Faith Movement 3
The Relationship between Kenneth Hagin and E. W. Kenyon 3
Hagin's Plagiarism of Kenyon 6
The True Father of the Faith Movement 11
Notes 13

2 The Cultic Origins of the Faith Movement 15
The Faith Theology: New Revelation or Heretical Cult? 16
The Origins of Kenyon's Gospel 21
E. W. Kenyon and the Pentecostal Movement 21
E. W. Kenyon and the Metaphysical Cults 24
Notes 26

3 The Kenyon Connection 29
A Biographical Sketch of Kenyon's Early Life and Ministry 29
The Educational and Religious Background of Kenyon 33
Charles Wesley Emerson and the Emerson College of Oratory 34

The Religious Environment of Emerson College 36
Emerson College and New Thought 38
References to the Metaphysical Cults in Kenyon's Writings 42
Notes 51

4 The Role of Kenneth Hagin in the Faith Movement 55
A Biographical Sketch of Hagin's Early Life and Ministry 56
Kenneth Hagin: Prophet and Teacher of Faith 59
Hagin's Claims of Divine Visitations 61
Hagin's Threats of Divine Judgments 64
The Human Origins of Hagin's Theology 65
A Critique of Hagin's Prophethood 69
Notes 72

5 The Faith Controversy and the Beginning of the Faith Denomination 75
The Influence of Kenneth Hagin on the Faith Movement 75
The Faith Controversy 77
The Faith Denomination 82
Efforts to Reconcile the Faith Controversy 85
A Critique of the New Charismatic Ecumenism 87
Summary of the Historical Analysis of the Faith Movement 91
Notes 92

PART 2: A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MODERN FAITH MOVEMENT

6 The Doctrine of Revelation Knowledge: Super Christians and the New Gnosticism 101
The Cultic Nature of the Doctrine of Revelation Knowledge 101
Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine of Revelation Knowledge 107
Notes 111

7 The Doctrine of Identification: The Born-Again Jesus and the Atonement of the Devil 114
The Cultic Nature of the Doctrine of Identification 115
Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine of Identification 121
Notes 128

8 The Doctrine of Faith: Faith in God versus Faith in Faith 132
The Cultic Nature of the Doctrine of Faith 132
Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine of Faith 140
Notes 144

9 The Doctrine of Healing: Sickness, Symptoms, and Satan 147
The Cultic Nature of the Doctrine of Healing 148
Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine of Healing 157
A Concluding, Non-Theological Postscript 163
Notes 165

10 The Doctrine Of Prosperity: Success and the Upwardly Mobile Christian 169
The Cultic Nature of the Doctrine of Prosperity 170
Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine of Prosperity 174
Notes 181

11 Summary and Conclusion 183
Summary 183
Where Do We Go From Here? *186*

Afterword: The Faith Movement Today 191
Select Bibliography 221

Preface to the Original Edition

This study is an expanded and updated version of my master's thesis, "The Kenyon Connection: A Theological and Historical Analysis of the Cultic Origins of the Faith Movement," which was submitted to the faculty of the School of Theology at Oral Roberts University in 1982. Since that thesis was completed, much new historical information about the origins of the Faith movement has come to light, most of which has confirmed my original thesis concerning its "connection" to the metaphysical cults. The theological analysis demonstrating the cultic parallels between the Faith theology and metaphysics has been greatly expanded in this study and, I hope, clarified. I have endeavored to write for the church, both clergy and laity, and I have tried to make simplicity, not profundity, my guiding principle.

With a few notable exceptions, the Faith movement has not been the object of scholarly historical research. Dr. Charles Farah and Dr. Gordon Fee have provided able biblical and theological critiques of the movement, but its historical origins were not within their areas of interest. Other critiques, though well-meaning, have shed far more heat than light. Bruce Barron's *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (IVP, 1987) contains pertinent biographical information on some of the key players of the movement, but offers little regarding its historical background. Clearly a strong need exists for a definitive history to be written of the Faith movement.

One would suspect, therefore, that what follows is an attempt to provide that history. That is not the case. I have included much historical information about the Faith movement in this work, but it in no way constitutes a neutral historical treatise. Although I believe that I have treated the historical evidence in a fair fashion and that my findings will bear the scrutiny of historiographical analysis, I must admit that my intent is not merely to report this information in the placid manner of a professional historian. I have used my historical findings as the basis of a theological polemic against the Faith theology, something a true historian would never do. I have

chosen to do so because I believe that, because of its cultic origins, the Faith theology represents a serious threat to the theological orthodoxy and spiritual orthopraxy of the independent charismatic movement. I do not, therefore, want to give the slightest pretense of wanting just to write history.

There are many people I now want to acknowledge and thank for their help in the researching and writing of this book. In expressing my gratitude to those mentioned here, I do not want to imply that they would necessarily agree with all or any of its contents, for which I am solely responsible.

Several university staff and faculty members have gone far beyond the call of duty in their assistance. I would mention Karen Robinson, former director of the Holy Spirit Research Center at ORU, in this regard. The library and archives staff of Barrington College, which is now merged with Gordon College, aided the writer in obtaining materials about Kenyon available nowhere else. Howard Ferrin, former chancellor of Barrington College, was particularly helpful in sharing his insights about Kenyon, who founded Barrington under the name of Bethel Bible Institute. Also, special thanks go to John Coffee and Richard Wentworth for their input about Kenyon's alma mater, Emerson College, now contained in their book, *A Century of Eloquence: The History of Emerson College, 1880–1980.*

Several personal interviews were crucial to this paper. Kenyon's daughter, Ruth Kenyon Houseworth, answered relentless questions about her father, always with clarity, accuracy and, most of all, patience. John Osteen, Fred Price, and Charles Capps took time out of their busy schedules to answer some tough questions about their movement. John Kennington and Ern Baxter provided invaluable information from their personal reminiscences about Kenyon, particularly about his background in metaphysics.

I would like to thank the editorial staff of Hendrickson Publishers for its patience and support, particularly Patrick Alexander, who has endured much in helping a first-time author. I trust that his confidence in this work will not be disappointed. Finally, I want to thank my wife, Wendy, who in my absence did double duty with our four children, and who in my presence listened with grace to my incessant rambling about this book. Het is eindelijk klaar gekomen, en ik hou van je!

