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Healing and Kenneth Hagin

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HEALING AND KENNETH HAGIN

Keith Warrington

1. Introduction

Kenneth Hagin (1917-) represents and is widely accepted as the father of the Word of Faith Ministries¹ though his mantle has largely fallen to Kenneth and Gloria Copeland who, through the magazine "Believer's Voice of Victory," promulgate a similar message concerning healing.² Because of the impact of his teaching concerning healing,³ with its attendant reactions,⁴ it is appropriate to analyze his beliefs and

¹ Others who would have similar beliefs include Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin Jr., Fred Price, Charles Capps, Norvel Hayes, Marilyn Hickey, Robert Tilton, Jerry Savelle, Bob and Marte Tilton, John Osteen, Charles and Frances Hunter. See J. Savelle, *Sharing Jesus Effectively: A Handbook on Successful Soul-Winning* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1982), p. 14; K. Hagin, Jr., "Trend Toward Faith Movement," *Charisma*, August, 1985, pp. 67 (67); D. Hollinger, "Enjoying God Forever: An Historical/Sociological Profile of the Health and Wealth Gospel," *Trinity Journal* 9:2 (1988), pp. 131-49.

² K. Copeland, "The Great Exchange," *Believer's Voice of Victory*, Feb. 1996, pp. 4-8.

³ D. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 7-8; According to Hagin (<http://www.rhema.org/khm.htm>), with the writings of his son, Kenneth Hagin Jr., they have distributed 53 million books with 58000 tapes being distributed every month. (The site was checked on Feb 10, 1999.)

⁴ G. M. Burge, "Problems in the Healing Ministries within the Charismatic Context," *Society for Pentecostal Studies Conference Papers, 1983*; D. H. Simmons, "Hagin-Heretic or Herald of God? A Theological and Historical Analysis of Kenneth E. Hagin's Claim to Be a Prophet" (M.A. thesis, Tulsa: Oral Roberts University, 1985); K. S. Kantzer, "The Cut-Rate Grace of a Health and Wealth Gospel," *Christianity Today* 29:9, June 4, 1985, pp. 14-15; J. A. Matta, *The Born Again Jesus of the Word Faith Teaching* (Fullerton: Spirit of Truth Ministry, 1987); D. J. Moo, "Divine Healing in the Health and Wealth Gospel," *Trinity Journal* 9:2 (1988), pp. 191-98; H. T. Neuman, "Cultic Origins of Word-

practices. Despite his attempts to prove that Christians may emulate the healing ministry of Jesus, he assumes major differences that undermine such a link. These will now be explored.

2. Faith

A major feature in his healing theory relates to the concept of faith. It will be analyzed under the following headings that explicate his views.

2.1 Faith Is Integral to Healing

Hagin believes that faith is crucial to the occurrence of healing. He affirms the view that “the healings of Jesus...demanded faith.”⁵ This faith, he anticipates, will always be present in the person healed or those present. Thus, speaking of the healing of Jairus’ daughter, he writes, “Jesus didn’t do this (heal his daughter) on his own...He (Jairus) had something to do with it.”⁶ Elsewhere, he contradicts himself, writing that some do get healed even though no faith has been expressed.⁷

Similarly, referring to the paucity of healings by Jesus in Nazareth recorded in Mark 6:5, he states, “the Greek says he tried to but he couldn’t...because of their unbelief...The few that did get healed had minor ailments...If He couldn’t do it at Nazareth, He can’t do it now.”⁸

Faith Theology within the Charismatic Movement,” *Pneuma* 12:1 (1990), pp. 32-55; V. Synan, “The Faith of Kenneth E. Hagin,” *Charisma and Christian Life*, June 1990, pp. 65-66; H. H. Knight, III, “God’s Faithfulness and God’s Freedom: A Comparison of Contemporary Theologies of Healing,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 65-89 (69-66); T. Smail, A. Walker, and N. Wright, “‘Revelation Knowledge’ and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 5 (1996), pp. 57-77; S-B Kim, “A Bed of Roses or a Bed of Thorns,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 20:1 (1996), pp. 14-25 (17-19).

