



THE STRANGE HISTORY OF PENTECOSTALISM PART 2 OF 3

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August 3, 1998 (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, 1701 Harns Rd., Oak Harbor, WA 98277) - The following is Part 2 of 3 of "The Strange History of Pentecostalism" by David W. Cloud--

AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON

Another very influential Pentecostal evangelist and faith healer was AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON (1890-1944), founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements calls her "the most prominent woman leader Pentecostalism has produced to date." She was married three times and divorced twice. Her first husband, Robert Semple, died in China in 1910, where the young couple had gone as missionaries. In 1911 she married Harold Stewart McPherson. He complained about her hysterical behavior and her neglect of him, and in 1921 the marriage ended in divorce (Eve Simson, *The Faith Healer*, p. 36). Aimee had left Harold to attend to her preaching. Interestingly, Aimee's associate pastor, Rheba Crawford, also left her husband to preach, and Rheba's husband also divorced her.

In May 1926, McPherson disappeared and was thought to have been drowned while swimming off the California coast. A month later she turned up in Mexico, claiming to have been kidnapped, but the evidence led most people to believe that she had an affair with a former employee, Kenneth Ormiston, who was married at the time. The two had been seen together earlier in the year during Aimee McPherson's trip to Europe. At the same time Aimee sailed for Europe, Ormiston disappeared from his job, and his wife, Ruth, registered a missing-person report at police headquarters. She told police a certain prominent woman was responsible for her husband's disappearance (Lately Thomas, *The Vanishing Evangelist*, p. 29). They had also been seen together checking into the same hotels at various times in California, after her return from Europe, prior to the alleged kidnapping. Though McPherson claimed to have wandered for 14 hours across roughly 20 miles of cruel desert covered with mesquite, cactus, and catclaw to escape her captors, when she was found she showed no sign of having been through such an ordeal. Her shoes were not scuffed or worn; there were grass stains on the insteps (there was no grass in the desert through which she claims to have wandered); she was not dehydrated or sunburned; her lips were not parched, cracked, or swollen; her tongue was not swollen; her color was normal; her dress was not torn and bore no dust or perspiration stains. The dress collar and cuffs, though white in color, were barely soiled. Further, she was wearing a watch her mother had given her--a watch she had not taken with her to the beach! (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, p. 299; Thomas, *The Vanishing Evangelist*, p. 59,66,78). Aimee told reporters that her ankles were bruised and torn by ropes from her captivity, but there had been no sign of such injuries when she was examined. An exhaustive search was made to find the adobe shack with a wooden floor

where she claimed she had been held captive and which she described in detail to the authorities, but no such shack was found in a 46-square-mile area. Experienced desert men and trackers (one had ridden that country as a cowboy for 37 years, another for 20), who attempted to find her attackers, traced her footsteps, and they found where she apparently had gotten out of an automobile on a road not far from where she was found. The senior tracker testified that he examined every foot of the ground over which she had claimed to have walked and that her tracks had been found nowhere. As for the shack, he said: "I do not know of an adobe house such as the one described by Mrs. McPherson within a hundred and fifty miles of Agua Prieta, and I know every house in this vast area" (Lately, *The Vanishing Evangelist*, p. 84). A grocery receipt signed by McPherson was found in a Carmel, California, cottage where it appears Aimee had met Ormiston during the time she was alleged to have been kidnapped. Several eye-witnesses testified that they saw the two together during that period.

The year after this episode, McPherson rejected the social taboos preached against by Bible-believing churches of that day. She bobbed her hair and started drinking, dancing, and wearing short skirts. In her early years she had preached against such things. Her choir director, Gladwyn Nichols, and the entire 300-member choir resigned because of her lifestyle. He told the press that they left because of "Aimee's surrender to worldliness--her wardrobe of fancy gowns and short skirts, jewelry, furs, her new infatuation with cosmetics and bobbed hair, all specifically condemned by the Scriptures" (Robert Bahr, *Least of All Saints*, p. 259).

In 1931 the divorced McPherson married the divorced David Hutton. He divorced Aimee in 1934.

McPherson's ministry featured the unscriptural spirit slaying phenomenon. One of her biographies, *Least of All Saints* by Robert Bahr, contains a photo of McPherson followers lying on the floor after she had laid hands on them and they were allegedly "baptized of the Holy Spirit." There were also cases of "spiritual drunkenness" in her early meetings (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, p. 162), though her later ministry was not characterized by such displays.