D. R. M.
Tulsa, Oklahoma
October 1987

Foreword by Hank Hanegraaff

In my book *Christianity in Crisis* I pointed out that some of the most scholarly rebuttals of the Faith Movement have come from within the ranks of the charismatic movement. Notable examples include Walter Martin, Gordon Fee, and Charles Farah. None is more noteworthy however than Dan McConnell. From his perspective as a former adjunct professor of theology at Oral Roberts University, he has critiqued Faith theology in a profound and persuasive fashion.

As a confirmed advocate of the charismatic renewal, McConnell writes,

> I would no more reject charismatic renewal than I would reject the Holy Spirit who gave it (see below, p. xxii).
>
> Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, with a few notable exceptions, the Faith Movement has enjoyed increasing acceptance by charismatics (see below, p. xxiii).
>
> Although most people assume that the Faith theology is a product of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, this assumption is not historically accurate. . . . The Faith movement can be traced historically to cultic sources (see below, p. xxiv).

While Faith teachers have been able to cleverly disguise themselves as charismatics, it would be a grave error to equate the Faith movement with the charismatic renewal. Some of today's clearest thinkers and keenest theologians are charismatic Christians. Men like Chuck Smith, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California, and founder of one of the largest and most effective Christian movements in modern-day history; Elliot Miller, editor of the *Christian Research Journal* and author of *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement,* and George Carey, respected theologian and archbishop of Canterbury.

McConnell demonstrates that both the "roots and fruits" of Faith theology are decidedly metaphysical rather than charismatic. With irrefutable documentation he traces the historical development

and heretical doctrines of Faith theology to such cults as Religious Science, Christian Science, and the Unity School of Christianity.

E. W. Kenyon, the real father of the modern-day Faith movement, "majored" in metaphysics. McConnell provides ample documentation that Kenneth Hagin, referred to by *Charisma* magazine as "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers" and the "father of the Faith movement" in reality plagiarized Kenyon. Hagin's theological perversions were in turn proliferated through men like Fredrick Price and Kenneth Copeland, who is today dubbed by *Time* magazine as the chief exponent of Faith theology.

While the Faith movement is undeniably cultic, it should be pointed out that *there are many sincere, born-again believers within the movement.* I cannot overemphasize this crucial point. These believers, for the most part, seem to be wholly unaware of the movement's cultic theology. We must therefore take care to judge the *theology* of the Faith movement rather than those being seduced by it.

For the most part, charismatics and noncharismatics are unified when it comes to the essentials of the historic Christian faith—such as the meaning of faith, the nature of God, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Their differences, on the other hand, involve nonessential Christian doctrine—primarily dealing with issues surrounding the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. And while we may vigorously debate such secondary matters within the faith, we must never divide over them.

Not so, however, when it comes to the Faith movement; there we must draw the line. The Faith movement has systematically subverted the very essence of Christianity so as to present us with a counterfeit Christ and a counterfeit Christianity. Therefore standing against the theology of the Faith movement does not *divide*; rather, it *unites* believers.

I have become both weary and wary of those who use the perversions of the Faith movement to drive a wedge between charismatic and noncharismatic Christians. Frankly, this is both counterproductive and divisive, for the Faith movement is not charismatic; it is cultic.

The crisis currently faced by Christianity—in the form of the Faith movement—does not center upon ongoing dialogues and debates among charismatic and noncharismatic believers. Rather, it involves a life-and-death struggle between orthodoxy and heresy—between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the cults.

With penetrating analysis and painstaking attention to detail, Dan McConnell unmasks Faith theology to reveal its cultic identity and to refute its false teachings. He is to be commended for providing an able defense and a potent antidote against a growing cancer feeding on the Body of Christ.

The apostle Paul warned the Christians in Galatia to guard against those preaching a different gospel—a "gospel" contrary to what was proclaimed by Christ and the apostles (Gal. 1:6–9). With so many religious beliefs, philosophies, and teachings circulating today, we must be even more diligent to observe Paul's admonition and heed his words. "Watch your life and doctrine closely," he told young Timothy. "Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:16).

Introduction: Charismatics at the Crossroads

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

—Apostle Paul, Galatians 1:6–9, NASB

Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than truth itself.

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1:2

After the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven, the gospel he had entrusted to the church was quickly perverted. Paul warned of "a different gospel" in approximately A.D. 55, a mere 20 to 25 years after the resurrection of Jesus. In Galatians, Paul expresses amazement that the "distortion" of the gospel had taken place so "quickly."[1] He also expresses anger that false teachers in the church were "hindering" and "disturbing" it with false doctrine (Gal. 5:7–12). The Galatians were in danger of "being severed from Christ" and "falling from grace" as the result of listening to these "teachers" (Gal. 5:4).

If the church in Galatia were the only example of this phenomenon, then perhaps it could be dismissed as an isolated incident. There are, however, numerous examples in the New Testament of this bitter conflict with false doctrine. Paul also warned the church of Ephesus that soon after his departure, "savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away

the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). These predators were all the more dangerous because they had infiltrated the Christian community and were doing their damage from within. Through their false teaching, they were attempting to lure sheep from the flock so as to prey upon them in isolation. The churches in Rome, Corinth, Colossae, Thessalonica, Philippi, Crete, and the Diaspora all show additional evidence of the struggle with false doctrine. We often think of the first-century church in very idealistic terms. But had it not been for these "different gospels," the New Testament as we know it today would never have been written.

Sadly, the struggle with false doctrine did not end with the writing of the New Testament. History attests to numerous "different gospels," and from the first century on these gospels have found a ready market in the church. The true and orthodox gospel of Jesus Christ has always had to compete with false doctrine for the hearts and minds of believers. In fact, it has often been said that "the history of theology is in large part a history of heresies."[2] In other words, the struggle between heresy and orthodoxy has taken place in every century of church history. Each new generation of church leadership has had "to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Tit. 1:9). We can thank God that we have centuries of historical orthodoxy to fall back on in this struggle, but the struggle itself continues.