⁵ K. E. Hagin, “Physical Healing through the Spirit” (audio-cassette), Knutsford: Faith Builders (n.d.); he claims that Trophimus did not have enough faith to be healed, K. E. Hagin, *The Key to Scriptural Healing* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1978), p. 13; cf. “Healing” (sermon-audio; Birmingham, Alabama, May 22, 1973).

⁶ Hagin, “Physical Healing.”

⁷ Hagin, “Healing.”

⁸ K. E. Hagin, “Healing and How to Keep It” (audio-cassette; Knutsford: Faith Builder, n.d.). Elsewhere, e.g., *Hear And Be Healed* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin

Notwithstanding his factual errors, he also indicates an inadequate Christology. He chooses not to examine the occasions when Jesus healed people despite the absence of faith on their part nor to clarify why apparently despite an absence of faith, some did get healed at Nazareth. He refers to Mark 7:32-37, in which Jesus takes the deaf man aside to minister to him, writing, “the Lord told me that He did this because there was so much unbelief in the town.”⁹ Whilst not providing any biblical support for this perception, he again provides conflicting views, acknowledging, “God will put up with a little unbelief in you when you don’t know any better.”¹⁰

He also believes that a lack of desire results in a lack of healing.¹¹ He describes two believers who gave up believing that they were being healed and died, when medically they did not need to, their reason being that they had seen Heaven and wanted to go.¹² No biblical evidence is offered for his beliefs; neither does the New Testament imply that Jesus needed a prior desire for healing to be reflected in people before he could heal them.

He further states, “if you received healing by somebody else’s faith, it would not be permanent,” advising the believer, “if you are to receive any permanent help then you are going to have to act in faith yourself.”¹³ However, there are occasions in the New Testament¹⁴ when the faith of another was a key in achieving the needed restoration though there is no suggestion that the problem reverted to the sufferer at a later date.

He also writes of people who “have lost their healing” or who have been “robbed by the Devil”¹⁵ due to the fact that “they didn’t know their authority. They didn’t know how to hold onto what they had.”¹⁶ He

Ministries, 1979), p. 13, he attributes the lack of healing at Nazareth to an absence of a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

⁹ *Bible Faith Study Course* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1974), p. 113.

¹⁰ *The Art of Intercession* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1980), p. 78.

¹¹ *What to Do When Faith Seems Weak And Victory Lost* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), p. 75.

¹² *What to Do*, pp. 80-84.

¹³ *Bible Faith*, p. 63.

¹⁴ Matt 8:5-13; 9:18-26; 15:21-28.

¹⁵ “Healing and How to Keep It.”

¹⁶ *The Believer’s Authority* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1984), p. 63; cf. K. E. Hagin, “The Individual’s Faith” (audio-cassette; Knutsford: Faith Builder,

comments on many Christians who do not feel worthy enough to receive healing and thus fail to receive it.¹⁷ The above statements are presented with no affirmatory biblical evidence. Instead, personal experiences are offered. A major problem with Hagin's teaching concerning faith is his definition of faith which differs from the faith commended by Jesus.

2.2 Faith Is Based on Apparent Scriptural Promises

His definition of faith equates to a belief that God will heal the sufferer. As a result of his interpretative grid, he thus writes, "If Jesus appeared to you in a vision and said that it was not His will to heal you, He would be making Himself out to be a liar."¹⁸ Hagin asserts that his views are based on promises located in the Bible.¹⁹

He states, "You have a right to believe for anything God's Word promises you."²⁰ In this he is correct. However, it is his interpretation of those "promises" that is to be critiqued. The flaw in Hagin's belief system is not his stress on God's faithfulness; it is in stressing a particular analysis that results in a definition of faith that is suspect, being exegetically invalid.

Compounding the inappropriateness of his views is his illegitimate hermeneutic where the meaning of the biblical text is distorted. Thus, he believes that the promise of healing to the believer is "at least 70 or 80 years (That should be a minimum - and you can go on up, according to how much you can believe for)."²¹ He records an incident where he

n.d.); *Healing Belongs To Us* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1986), pp. 18-19.

¹⁷ K. E. Hagin, *The Real Faith* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), pp. 23-24.

¹⁸ *What To Do*, p. 96.