McPherson taught that healing is guaranteed in the atonement. She falsely promised to the eager crowds: "Your chains will be shattered, your fetters crushed, your troubles healed, if you only believe--for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, p. 221). It is blessedly true, of course, that the Lord is a very present help in time of trouble and that He goes with His children through all their trials, but to promise that in this present life all problems will be removed and all sicknesses healed if one only has enough faith is a deception. McPherson warned that the attitude "if it is His will to heal me, I am willing" brings no results (Epstein, p. 224). In fact, McPherson claimed that physical healing is part of the gospel. The "foursquare" gospel she promoted was Jesus Christ as Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Coming King. She claimed that she had obtained this gospel through a vision in 1922, in which God showed her that the Gospel was for body and soul and spirit. It was the same "foursquare gospel" being preached by the Elim Foursquare Gospel Association in Ireland (McPherson had worked with Elim's founder, George Jeffrys), the Assemblies of God in the United States, and other Pentecostal groups. The "full" Gospel, though, is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Aimee McPherson promised that physical healing is available to those who have complete faith. In spite of this, most who came to her meetings in search of healing left disappointed. To go through McPherson's healing line required that one obtain a card, and these were normally limited to 75 people.

The following sad case of a little girl who attended a McPherson revival crusade illustrates the plight of those who are duped by this false teaching:

"A little girl wore a pair of glasses one-half of which was entirely black. I gathered that she was totally blind in one eye and almost blind in the other. I sat upon the stage very close to the whole procedure. While prayer was being made for her, the little girl, who appeared to be about 11 years of age, wept and sobbed and writhed in her eagerness to secure the help that she had been led to expect. She left the platform and public claim was made by one of the workers that she had been healed, and the little girl verified the claim by a nod of the head given in reply to the question of the workers. An hour later, when the meeting was out, I noticed a small cluster of women near the platform. I thought I saw the blind little girl in their midst, so I asked my wife to go over and

investigate and talk to her if necessary. She found the erstwhile 'cured' girl flat on her face on the floor, sobbing, with shattered hopes and a breaking heart. Her disappointment was complete, and so was her disillusionment. The improved sight that she seemed to have had in the midst of the excitement on the platform had disappeared, and with it the hope of the little girl" (Arno Clemens Gaebelein, *The Healing Question*, New York: Our Hope Publications, 1925, p. 93).

Though there were some notable healings documented under McPherson's ministry, one of McPherson's biographers, Daniel Epstein (though extremely sympathetic to her), admitted that those healed were "mostly diseases of the immune system, or attributed to hysteria." He said: "Sister Aimee is not credited with raising anyone from the dead, correcting a harelip or cleft palate, or restoring a missing limb, digit, or internal organ" (Epstein, *Sister Aimee*, New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1993, p. 112).

McPherson preached an unscriptural positive-only message which predated the New Evangelical approach by many decades. Consider the following descriptions of her message by her biographer:

"Anticipating the 'creation theology' of Matthew Fox by sixty years, Aimee would stress grace above original sin, with the bait of love she would go 'fishing for whales.' Her preaching was anecdotal and affectionate, never threatening" (Epstein, p. 118).

"And she took the opportunity to condemn the method of Billy Sunday, the teetotaler who yelled at sinners and threatened them with damnation and hellfire. 'Let us lead them by kindness and sympathy,' Aimee advised" (Epstein, pp. 221,222).

"Aimee built her career by replacing the 'Gospel of Fear, Hellfire, and Damnation' with the 'Gospel of Reconciliation and Love'" (Epstein, p. 283).

McPherson's mother, Mildred (Minnie) Kennedy, worked as a business associate in her daughter's successful evangelistic empire. In fact, they owned the Angelus Temple outright, in a fifty-fifty partnership. They frequently got into terrific fights. In 1927 Aimee had her mother fired from the positions she had long held in her Foursquare church. Mildred returned for a brief time to help during a massive financial crisis created by Aimee's unwise investments, but in 1929 Mildred left her daughter Aimee's ministry permanently "after receiving a broken nose during an explosive argument" (Robert Bahr, *Least of All Saints*, p. 296). In 1937 Mildred sided with her granddaughter, Roberta, in a highly publicized lawsuit against Aimee's lawyer. The widowed Mildred Kennedy wed in 1931, but the marriage was annulled when it was learned that the man was already married. Later that same year the man obtained a quickie divorce in Las Vegas, Mildred met him there and they were remarried. The strange marriage lasted less than a year. When Aimee McPherson died of a drug overdose in 1944, she left her mother ten dollars with the stipulation that if Mildred contested it she would get nothing (Bahr, p. 282).

A.J. TOMLINSON

Another of the early Pentecostal leaders was A.J. TOMLINSON (1865-1943), founder of the CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY. Tomlinson was one of the most influential men in the formation of the Pentecostal movement. As a young man, Tomlinson, a mystical Quaker, accepted the teaching on healing in the atonement taught by Holiness-Pentecostal female evangelist Carrie Judd Montgomery. Before the turn of the century, he also accepted the false holiness doctrine of entire sanctification, that the dedicated Christian can be free from sin, and claimed that he had attained this experience. In 1901 he visited Frank Sandford's work in Maine and was baptized by Sandford. He joined a group which called itself "The Church of the Living God for the Evangelization of the World, Gathering of Israel, New Order of Things at the Close of the Gentile Age." The extreme latter rain position of this group was evident in its name. In 1903 he joined a congregation named the Holiness Church at Camp Creek, Tennessee, and was soon elected the pastor. In June of that year he claimed to have a vision that the true church of Jesus Christ was restored in his Holiness Church. Tomlinson believed the true church was lost in A.D. 325 and that it was restored in layers, beginning with the 16th-century Protestant Reformation and culminating with the founding of the Church of God in 1903. "To Tomlinson the group he was associated with was the only true and valid Christian communion 'this side of the Dark Ages'" (Vinson Synan,