This is no less true today. The twentieth-century Christian is faced with a plethora, a virtual "legion" of gospels. All of these are garbed in the most alluring of dress and call to the believer in the most seductive of whispers. As quoted above, Irenaeus, the great second-century defender of the faith against the heresy of gnosticism, warned that error is never put forward in a manner that exposes its grotesque deformities. Instead, it is packaged in outward adornment so appealing that it appears "more true than truth itself." The tremendous appeal of heresy is that it *looks* and *sounds* like the real thing! Consequently, the demarcation between heresy and orthodoxy is rarely clear cut. The most dangerous heresies lie in the gray area, a shadowy place of both light and darkness. These "different gospels" may vary in the particular doctrinal error they propagate, but all heresies have one thing in common: their threat to the church is directly proportionate to the degree in which they appear orthodox. The most dangerous of lies is not the bald-faced lie, for that is easily detected and rejected. A half-truth always does far more damage than a bald-faced lie.

Not only do different gospels *look* like the real thing, they *sound* like it as well. Another great defender of the faith, Walter Martin, "cult-buster" par excellence, says this of the ability of cults to mimic the gospel of Jesus:

> The student of cultism then, must be prepared to scale the language barrier of terminology. First, he must recognize that it does exist, and second, he must acknowledge the very real fact that unless terms are defined . . . the semantic jungle which the cults have created will envelop him, making difficult, if not impossible, a proper contrast between the teachings of the cults and those of orthodox Christianity.[3]

The most successful cults in the U.S. today use the same terminology, the same phraseology, and the same proof-texts as evangelical Christians. Dialogue with people trapped in these cults is all but impossible because both sides use the very same terms with radically different meanings. Until terms are defined, any differentiation between cultic teachings and orthodox Christianity is an exercise in futility, which is precisely what the cultist wants. Those who preach different gospels want their deception to sound like such a perfect recording of the orthodox gospel that the believer is left scratching his head wondering "Is it live? . . . Or is it Memorex?"

Walter Martin's warning against the "semantic jungle" through which the cults attempt to envelop the believer with confusing terminology should not be heard as just a warning against blatant cults "out there somewhere." It is a strange curiosity that those Christians who are most adamant that ours is the generation that will see the Lord's return—and the end-time deception and apostasy associated with his return—look for signs of this deception *outside* the church, in such conspiracies as the New Age movement, and in such cults as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Science. Admittedly, these movements pose potential threats to the church, but perhaps we would do better to look for the deception of the end-times where Jesus and the New Testament predicted it would occur: *within* the church, within groups that call themselves "Christian" but which actually preach a different gospel.

In speaking of the possibility that sincere believers could be deceived into believing a different gospel, we are not referring to the legitimate doctrinal differences that exist among Christians. What Paul was referring to in Gal. 1:6–9 was much more than that. This different gospel was not just "another" organic variety of the same gospel; the meaning of the Greek words indicates that it was an alien gospel that was of an altogether different kind.[4] One need look no

further for evidence of the absolute difference between the Pauline gospel and the false gospel with which the Galatians were being deceived than to the fact that Paul invokes an anathema, a curse of destruction by God, on any being, human or angelic, who preaches any gospel other than the gospel delivered to him by the Lord Jesus himself.[5] Clearly, to preach or believe a different gospel is an extremely serious matter.

We who count ourselves "charismatics" are at a crossroads. The charismatic renewal has reached a spiritual intersection in its history, and the decisions made by charismatic leadership in the next five years will, I believe, forever determine our place in the annals of church history. Nothing less than the doctrinal orthodoxy of our movement is at stake. Responsible leadership within the charismatic renewal must weigh seriously the evidence presented in this book—and the other books like it that I believe will be forthcoming—and, at whatever cost, lead the renewal on the road of return to the orthodox faith of the Christian church.

I am writing this book as a confirmed, unapologetic advocate of and participant in the charismatic renewal. Furthermore, while I am not a Pentecostal by way of theology, I believe that there is sound, biblical evidence to support many of the practices and experiences of charismatic renewal. Those who interpret this book as a rejection of charismatic renewal interpret it wrongly. I would no more reject charismatic renewal than I would reject the Holy Spirit who gave it.

Nevertheless, there has been, and still is, much that passes for "truth" in the charismatic renewal that I believe deeply grieves the Holy Spirit, who is "the Spirit of truth." I would go so far as to say that many in the present charismatic renewal preach and practice a different gospel. This is a most serious charge and one that is not lightly made. It is rendered all the more serious because those preaching this error are some of the most prominent figures in the charismatic renewal. I am referring to Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and all the other ministers and churches who are a part of what we shall refer to in this book as "the Faith movement."[6] With its "faith-formulas" for health, wealth, and prosperity, the Faith movement has taken the charismatic renewal by storm. No one could seriously question its success. The price tag of its success, however, has been nothing less than the orthodoxy of the charismatic renewal. Those in the Faith movement are now, and have been for years, preaching a different gospel.

One may well ask how this different gospel of the Faith movement escaped the notice of the church. The answer is that it hasn't; at least, not entirely. In the last decade, the Faith theology has been described in various publications as "heresy," "cultic," "gnostic," and "a work of Satan." This book is only the latest in a whole series of publications that have challenged the orthodoxy of the Faith movement; it is neither the first, nor the last, of its kind.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, with a few notable exceptions,[7] the Faith movement has enjoyed increasing acceptance by charismatics, and the voices being raised against it are fewer and quieter. The reasons for this growing silence are twofold. First, the church has not seen this gospel for what it is largely because of what Walter Martin calls "the language barrier of terminology." The Faith movement uses so much evangelical and Pentecostal terminology and so many biblical proof-texts that most believers are lulled into a false sense of security as to its orthodoxy.