The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, p. 76). Their meetings were often characterized by pandemonium, i.e., shouting, jerking, falling, writhing like serpents, trances. There were long lists of unscriptural prohibitions, including Coca Cola, pork, chewing gum, rings, bracelets, and neckties. Not only were such things forbidden, but those who used them were considered unsaved.

In 1907 the group officially adopted the name Church of God. In 1923 Tomlinson left the original Church of God group (which became the mainline Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) and formed his own organization, later called the Church of God of Prophecy. Tomlinson claimed that physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement and he taught against the use of medicine. He believed that tongues speaking is the evidence of salvation. He taught that a person can lose his salvation and then be reconverted, at which time he must be rebaptized. Tomlinson defended the practice of women preachers, and the Church of God of Prophecy has a large number of women pastors and denominational leaders. The unscriptural spirit slaying phenomenon has been a part of the Church of God of Prophecy from its inception. In 1940 Tomlinson purchased a 216-acre parcel and named it Field of the Woods, in recognition of the vision he was alleged to have had in 1903 by which he rediscovered the true church of God. After Tomlinson's death in 1943, the courts decreed that the denomination would be called Church of God of Prophecy to differentiate it from other groups which used the name Church of God. Tomlinson's successor was selected by a message allegedly given in tongues, then interpreted. Tomlinson's oldest son, Homer, started his own church after his father's death, and between 1954 and 1966 he traveled to the capitals of 101 countries and crowned himself as King of the World, promising peace and prosperity. He claimed that many national miracles followed these coronation ceremonies, and he took credit for stopping wars, halting massacres, and ending droughts.

A.A. ALLEN

Though hailed today by Benny Hinn and other Laughing Revival leaders as a great evangelist and healer, Pentecostal latter rain healing- evangelist A.A. ALLEN (1911-1970) was a drunkard and a charlatan. His *Miracle Magazine* was filled with incredible claims, such as the cure of a woman who allegedly shed 200 pounds instantly during one of his healing services. In 1956 he began claiming that miracle oil flowed from the hands and heads of those attending his meetings. This allegedly began when God poured supernatural oil on the hands of Lewin Burchan, a seven-year-old boy who was being used as a Pentecostal evangelist. In the 1960s, Allen launched a "raise the dead" campaign, urging his followers to believe God for resurrections. He had to stop this when some refused to bury their dead loved ones (Harrell, p. 199). Allen also claimed to have the authority to lay hands on those who gave to his ministry, granting them "the power to get wealth." Many of his books promised prosperity. Three of these were *The Secret to Scriptural Financial Success* (1953), *Power to Get Wealth* (1963), and *God's Guarantee to Bless and Prosper You Financially* (1968). In one story often related by Allen, he was praying for the money to pay a \$410 printing bill when the \$1 bills in his pocket were instantly changed to \$20 bills. Allen told his followers: "I believe I can command God to perform a miracle for you financially." Allen built his own 2400-acre community called Miracle Valley, in Arizona. His vast evangelistic empire took in about \$3.5 million annually, a massive amount of money for that time. Allen was arrested for drunk driving during a revival in 1955. He divorced his wife in 1967, in spite of the fact that she had stood by him during the many troubles he had brought upon himself, and three years later he died alone at a motel in San Francisco while his team was conducting a crusade in West Virginia. He was 59 years old and he had himself with liquor.

JACK COE

Another famous Pentecostal latter days healing evangelist was JACK COE (1918-1956). His ministry, too, was characterized by false teaching and outrageous and untrue claims. Though the Assemblies of God expelled him in 1953 for extremism, Coe's false teaching that healing is guaranteed in the atonement is shared by the Assemblies of God. He claimed that consulting physicians was connected with the mark of the beast (Simson, *The Faith Healer*, p. 164). In February 1956, at a healing crusade in Miami, Florida, Coe laid hands on a little boy who was stricken with polio. The boy's mother, Ann Clark, was told by Coe: "If you believe Jesus heals the child, take the braces off, and leave them off." She immediately removed the braces from the boy's feeble legs, but as he attempted to take a step, he collapsed to the floor. Believing the false teaching that Coe and the other faith healers preached that God had promised her boy's healing through faith, Mrs. Clark determined not to put

the braces back on. Soon the boy's legs began to swell and she took him to a doctor, who ordered the braces to be put back on. Her letter to Jack Coe, seeking his counsel, was ignored. She contacted the police and Coe was charged with practicing medicine without a license. After a highly publicized trial, the judge dismissed the case. Mrs. Clark's sad experience reminds us that the path of the Pentecostal movement is strewn with this type of heartache because it promises things which God has not promised.

Though he taught that healing was guaranteed in the atonement and warned his followers against using medicine and consulting physicians, Coe went to the hospital when he fell ill with polio only a few months after the aforementioned trial. He succumbed to this disease a few weeks later, and it would be difficult not to see the hand of God in such a remarkable coincidence. After Coe's death, his widow published a series of articles exposing the fraud of key healing evangelists.

CHARLES PRICE

CHARLES PRICE (1880-1947) was another of the famous latter day rain theology healing evangelists of the first half of the 20th century. He turned his back on modernistic theology after attending Aimee Semple McPherson's meeting in early 1920 and was "baptized in the Spirit" soon thereafter. Beginning in 1922 he conducted healing crusades in many parts of the world. In 1923, following a Price crusade in Vancouver, British Columbia, a group of physicians, professors, lawyers, and ministers followed up on the alleged healings. Of the 350 people who had claimed to be healed, they could not find any physical change in the conditions of 301, 39 had died within six months of the meeting, five had become insane, and five others appeared to be cured of "nervous disorders" (D. Richard Wolfe, "Faith Healing and Healing Faith," *Journal of the Indiana Medical Association*, 53, April 1959, cited from Eve Simson, *The Faith Healer*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1977, p. 166).

JAMAICA

Some of the Pentecostal healing evangelists of the 1950s reported that hundreds of deaf people were healed during meetings in JAMAICA. In 1962 G.H. Montgomery, associated with Jack Coe's widow, Juanita, exposed this fraud with the following report: "Some of these same evangelists reported that literally hundreds of deaf people were healed and received their hearing in the Jamaica meetings. Now, it so happens that we have a missionary daughter in Jamaica who works exclusively with deaf people. In five years of work with these people, neither she nor her colleagues have ever found so much as one person who was healed of total deafness" (Harrell, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 142).

AFRICA

Many of the more amazing healings and resurrections and other miracles reported by the latter rain people allegedly occur in AFRICA and Asia and South America, far away from those who are being told about the miracles. Oftentimes when someone has occasion to follow-up on these miracles, they are found to be false. In 1984 evangelist Duncan Leighton followed the DEREK PRINCE team through Zambia where thousands of miracle healings were claimed. Leighton's efforts to document genuine miracle healings were fruitless (Leighton, *Signs, One Wonders*, cited in *The Healing Epidemic*, p. 216). A missionary doctor who followed up on reports of miracle healings in Africa in the mid 1940s also could not find any genuine organic healings. "I have not come across a single case of undoubted cure proved by medical examination of the clinical condition before and after the alleged healing" (Ibid., p. 219).

DAVID DUPLESSIS

Another example of the confusion which has characterized the Pentecostal movement throughout its history is the ministry of DAVID DUPLESSIS (1905-1987), one of the key men in bringing together Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. Duplessis' parents came under the influence of Pentecostal missionaries out of John Dowie's Zion City. They were put out of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa when they accepted the heretical doctrines of the latter rain miracle revival, healing in the atonement, and spirit baptism with the evidence of tongues. Duplessis' father became a part-time Pentecostal preacher and refused to allow his family to take medicines or visit doctors. He even refused veterinary care for his livestock and was briefly jailed for causing

the needless deaths of plagued cattle. David Duplessis claimed that he had a Pentecostal spirit baptism experience in 1918 and in 1930 he was ordained as a Pentecostal preacher. Six years later Pentecostal evangelist Smith Wigglesworth prophesied over Duplessis that he would be one of God's instruments in a coming worldwide ecumenical revival. By the 1950s Duplessis became immersed in the task of ecumenism. He preached that God was pouring out the latter rain power just preceding Christ's return. He traveled widely, visiting the apostate leaders of the various mainline denominations. He became friends with the modernistic leaders of the World Council of Churches and participated in the second assembly of the WCC in 1954 and in the third assembly in 1961. He was invited to the Vatican to speak personally with Pope John XXIII and was the only Pentecostal invited to attend the Roman Catholic Vatican II Council of the mid-1960s. In his autobiography he testified that his heart broke and he literally wept during the performance of the Catholic mass (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, p. 215). Throughout these experiences, Duplessis thought he was led by the Lord because of the "prophecies" he had received and also because of various powerful emotional and spiritual experiences. When he met with 24 modernistic ecumenical leaders in 1956, for example, he said he "felt a warm glow come over me" and his attitude of judging doctrine melted away. "I felt such love and compassion for those ecclesiastical leaders that I would rather have died for them than pass sentence upon them." He contrasted this with the "old days" when he would have denounced their false theology (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, p. 181). When he first visited the Vatican, Duplessis claimed that a similar experience caused his prejudice against Catholicism to melt away so that thereafter he could readily accept Catholic priests as brothers in Christ without any judgmentalism whatsoever regarding their doctrine. Through powerful emotional experiences at mass during the Vatican II council, Duplessis says he was purged entirely from suspicion about Catholic doctrine (p. 216).