Second, as even one of its arch-critics has admitted, the Faith gospel is "without question the most attractive message being preached today or, for that matter, in the whole history of the Church."[8] Seldom if ever, has there been a gospel that has promised so much, and demanded so little. The Faith gospel is a message ideally suited to the twentieth-century American Christian. In an age in America characterized by complexity, the Faith gospel gives simple, if not revelational, answers. In an economy fueled by materialism and fired by the ambitions of the "upwardly mobile," the Faith gospel preaches wealth and prosperity. The Faith gospel promises health and long life to a world in which death can come a myriad of different ways. Finally, in an international environment characterized by anarchy, in which terrorists strike at will and nuclear holocaust can come screaming from the sky at any moment, the Faith gospel confers an authority with which the believer can supposedly exercise complete control over his or her own environment. Little wonder that armed with such a gospel the Faith movement has grown to the extent that in the minds of many it is no longer just a *part* of the charismatic movement: it *is* the charismatic movement.

So, what is so bad about this association? What is so "different" about the gospel of the Faith movement? Why are there so many outside the movement who are bitterly outspoken in their opposition? Why are such inflammatory words like "cultic" and "heretical" being used by these opponents to describe the Faith movement? The purpose of this book is to answer these very questions. We shall

attempt to prove that both the "roots" and the "fruits" of the Faith movement are those of a different gospel, not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The charges of cultism and heresy leveled against the Faith movement in the past are not without basis. The Faith movement is cultic because of its roots (its historical origins) and it is heretical because of its fruits (its doctrines and practices).

Although most people assume that the Faith theology is a product of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, this assumption is not historically accurate. The historical origins of the Faith movement are not primarily Pentecostal or charismatic. The Faith movement can be traced historically to cultic sources. As a result, both its doctrines and practices contain heretical elements. The first part of the book will examine the historical origins of the Faith movement and the second part will critique its theological doctrines. Our analysis of the historical origins of the Faith movement will begin with determining who it is that authored the teachings upon which the movement is founded.

Notes

1. In this context, "quickly" could mean "so soon" after their conversion, or quite possibly, "so rashly" after the first opportunity to desert presented itself. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1981), p. 75.

2. Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), p. xxiii.

3. Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults: An Analysis of the Major Cult Systems in the Present Christian Era* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1977), p. 18.

4. In the Greek this effect is achieved by the use of two different words to indicate "another." *Allos* means "another of the same kind" or "another in a series," while *heteros* means "another of a different kind" (e.g., "heterosexual"). Although some scholars rightly note that *heteros* and *allos* can be used interchangeably, in this context the difference is apparent. Cf. *Amplified Bible*.

5. Many have interpreted *anathema* to connote the idea of excommunication, but it was actually used of objects, either good or bad, consecrated to God for his use and purposes. *Anathema* could be used of "votive gifts" to the glory of God as in Luke 21:5, or it could be used of an invocation of the curse of God, as in Acts 23:14; Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 12:3, 16:22. The destructive element of *anathema* in Galatians is corroborated by the fact that in Gal. 5:12 Paul prays, "Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves." The word translated by the *NASB* as "mutilate" actually means

"to castrate," as indicated by the *NEB* translation, "As for those agitators, they had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves."

6. The "Faith movement" is also known as "the Word movement" and "the Word of Faith movement" or, by its detractors, as "the Faith-Formula movement" or "the Hyper-Faith movement." Besides Hagin and Copeland, some of the main preachers and authors of the Faith movement are: Ken Hagin, Jr., Gloria Copeland, Fred Price, Jerry Savelle, Charles Capps, Norvel Hayes, John Osteen, Robert Tilton, Lester Sumrall, Ed Dufresne, Charles Cowan, Marilyn Hickey, Ken Stewart, Roy Hicks, Don Gossett, and Buddy Harrison. Until his death on Dec. 8, 1984, Hobart Freeman was regarded as a renegade preacher of the Faith movement who was ostracized for his radical beliefs on healing. More shall be said of Freeman later.

7. In the last two years, there have been three major publications which have critiqued the Faith movement. Two of these are by Dave Hunt: (with T. A. McMahon) *The Seduction of Christianity* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1985) and *Beyond Seduction* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1987). A third critique is Bruce Barron's *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1987).

8. Charles Farah, *This Cancer Kills: A Critical Analysis of the Roots & Fruits of 'Faith-Formula' Theology* (Portland: Charis Life, 1982), p. 15.

Part 1

A Historical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement

1 The True Father of the Modern Faith Movement

People frequently credit my father, Kenneth E. Hagin, with being the "father" of the so-called faith movement. However, as he points out, it's nothing new; it's just the preaching of the simple ageless gospel. But he has had a great effect on many of the well-known faith ministers of today. Almost every major faith ministry of the United States has been influenced by his ministry.

—Kenneth Hagin, Jr.,
"Trend toward the Faith Movement,"
Charisma (Aug. 1985), 67.

They've [the Faith teachers] all copied from my Dad [E. W. Kenyon]. They've changed it a little bit and added their own touch . . . , but they couldn't change the wording. The Lord gave him [Kenyon] words and phrases. He coined them. They can't put it in any other words . . . It's very difficult for some people to be big enough to give credit to somebody else.

—Ruth Kenyon Houseworth,
taped interview, Lynnwood,
Wash., Feb. 19, 1982.

The Relationship between Kenneth Hagin and E. W. Kenyon

The founding father of the Faith movement is commonly held to be Kenneth Erwin Hagin, the man termed by *Charisma* magazine as "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers,"[1] and "the father of the Faith movement."[2] Delivered with his country Texan accent and a disarming "good ol' boy" charm, Hagin's teachings on faith, healing, and prosperity have been foundational for almost every major minister of the Faith movement.[3] Even the other heavyweights of the Faith movement readily admit that Hagin's teaching and leadership were the key to both their own success and that of the movement.

For instance, the heir apparent to Hagin's throne, Kenneth Copeland, frequently acknowledges Hagin as his spiritual father. Although he briefly attended Oral Roberts University, Copeland

points to Hagin as his mentor, not Roberts. Ken Hagin, Jr., recounts the beginning of Copeland's relationship with his father this way:

> A poverty-stricken student from Oral Roberts University attended my father's Tulsa seminars in the mid '60s and got turned onto the Word of God. The student was deeply in debt, but he desperately wanted my father's tapes. He offered to trade the title to his car for them. Buddy Harrison, my brother-in-law, was managing the ministry then. He took one look at the old car and told him, "Just go ahead and take the tapes. Bring the money when you can." *So young Kenneth Copeland memorized those tapes and another great ministry was launched.*[4]

According to recent polls and press, Copeland is now the ex officio leader of the Faith movement. Nevertheless, at least in spiritual matters, when Hagin speaks, Copeland still listens.