As a young man Duplessis was prepared for the deception he experienced in the ecumenical movement. He claimed that he got his guidance from God in direct revelations and also through "tongues." In his autobiography, he said that in his early spiritual life God showed him that tongues was a means for determining the divine will. "... the light clicked on. I was speaking to God in tongues, and He was speaking back to me in my mind. I began to find beautiful revelation that way. Praying in tongues proved to be a wonderful step in working my way out of such an impasse [in not being able to discern God's will]. I would merely pray in tongues, and if the idea held firm, then I knew it was real" (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, pp. 76-78). This testimony reflects the deep and frightful spiritual ignorance which caused Duplessis to be led from deception to deception throughout his life. The Pentecostal movement has been characterized by this confusion and deception throughout the century. Though Duplessis lost his ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God for awhile for his radical ecumenism, he retained his membership in an Assembly of God congregation and his ministerial credentials were formally reinstated with the AOG in 1980.

SMITH WIGGLESWORTH

SMITH WIGGLESWORTH (1859-1947) was a famous Pentecostal evangelist and faith healer. Many books have been written about his unusual life. He was converted in a Methodist church, confirmed as an Anglican, and as a young man was associated with the Salvation Army and Plymouth Brethren. In 1907 he claimed that he was "baptised in the Holy Spirit" after hands were laid on him by Mary Boddy, who alleged to have had a Pentecostal experience only a month prior to that. Mrs. Boddy believed in the doctrine of healing in the atonement, but she spent the last sixteen years of her life as an invalid. Wigglesworth, too, believed that physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement of Christ. He taught against the use of all medicine. He believed that signs and wonders should always follow the preaching of the Gospel. He taught that a Christian can be justified and sanctified but still not have everything necessary from God. "People are never safe until they are baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Wigglesworth, "The Place of Power," June 1916, reprinted in *The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 151). He taught that handkerchiefs which are prayed over will bring life if carried in faith to the sick (*The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 231). He taught: "Jesus came to set us free from sin, to free us from sickness, so that we should go forth in the power of the Spirit and minister to the needy, sick, and afflicted" (Wigglesworth, "Divine Life Brings Divine Health," *Pentecostal Evangel*, Jan. 17, 1942). He claimed that the Christian has the power to speak things into existence: "God declares, 'You have an anointing.' Believe God and you will see this happen. What you say will come to pass. Speak the word and the bound shall be free, the sick shall be healed" (Wigglesworth, "Power from on High," *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 27, 1944).

Like today's Word-Faith preachers, Wigglesworth failed to make a proper distinction between the person and ministry of Jesus Christ and that of the Christian. He claimed that Jesus Christ increased in the fullness of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit. "I want you to understand that after the trials, after all the temptations and everything, Jesus comes out more full of God, more clothed in the Spirit, more ready for the fight" (Wigglesworth, "The Place of Power," June 1916, reprinted in *The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 146). This is heresy. The Lord Jesus Christ was God the Son. He could not be "more full of God." Further, He was given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to be our example; He came to be our Savior (Lk. 19:10). Wigglesworth also taught that the Christian can operate in the same omnipotent power that Christ exercised. "Dare you come into the place of omnipotence? ... God's design is to bring you to the place where you will be a son clothed with the power of gifts and graces, ministries and operations, to bring you into glory, clothed with the majesty of heaven. For he shall bring many sons and daughters unto glory--unto son-likeness, son-perfection" (Wigglesworth, "The Privileges of Sonship," August 1924, reprinted in *The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 221). This is very similar to the false Manifest Sons of God theology of the perfectibility of certain saints, and it is the same heresy as that taught today by Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and other Word-Faith teachers. Again, it is a confusion of this present life with that which is to come. They would mock this statement, claiming that my problem is unbelief and spiritual blindness, but the fact remains that they cannot do the miracles that Christ performed. The Lord Jesus Christ never conducted a healing crusade and He never took up an offering before He performed His signs and wonders. He did not have any rock music to stir up the crowd. He did not laugh hysterically or stagger about like a drunk man. He could raise the dead and heal every sickness without fail. No Pentecostal preacher has ever been able to do this.

Wigglesworth taught a form of sinless perfection. He stated: "I am realizing very truly these days that there is a sanctification of the Spirit where the thoughts are holy, where the life is beautiful, with no blemish" (Wigglesworth, "Count It All Joy," August 1925, reprinted in *The Anointing of His Spirit*, p. 226). Oh, that this were the truth, but it is not. The Apostle Paul described his experience in these words: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 8:18,24). There is spiritual victory through the Holy Spirit in this life, but it is not the experience described by Wigglesworth. It is not a life in which the thoughts are perfectly holy and in which there is no blemish. This is the destructive heresy of perfectionism, of complete sanctification, which has led multitudes of sincere people down the road of confusion and despair. To encourage people to seek and demand that which God has not promised is to expose them to demonic delusion and fleshly fanaticism.