Frederick K. C. Price, a prominent Faith preacher and founder of the 14 thousand member Crenshaw Christian Center of Inglewood, California, can make the incredible claim that "Kenneth Hagin has had the greatest influence upon my life of any living man."[5] Price received a great deal of help from Hagin in the early days of his Faith ministry, and Hagin is still a frequent speaker at his church in California.

Many other ministers of the Faith movement also acknowledge Hagin as their spiritual father. Charles Capps, who bills himself as "a Spirit-filled farmer from England, Arkansas," and who speaks at many national and local Faith conferences, states that "most of my teaching came from Brother Kenneth Hagin" and that Hagin was "the greatest influence of my life."[6] Even so prominent a preacher of charismatic renewal as John Osteen, pastor of the Lakewood Outreach Center, Houston, Texas, gratefully acknowledges Hagin as his introduction to the Faith movement and proclaims, "I think Brother Hagin is chosen of God and stands in the forefront of the message of faith."[7]

Indeed, not only does Kenneth Hagin stand in the forefront, for many in the Faith movement he is also "the Prophet": the Revelator of the gospel of faith, health, and wealth. As we will see in chapter 4, Hagin claims to be the man who first received the "revelation" on which the Faith movement is based. Even though in popularity and power the younger Copeland has overtaken his elder Hagin, in the eyes of his disciples, the man who is referred to as "Dad Hagin" at Rhema Bible Institute is still the grand old man of Faith.

Not everyone in the Faith movement, however, is willing to concede to Hagin the role of patriarch and founder. Ruth Kenyon

Houseworth, president of the Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, Lynnwood, Washington, contends that her father, E. W. Kenyon, who died in 1948, is the man who really deserves the title, "father of the Faith movement." Mrs. Houseworth charges that the 18 books written by her father and published by her society have been pilfered, in both idea and word, by the other preachers of the movement.[8]

Houseworth says of her father's lack of acknowledgment by the Faith movement:

> His first book was printed in 1916, and he had the revelation years before that. These that are coming along now that have been in the ministry for just a few years and claiming that this is something that they are just starting, it makes you laugh a little bit. It is very difficult for some people to be big enough to give credit to somebody else.[9]

Although Mrs. Houseworth is extremely gracious when asked about her father's lack of recognition, she is decidedly not "laughing" about it, not even "a little bit." She feels hurt that the Faith teachers have failed to give credit where credit is due. Moreover, the Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society has been exploited financially by the massive popularity of Hagin (whose first book was not published until 1960), Copeland, et al. Houseworth can no longer afford to publish its newsletter because of what she sees as the injustice done to her father.

The injustice done to Kenyon has not gone unnoticed by others who knew him. For instance, one man who both knew and occasionally ministered with Kenyon, John Kennington, pastor of Emmanuel Temple in Portland, Oregon, says this of his role in the Faith movement:

> Today Kenyon's ideas are in the ascendancy. Via the electronic church or in the printed page I readily recognize not only Kenyon's concepts, but at times I recognize pure plagiarism, for I can almost tell you book, chapter, and page where the material is coming from. Kenyon has become the "father" of the so-called "faith" movement.[10]

Kennington claims that plagiarism of Kenyon's writings is a fairly common occurrence in the charismatic movement. "In fact," he says, "one prominent Pentecostal minister hired a writer or writers to rewrite Kenyon's books and put his name on those books."[11] Because of these many plagiarisms, Kennington agrees with Houseworth that her father is also the father of the Faith movement.

Hagin may have the reputation of being "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers," but in the eyes of Mrs. Houseworth, he is just

another young preacher who has "borrowed" her deceased father's writings. Kenyon was 70 years old when Hagin was licensed as an Assemblies of God pastor in 1937 at the age of 20. Hagin himself, however, has gone on record with the claim that he was teaching his message on faith and healing long before he ever heard of E. W. Kenyon.

> Mr. Kenyon went home to be with the Lord in 1948. It was 1950 before I was introduced to his books. A brother in the Lord asked me, "Did you ever read after Dr. Kenyon?" I said, "I've never heard of him." He said, "You preach healing and faith just like he does." He gave me some of Kenyon's books. And he did preach faith and healing just like I do. After all, if someone preaches the new birth, and somebody else preaches the new birth, it has to be the same. Likewise, if you preach faith and healing—and I mean Bible faith and Bible healing—it has to be the same. We may have different words to express it, but if it is according to the word of God, it is the same truth.[12]

Hagin claims that it was not until 1950 that he came into contact with Kenyon, some 17 years after he had gotten "the revelation" that launched his ministry. Any similarities between himself and Kenyon are to be attributed, says Hagin, to the fact that both are merely "using different words to express" what the Bible has to say on "the same truth."[13]

At first glance, this statement may appear a reasonable explanation, but does it account for the amazing similarities between Hagin's writings and Kenyon's? Unfortunately, no, for as this chapter unfolds the reader will be presented with seemingly undeniable evidence that E. W. Kenyon is the true father of the Faith movement, a position which has been unjustly usurped by Kenneth Hagin. As Mrs. Houseworth has testified, the Faith movement in general and Kenneth Hagin in particular have used Kenyon's many books and pamphlets without ever acknowledging that he is the author of their teachings and the founder of their movement.