The popular Bible commentator Harry Ironside began his ministry as a young man with the Salvation Army. He earnestly sought the sinless perfection experience, and at one point he thought he "had it." Alas, though, he soon realized that his old sin nature was still present and active. In great despair he was committed to a hospital in a state of emotional and spiritual breakdown. There God brought him into contact with literature which taught the way of biblical sanctification and with Christians who could help him understand his salvation correctly. He became established in the Faith and went on to have a long and fruitful ministry of the Word of God. His testimony is in the book *Holiness: The False and the True*, which is published by Loizeaux Brothers, P.O. Box 277, Neptune, NJ 07754-0277. 800- 526-2796 (orders), 908-774-0641 (fax). This book is also available in the "Charismatic" section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/>

Wigglesworth preached constantly on the power of faith, but he failed to balance his teaching with the absolute necessity of submitting one's faith to the sovereign will of God. He failed to distinguish properly between this present life and the resurrection life which is to come (Romans 8:18- 25). Instead he taught: "Jesus would have us come forth in divine likeness, in resurrection force, in the power of the Spirit, to walk in faith and understand his Word, what he meant when he said he would give us power over all the power of the enemy. Christ will subdue all things till everything comes into perfect harmony with his will" (Wigglesworth, "The Substance of Things Hoped For," *Pentecostal Evangel*, Oct. 25, 1924). This is a destructive doctrinal error which causes people to be confused about what they can and cannot expect from God in this present time. Such false teaching produces great confusion and results in the overthrowing of the faith of great numbers of people who, having tried to exercise the faith spoken of by the Pentecostal preacher and having failed to achieve the desired miracle,

give up in great despair. Faith is trusting God and His Word NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES, whether He does miracles or whether He does not do miracles. Faith is waiting on God to bring His promises to pass, regardless of what I am experiencing in this present life. Hebrews 11 reminds us that there are two kinds of faith: that which overcomes difficulties (Heb. 11:32- 35a) and that which endures difficulties (Heb. 11:35b-40).

In spite of his teaching that God promises perfect physical wholeness and that the Christian can operate in the same sign gifts that Christ exhibited, very few of those who sought Wigglesworth's healing ministrations were ever healed. His own wife died a mere six years after he became a Pentecostal, and his son died two years after that. His daughter, who assisted in his meetings, was never healed of her deafness. For three years Wigglesworth himself suffered with gallstones.

In 1936 Wigglesworth gave a prophecy to the aforementioned David DuPlessis that God would pour out His Spirit upon all denominations and that the Pentecostal experience would sweep the world. DuPlessis was told that he would play a significant role in this movement. The fulfillment of the prophecy has proven that it was not of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:27; 16:13; 1 John 4:6), and wherever He holds sway in men's lives He enlightens their minds to the truth and causes them to abhor error. In contrast, the ecumenical-Charismatic "renewal" with which David DuPlessis was associated, is a movement which confirms people in their doctrinal error. Catholics remained committed to Roman heresies. Modernists remained committed to their unbelief. Members of apostate denominations remained committed to the apostasy. The ecumenical-Charismatic renewal has broken down the walls between truth and error and has been one of the chief glues of the end-times one-world church movement.

KENNETH HAGIN, SR.

KENNETH HAGIN, SR. (1917-) is one of the most influential Pentecostal leaders today. He claims that his teaching was given to him by God, but in fact he plagiarized heavily from the writings of E.W. KENYON (1867-1948). D.R. McConnell, in his book *A Different Gospel*, documents this with pages of comparisons proving beyond question that Hagin plagiarized Kenyon's writings. McConnell introduces this section of his book by saying: "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." Plagiarism is not only deceit; it is a criminal offense.

Kenyon was a Baptist pastor and never joined the Pentecostal movement (though he did move in Pentecostal circles toward the end of his life), but his pioneer radio broadcasts and voluminous writings had broad influence in the Deeper Life and Pentecostal-Charismatic movements. Though he did not use the term "revelation" to describe his teaching, he presented his doctrine as new and history-changing. He claimed that if his message were followed it would create a master race of Christians who would have complete power over demons and disease. In his book *Identification*, he stated: "When these truths really gain the ascendancy in us, they will make us spiritual supermen, masters of demons and disease. ... It will be the end of weakness and failure" (*Identification*, Seattle: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1968, p. 68). In his early years Kenyon was influenced by Methodist sinless perfectionism and by New Thought doctrine. It is obvious that he borrowed heavily from the latter. D.R. McConnell masterfully traces this connection in his book *A Different Gospel*. In 1892 Kenyon enrolled in the Emerson College of Oratory, "an institution that was absolutely inundated with metaphysical, cultic ideas and practices" (McConnell, *A Different Gospel*, p. 34). Charles Wesley Emerson, the head of Emerson College, was a Unitarian minister and eventually joined Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science movement. A number of Emerson graduates went on to become prominent Christian Science practitioners. One graduate of Emerson compiled *The Complete Concordance of the Writings of Mary Baker Eddy*. Another graduate wrote the book *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy*. Emerson's "religion was a veritable smorgasbord of the sources underlying New Thought metaphysics: Platonism, Swedenborgianism, New England Unitarianism, and Emersonian Transcendentalism. All of these various elements were held together by heavy proof-texting from the Bible and a quasi-Darwinian view of the religious evolution of humanity which ended in man becoming a god" (Ibid., p. 35). Though Kenyon claimed to be opposed to the New Thought cults and though he claimed to derive his teaching strictly from the Bible, there is no question that he incorporated many New Thought ideas into his doctrine. Like New Thought, Kenyon taught that the spiritual is the cause of all

physical effects and that positive confession has the power to create its own reality. He believed that healing and other ongoing miracles are necessary to demonstrate the reality of Christianity. He considered his writings "to be a wonderful new interpretation of the Scriptures, a 'new type of Christianity,' which would bring healing and prosperity to all who possessed his revelation knowledge of the Bible" (McConnell, p. 50).

Kenneth Hagin's positive-confession teachings, which he derived at least partially from Kenyon, have spawned an entire movement within modern Pentecostalism, and its proponents have vast influence. The Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements admits that "Kenyon's writings became seminal for the ministries of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Don Gossett, Charles Capps, and others in the Word of Faith and Positive Confession movements." This Dictionary also notes that Kenyon influenced Ern Baxter, F.F. Bosworth, David Nunn, T.L. Osborn, Jimmy Swaggart, "and many others." In a survey taken by *Charisma* magazine in 1985, seven Word-Faith teachers ranked among the top 24 most influential Charismatic leaders. Kenneth Hagin, Sr., ranked third. Hagin protege Kenneth Copeland ranked second. Other Word-Faith teachers listed in the survey were Marilyn Hickey, Fred Price, Robert Tilton, John Osteen, and Norvel Hayes.

Hagin teaches that Christ's physical death did not remove sin. Rather, it was Christ's alleged spiritual death and his alleged struggles in hell which removed sin. Hagin teaches that Christ was sent to hell and there he struggled against Satan and the demons and by his victory over them he was born again. This is heresy of the greatest sort. The Bible plainly states that we are redeemed by Christ's death and blood (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14; 10:10). The atonement was finished on the cross. When Christ dismissed His spirit from his body, He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Lord Jesus Christ was not born again; He was never lost. He bore our sin, but He was never a sinner. He was never tormented in hell by Satan and the demons. Nowhere does the Bible say that Satan is in hell or that he has any influence in hell. One happy day in the future he will be bound for 1,000 years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3) and ultimately he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), but nowhere does the Bible say Satan is the master of hell.

Hagin further teaches that the Christian is an incarnation of God like Jesus was. "The believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth" (Hagin, "The Incarnation," *The Word of Faith*, Dec. 1980, cited from Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis*, pp. 175, 397). This is a gross heresy. The Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. He is the eternal Son of God. Nowhere is the believer said to be an incarnation of Almighty God. The Lord Jesus Christ performed miracles to demonstrate that He was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. No Christian can do the things that Christ did. Not one Pentecostal preacher has ever been able to perform the miracles that Christ performed. It is blasphemous confusion to claim that the believer is an incarnation of God like Christ was.

Hagin has been guided by alleged visitations of angels and of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. His book *I Believe in Visions* describes eight of these. The seventh occurred December 12, 1962. Hagin claims the Lord prophesied to him in this visitation that He would soon begin to move among all denominations to "bring them into a full salvation and into the baptism of the Holy Ghost." Hagin claims that Jesus Christ told him that he would play a part in this ecumenical miracle revival. As we have seen, a similar prophecy was given to David DuPlessis by Smith Wigglesworth in 1936. The ecumenical-Charismatic movement which has since swept through the Roman Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant denominations would appear to be a fulfillment of these prophecies. DuPlessis was the first to carry Pentecostal experiences to the Roman Catholic Church. He was the only Pentecostal to attend Rome's Vatican II Council in the mid 1960s. The succeeding ecumenical-Charismatic movement has not been based on the Word of God, though. Charismatic Catholics who have received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" have not turned away from Rome's heresies but instead have found that their love for heresy has been rekindled. They have fallen in love with the false Catholic Mary and with the false Catholic mass and with the blasphemous office of the pope. I have witnessed the unscriptural fruit of the ecumenical Charismatic movement firsthand. In 1987 and again in 1990 I attended with press credentials two of the largest Charismatic conferences ever held. They were organized by the North America Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization. Roughly 40 denominations were represented. Fifty percent of the attendees were Roman Catholic. A Catholic mass was featured every morning. Catholic priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the concluding message at both meetings. In Indianapolis Forrest preached a message on why he was thankful for Roman Catholicism, and he said that he praised the Lord for Mary the Queen of Heaven and for purgatory!