Hagin's Plagiarism of Kenyon

Hagin, of course, would deny any plagiarism of Kenyon. He maintains that it was not until *after* his discovery of the truths of the Faith gospel that he was introduced to Kenyon's writings. There is reason to believe, however, that he was acquainted with Kenyon earlier than 1950, perhaps much earlier. For example, Hagin remembers reading a book in 1949 with the following quotation: "It seems

that God is limited by our prayer life, that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him to do it. Why this is, I do not know."[14] This quotation comes from E. W. Kenyon's book, *The Two Kinds of Faith*.[15] Even the "revelation" supposedly given to Hagin on his deathbed is described by him with an undocumented and plagiarized quotation from *The Two Kinds of Faith*.[16]

Such confusion over when Hagin read various materials by Kenyon is fairly common. For instance, Hagin says that, in February of 1978, the Lord told him to prepare a teaching seminar on "the name of Jesus." Only after he began his research does Hagin admit that he discovered Kenyon's book, *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*. At his request, Mrs. Houseworth gave Hagin permission to quote from Kenyon's *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*. Hagin's book, *The Name of Jesus*, was first published in 1979. Concerning his indebtedness to Kenyon, Hagin writes:

> At the time [1978], I had one sermon I preached on this wonderful subject, but I had never really taught on it at length. I began to look around to see what I could find written on the subject. For others, you see, have revelations from God. I was amazed how little material there is in print on this subject. The only good book devoted entirely to it that I have found is E. W. Kenyon's *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*. I encourage you to get a copy. It is a marvelous book. It is revelation knowledge. It is the Word of God.[17]

This is one of the few candid, direct acknowledgments of Kenyon to appear in any of Hagin's writings. The problem is that two years prior to 1978, the first date that Hagin admits to having read Kenyon's *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*, he had already copied extensively from this book for an article published in his magazine in 1976.[18] That article never mentions the name of E. W. Kenyon.

Nor is Kenyon mentioned where his words and thoughts appear in numerous other books and articles by Hagin. Whereas Hagin appears to have copied only occasionally from sources other than Kenyon,[19] he has plagiarized Kenyon both repeatedly and extensively. Actually, it would not be overstated to say that the very doctrines that have made Kenneth Hagin and the Faith movement such a distinctive and powerful force within the independent charismatic movement are all plagiarized from E. W. Kenyon. This is a most serious charge and one that will be substantiated by ample evidence. Part 2 of this volume will examine the fact that all of the major thoughts and ideas of Faith theology are taken from Kenyon. At this point in our study, it is sufficient to say that the writings of

Kenneth Hagin are verbally dependent upon Kenyon. The accusations of plagiarism by Houseworth and Kennington are absolutely correct. In many instances, Hagin has, indeed, copied word-for-word without documentation from Kenyon's writings. The following excerpts of plagiarisms from no less than eight books by E. W. Kenyon are presented as evidence of this charge. This is only a sampling of such plagiarisms. Many more could be cited.

Kenneth Hagin	*E. W. Kenyon*
The 22nd Psalm gives a graphic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus—more vivid than that of John, Matthew or Mark who witnessed it.	The twenty-second Psalm gives a graphic picture of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is more vivid than that of John, Matthew or Mark who witnessed it.
He utters the strange words "But thou art holy." What does that mean? He is becoming sin. . . . His parched lips cry, "I am a worm and no man." He is spiritually dead—the worm. Jesus died of a ruptured heart. When it happened, blood from all parts of His body poured through the rent into the sack which holds the heart. As the body cooled, the red corpuscles coagulated and rose to the top, the white serum settled to the bottom. When that Roman spear pierced the sack, water poured out first, then the coagulated blood oozed out, rolling down his side onto the ground. John bore witness of it. ("Christ our Substitute," *The Word of Faith* [Mar., 1975], pp. 1, 4, 5, 7)	But He says the strangest words, "But thou art holy." What does that mean? He is becoming sin. Can you hear those parched lips cry, "I am a worm and no man"? He is spiritually dead. The worm. Jesus had died of a ruptured heart. When that happened, blood from all parts of the body poured in through the rent, into the sack that holds the heart. Then as the body cooled, the red corpuscles coagulated and rose to the top. The white serum settled to the bottom. When that Roman soldier's spear pierced the sack, water poured out first. Then the coagulated blood oozed out, rolled down His side onto the ground, and John bore witness of it. (*What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1969], 44–45)
What does identification mean? It means our complete union with Christ. This gives us the key which unlocks the great teachings of identification. Christ became one with us in sin that we might become one with Him in righteousness. He became as we were to the end that we might become as He is now. He died to make us live. He became weak to make us strong. He suffered shame to give us glory. He went to hell to take us to heaven.	At once you ask, "What does identification mean?" It means our complete union with Him in His Substitutionary Sacrifice. This gives us the key that unlocks the great teaching of identification. Christ became one with us in sin, that we might become one with Him in righteousness. He became as we were to the end that we might become as He is now. . . . He died to make us live . . . He became weak to make us strong. He suffered shame to give us glory. He went to hell to take us to heaven.

He was condemned to justify us.
He was made sick that healing might be ours.
("The Resurrection! What it Gives Us . . . " *The Word of Faith* [Apr., 1977], p. 5)

He was condemned to justify us.
He was made sick that healing might be ours.
(*Identification: A Romance in Redemption* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1968], 6, 7)

Here is a picture of Christ in awful combat with the hosts of darkness. It gives us a glimpse of the tremendous victory He won before He rose from the dead. The margin of King James reads, "He put off from Himself the principalities and the powers." It is quite obvious and evident that whole demon hosts, when they had Jesus within their power intended to swamp Him, to overwhelm Him, and to hold Him in fearful bondage. But the cry came forth from the throne of God that Jesus had met the demands of Justice, that the sin problem had been settled, that man's redemption was a fact. And when that cry reached the dark regions, Jesus arose and threw back the host of demons and met Satan in awful combat.

The picture here is of Christ . . . in awful combat with the hosts of darkness. It gives us a glimpse of the tremendous battle and victory that Jesus won before He rose from the dead. The margin reads: Having put off from Himself the principalities and powers." It is evident that the whole demon host, when they saw Jesus in their power simply intended to swamp Him, overwhelm Him, and they held Him in fearful bondage until the cry came forth from the throne of God that Jesus had met the demands of justice; that the sin problem was settled and man's redemption was a fact. When this cry reached the dark regions, Jesus rose and hurled back the hosts of darkness, and met Satan in awful combat.