Upon the authority of the Bible I can testify that the ecumenical-Charismatic "revival" is demonically inspired because it produces doctrinal error instead of truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of TRUTH.

Hagin has taught a health-prosperity gospel. He says: "Like salvation, healing is a gift, already paid for at Calvary. All we need to do is accept it. All we need to do is possess the promise that is ours. As children of God, we need to realize that healing belongs to us" (Hagin, *Healing Belongs to Us*, p. 32). He further says: "God is glorified through healing and deliverance, not sickness and suffering" (Hagin, *The Key to Scriptural Healing*, p. 17). Hagin's claims do not match reality, though. A few years ago he claimed that he hadn't been sick in 60 years, but actually he has had several cardiovascular crises, one lasting six weeks. Heart disease is a sickness, dear friends!

As for prosperity, Hagin claims that the Lord spoke to him in a vision in 1959 with the words: "If you will learn to follow that inward witness I will make you rich. I will guide you in all the affairs of life, financial as well as spiritual" (Hagin, *How to Be Led by the Holy Spirit*). In an article "How God Taught Me about Prosperity," Hagin claims that Jesus Christ taught him not to think that it is wrong to have riches. Allegedly Christ told him not to "pray about money anymore; that is, the way you've been praying. CLAIM WHATEVER YOU NEED." Christ allegedly further taught Hagin that he has personal angels who can be commanded to do his bidding. Hagin says Christ told him in 1963 that the angels were waiting for his command to provide his material desires. "They are waiting on you to give them the order, just as the waitress cannot do anything for you until you give her the order" (Hagin, *I Believe in Visions*, p. 126).

This is the source for the terms "word-faith" or "positive confession." That which the believer confesses with his mouth will be true in reality. Various forms of this false idea have spread throughout many parts of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement today.

Hagin's ministry has been characterized by phenomena which we would characterize as demonic. The unscriptural "spirit slaying" phenomenon has been a major part of his ministry. He describes many people who have fallen into trances during his meetings. He claims one teenage girl was in a trance for almost nine hours, and that when he and a pastor tried to move her, the two of them were unable to budge her off the floor, in spite of the fact that this pastor was a large man weighing more than 200 pounds. He tells of other people being glued to the floor so that no one could move them. On one occasion, when someone was levitated in a meeting, Hagin's wife and two other people questioned whether it was of the Lord. He claims that God instructed him to touch all three of them on the forehead with his little finger, and when he did so, they were knocked to the floor and paralyzed so that they could not get up. They were not allowed to rise until they acknowledged that Hagin's power was of God. When they admitted this, Hagin touched them again with his finger and they were released (McConnell, p. 64). Hagin tells of a woman who danced off a platform and levitated in the air while she was "dancing in the Spirit." He claims to have visited both Heaven and Hell.

Hagin has been in the center of the current Laughing Revival. We have previously related that it was during a Rodney Howard-Browne crusade at Hagin's church that Vineyard pastor Randy Clark received the "anointing" which he subsequently carried to Toronto. I have seen video recordings of a conference conducted by Kenneth Hagin, Sr., Kenneth Hagin, Jr., and Kenneth Copeland in Chesterfield, Missouri, October 12-24, 1997. It is one of the strangest and most unscriptural things I have ever witnessed. Hagin, Sr. staggers around like a drunk, sticking his tongue out and wiggling it like a serpent. He blows and hisses and pants, blowing on people, waving his arms at them, striking them on the head, while entire rows of people fall down or slide out of their seats in a drunken stupor as he lurches by. Women fall to the floor in all sorts of compromising positions and have to be covered with the assistance of ladies who are assigned that task. Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin, Jr., are right in the middle of the insanity, acting as if they were completely drunken on liquor, rolling on the floor, making strange noises, laughing hysterically for no apparent reason. One of Hagin's helpers, a large man who is attempting to hold the senior Hagin upright, is overcome with drunkenness and falls into the lap of an attractive woman. Pandemonium and confusion reign. Four men are required to help the drunken Hagin get back onto the speaker's platform.

Hagin's influence has been phenomenal. Thousands of students have graduated from his Rhema Bible Training Center and have gone throughout the world planting churches patterned after his ministry. The stated purpose of

Rhema is "to produce graduates who will carry forth the great charismatic renewal that God has sent into our time." His daily radio program is broadcast on more than 180 stations in the States and by short-wave to about 80 other countries. By the late 1980s, more than three million of his 85 books and a half million of his sermons on audio cassette were being distributed each year. His monthly *Word of Faith* magazine goes to 190,000 homes.

[Continued in Part 3 of 3.](#)