God has made this investment for the church. He has made this deposit on which the church has a right to draw for her every need. Oh that our eyes would open, that our souls would dare to rise in the realm of the omnipotent where that name would mean to us all that God the Father intended it to mean! In one sense, this is practically unexplored table land in Christian experience. ("The Name of Jesus: The More Excellent Name," *The Word of Faith* [Apr., 1976], pp. 4–6)

God has made this investment for the benefit of the Church: He has made this deposit on which the Church has a right to draw for Her every need. Oh, that our eyes were open; that our souls would dare rise into the realm of Omnipotence where the Name would mean to us all that the Father has invested in it. . . . This is practically an unexplored tableland in Christian experience. (*The Wonderful Name of Jesus* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1927], 8, 9, 11)

God's method of physical healing is spiritual.
It is not mental as Christian Science, Unity and other metaphysical teachers claim. Neither is it physical as the medical world teaches. When man heals, he must do it either through the mind or through the physical body.
When God heals He heals through the human spirit, for God is a Spirit. Life's greatest forces are spiritual forces. . . . Love and hate, faith and fear, joy and

You must have seen as you have studied this book that healing is spiritual.
It is not mental as Christian Science and Unity and other metaphysical teachers claim. Neither is it physical as the medical world teaches. When man heals, he must either do it through the mind . . . or he does it through the physical body . . . When God heals He heals through the spirit. We can understand that the greatest forces in life are spiritual forces. Love and hate, fear and faith, joy and

peace, are all of the spirit. ("Spirit, Soul,& Body; Part Three: God Heals through the Spirit of Man," *Word of Faith* [Dec., 1977], p. 5)

grief, are all of the spirit. (*Jesus the Healer* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1940], p. 90)

The fact that there is enmity between Satan and the woman is seen through woman's history. . . . She has been bought and sold as common chattel. Only where Christianity has reached the heart of the country has woman been elevated above the brute creation. Woman's seed is Christ. Christ was hunted from His babyhood by Satan's seed until finally He was nailed to the cross. From the resurrection of Jesus until this day, the church has been the subject of the bitterest persecution and enmity of the world. "and it . . . shall bruise thy head" (the head of Satan). In Oriental languages "bruising the head" means breaking the lordship of a ruler. "The heel" is the Church in its earth walk. . . . The long ages of persecution of the Church by the seed of Satan are today merely a matter of history. ("Incarnation," *Word of Faith* [Dec., 1978], p. 4)

That is, there will be enmity between Satan and woman. This is proved by woman's history. She has been bought and sold as common chattel. Only where Christianity has reached the hearts of a country has woman ever received any treatment that would lift her above the brute creation. . . . and woman's seed is Christ. Christ was hunted from His babyhood by Satan's seed until finally they nailed him to the cross; and from the resurrection of Jesus until this day, the church has been the subject of the bitterest persecution and enmity of the world. "He shall bruise thy head" —that is, the head of Satan. In all Oriental languages the term "bruise the head" means breaking the lordship of the ruler. "The heel" is the Church in its earth walk. The long ages of persecution of the Church by the seed of Satan are a matter of history. (*The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1969], p. 58)

Here in Genesis, God refused to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until He had talked it over with Abraham, His blood covenant friend. Abraham's prayer is one of the most suggestive and illuminating prayers of the Old Testament. Abraham was taking his place in the covenant. Abraham had, through the covenant, received rights and privileges which we very little understand. The covenant Abraham had just solemnized with Jehovah gave him a legal standing with God. . . . we hear him speaking so plainly . . . "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" All through the Old Testament we find men who understood and took their place in the covenant. Joshua could open the Jordan. He could command the sun, moon and stars to stand still in the heavens. Elijah could bring fire out of heaven to consume the altar as well as the sacrifice.

. . . in Gen. 18 when God refused to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until He had talked it over with His blood covenant friend, Abraham. Abraham's prayer . . . is one of the most illuminating and suggestive prayers in the Old Covenant. . . . Abraham was taking his place in the covenant. Abraham had through the Covenant received rights and privileges that we little understand. The Covenant that Abraham had just solemnized with Jehovah gave him a legal standing with God. We hear him speak so plainly, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" All through the Old Covenant we find men who understood and took their place in the Covenant. Joshua could open the Jordan. He could command the sun, moon and stars to stand still in the heavens. Elijah could bring fire out of heaven to consume the offering as well as the altar.

David's mighty men were utterly shielded from death in time of war as long as they

remembered the covenant. (*Plead Your Case* [Tulsa: Faith Library, 1979], pp. 4–9; cf. pp. 23–32)

In John 1:4 we get the first intimation of what this life will do for us: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

There are four different Greek words translated "life" in the New Testament. First, there is *zoe*. Then there is *psuche*. That means natural or human life. *Bios* means manner of life. And

anastrophee means
confused behavior. It seems strange that the church has majored on "manner of life" or "behavior" rather than eternal life, which determines in a very large way the manner of life. Receiving eternal life is the most miraculous incident in life. Often we call it conversion or the new birth.
Some call it "getting religion," but that's not what it is, really.
It is, in reality, God imparting His very nature, substance, and being to our human spirits. (*The God Kind of Life* [Tulsa: Faith Library, 1981], pp. 1–2, 9)

Man is a spirit who possesses a soul and lives in a body. . . .
He is in the same class with God. . . .
We know that God is a Spirit. And yet [He] took upon Himself a
man's body. . . . when God took upon Himself human form,
He was no less God than when He didn't have a body.
Man, at physical death, leaves his body. Yet he is no less man than he was when he had his body. (*Man of Three Dimensions* [Tulsa: Faith Library, 1973], no page)

David's mighty men were utterly shielded from death in their wars. They became supermen as long as they
remembered the covenant. (*The Two Kinds of Faith* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1969], pp. 76–84)

Jesus gave us the first intimation of what this Life would do for man. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

There are four Greek words translated "life" . . . in the New Testament. The first one is *psuche*
which means natural, human life. The second is *bios* which means manner of life . . . . The third is
anastrophee which . . . means "a confused behavior." It is a strange thing that the Church has majored in "manner of life" or "behavior" rather than Eternal Life which determines in a very large way the "manner of life." Receiving Eternal Life is the most miraculous incident or event in life. It is called conversion, the New Birth and the New Creation.
Some have called it "getting religion."

It is, in reality, God imparting His very Nature, Substance, and Being to our human spirits. (*Two Kinds of Life* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1971], pp. 2–3)

Man is a spirit being, he has a soul, and he lives . . . in a body.
He is in the same class as God.
We know that God is a spirit and
He became a man and took on a man's body, and when He did it

He was no less God than He was before He took the physical body. . . .
Man, at death, leaves his physical body and is no less man than he was when he had his . . . body. (*The Hidden Man* [Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1970], p. 40; *Two Kinds of Faith*, p. 3)

The True Father of the Faith Movement

The primary purpose of revealing Hagin's plagiarisms is to prove his verbal and doctrinal dependency upon Kenyon. This book

will offer neither theories as to why Hagin plagiarized Kenyon, nor indictments as to the fact that he did so. When he was once confronted with the plagiarism of another writer, Hagin claimed that the appropriate documentation giving credit to the author was omitted from his book "in error."[20] Because of the number and extent of Hagin's plagiarisms of Kenyon, it seems unlikely that *all* of them are an oversight. But we are more than willing to concede such a possibility, particularly if Hagin were to admit the extent of his dependency upon Kenyon. His honesty in doing so would give credibility to any claim of having plagiarized Kenyon by accident. It would also do much towards righting the injustice done to the Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society.

In admitting that he took his theology from the writings of Kenyon, Hagin would also have to acknowledge that his teaching is of human origins. As we shall see, Hagin claims to have received most of the Faith gospel by divine visitation, visions, and revelation. Much of his reputation as a "prophet" in the Faith movement rests upon these experiences. His reputation and revelation aside, however, it must be said that Hagin's theology has historical roots, and these may be traced directly to Kenyon, whose writings predate Hagin's by more than thirty years. The word-for-word correspondences between Hagin's writings and Kenyon's cannot be attributed to coincidence, nor can they be attributed to a miracle of inspiration by the Holy Spirit. It is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit would inspire Hagin to use another man's words without also informing him as to who first wrote those words. That man was E. W. Kenyon.

In conclusion, it must be admitted that Hagin is the man who single-handedly took Kenyon's teachings and from them forged a movement, the Faith movement. Hagin's influence is omnipresent in Faith circles. His mark is printed indelibly upon his countless disciples, such as Copeland, Price, and Capps. Hagin's son, Ken, Jr., is quite correct in his statement cited earlier that "almost every major faith ministry of the United States has been influenced by his ministry." What Hagin's son does not say is that his father plagiarized the majority of his teaching from E. W. Kenyon. *If this is true, however, then through the person of Kenneth Hagin, E. W. Kenyon's teachings are the foundation of the entire Faith movement.* Hagin was the key player in the early Faith movement. But Kenyon was the author of its major doctrines.

Consequently, we cannot agree that Hagin's leadership thereby merits him the title of "father of the Faith movement." Vladimir

Lenin and Joseph Stalin provided the leadership to transform communism into an international movement, but Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels first taught the doctrines on which communism came to be based. Thus, they are today considered the founding fathers of the Communist movement. Likewise, Hagin was the primary leader of the early Faith movement, but he was not the man who first taught its doctrines and thus was not its founding father. Consequently, we must agree with Ruth Kenyon Houseworth that since her father, E. W. Kenyon, was the man who first authored its teachings, he is, in fact, "the True Father of the Faith movement."

Notes

1. Sherry Andrews, "Kenneth Hagin: Keeping the Faith," *Charisma* (Oct., 1981), p. 24.

2. E. S. Caldwell, "Kenneth Hagin, Sr.: Acknowledged as Father of the Faith Movement," *Charisma* (Aug., 1985), p. 116. It is interesting to note that in a random sampling of *Charisma* readers concerning those ministers who influenced them the most, Kenneth Hagin was third, ranked only behind TV kingpin and presidential aspirant, Pat Robertson, and the heir apparent of the throne of the Faith movement, Kenneth Copeland. Faith preachers Marilyn Hickey and Fred Price were ranked sixth and ninth respectively, and Robert Tilton, John Osteen and Norvel Hayes were in the top 24. The Faith movement was listed as one of the ten "decatrends" of the charismatic movement. See Kenneth Hagin, Jr., "Trend toward the Faith Movement," *Charisma* (Aug., 1985), pp. 67–70.

3. Hagin, Jr., "Trend toward the Faith Movement," p. 67.

4. Ibid.; italics added for emphasis.

5. Fred Price, taped correspondence, Inglewood, Calif., Feb. 18, 1982.

6. Charles Capps, taped correspondence, England, Ark., Feb. 17, 1982.

7. John Osteen, taped phone interview, Pastor of Lakewood Outreach Center, Houston, Tex., Feb. 24, 1982.

8. Ruth Kenyon Houseworth, taped phone interview, Lynnwood, Wash., Feb. 19, 1982.

9. Ibid.

10. John Kennington, "E. W. Kenyon and the Metaphysics of Christian Science," unpublished written statement, Portland, Ore., July 8, 1986.

11. Ibid.

12. Kenneth Hagin, *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1981), preface

13. Ibid.

14. Kenneth Hagin, *The Art of Intercession* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1980), p. 1.

15. E. W. Kenyon, *The Two Kinds of Faith: Faith's Secrets Revealed* (Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1942), p. 76.

16. Cf., Hagin's *Six Hindrances to Faith* (Tulsa: Faith Library, [n.d.]) to Kenyon's *Two Kinds of Faith*, p. 67.

17. Hagin, *The Name of Jesus*, preface.

18. Cf., E. W. Kenyon, *The Wonderful Name of Jesus* (Seatle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1927), pp. 8–11, with Kenneth Hagin, "The Name of Jesus: The More Excellent Name," *The Word of Faith* (April, 1976), pp. 4–6.

19. One other author from whom Hagin has explicitly plagiarized is John A. MacMillan. See ch. 4, pp. 67–69.

20. See ch. 4, pp. 69ff.