¹⁹ *Bible Prayer Study Course* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d), p. 5; he questions the quality of the better Covenant promised to believers in Hebrews 8:6 if it does not include similar promises to that in the old Covenant (cf. K. E. Hagin, "Healing Is Provided in the New Testament" [audio-cassette; Knutsford: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.]. Against the charge of some that "that is just for Israel," he states, "if God was opposed to His people being sick then, He is opposed to it now because God never changes" (*Seven Things You Should Know about Divine Healing* [Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979], p. 20).

²⁰ *What To Do*, pp. 31, 33; K. E. Hagin, *What Faith Is* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1983), pp. 1, 11.

²¹ *What To Do*, p. 44.

prayed for himself and a colleague because they were to eat food that would normally react against them because of allergies and ulcers. He comments, “My faith worked. It worked because the Scriptures teach that food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim 4:4, 5). It worked because this was something that was good and necessary.”²² However, verse 3 explains that the author is not describing a physical protection of the believer from certain foods but pronouncing the legitimacy of marriage and certain foods forbidden by deceivers in the church. At the same time, Hagin admits refraining from the exercise of faith when it came to a painful physical reaction he experienced when drinking coffee noting, “I had enough sense to know my faith would not work there. Coffee has no food value.”²³ There is, however, no justification for this arbitrary reasoning.

This elasticity of meaning is noted elsewhere. He describes the theory that “faith will work in your heart with doubt in your head.”²⁴ He appears to achieve this by recognizing that though the mind may doubt God’s promises, by concentrating on the promises, one can overcome one’s doubts.²⁵ However, he also states of the unhealed, “the reason they are not healed is that they are thinking wrong,”²⁶ echoing neo-gnosticism and an anthropocentric resolution to the problem concerned. Such an incoherent view of faith is of little help to the sufferer though may be of use to the faith healer for its discontinuous nature is flexible enough to accommodate the success or failure achieved without calling into question the integrity of the faith healer’s beliefs.

2.3 Faith Is Believing That What Is Asked Is Yours

Hagin advises the sufferer, “never permit a mental picture of failure to remain in your mind...Doubt is the devil.”²⁷ Questioning whether it is the will of God to heal “violates the promises of God”²⁸ and as such may be described as “an unwillingness to allow the Word of God to govern

²² *What To Do*, p. 26, his colleague ate chili!

²³ *What To Do*, p. 27.

²⁴ *What To Do*, p. 70.

²⁵ *What To Do*, pp. 71-72.

²⁶ K. E. Hagin, *Right and Wrong Thinking* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1966), p. 19.

²⁷ *Bible Prayer*, p. 8.

²⁸ *What To Do*, p. 55.

our lives.”²⁹ He therefore states, “as long as you hope, it’ll never materialize...But the moment you start believing, it will work.”³⁰ Faith is defined as “expecting” to be healed.³¹ Furthermore, though symptoms still remain, he advocates praising God for their restoration,³² instructing his readers, “act as though you have received what you asked.”³³ Drawing from Genesis 17:5, Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 13:8, and particularly Romans 4:17, he argues that faith is exercised by “calling those things which be not as though they were.”³⁴ He concedes that the latter may take some time for “God will permit you to be tried and tested in faith right up to the end.”³⁵ Indeed, he records that the real test of one’s faith that one has been healed occurs when one is suffering pain,³⁶ though he fails to provide a parallel in the ministry of Jesus whom he is apparently imitating.

In attempting to expose the meaning of Mark 11:23f, he writes, “I saw that the verse says that you have to believe when you pray. The having comes after the believing.” From this, he deduces, “I’ve got to believe that my paralysis is gone while I’m still lying here on this bed, and while my heart is not beating right.”³⁷ He records an incident where a woman had received more than one prayer for healing by a congregation and had died. His assessment was that “instead of praying again for her healing, they should have raised their hands and thanked God that she had been healed.”³⁸ No valid textual evidence is forwarded for this view.

More particularly, these aspects are not supported in the healing ministry of Jesus, a ministry that elsewhere he strongly advocates should be the pattern to be emulated by believers. Jesus does not condemn doubt nor demand faith; there is no evidence of symptoms remaining after the healing; neither is it recorded that ongoing symptoms are a test of one’s faith nor does Jesus request gratitude before the healing occurs. At the

²⁹ *The Real Faith*, p. 18.

³⁰ *Bible Faith*, pp. 15, 20.

³¹ “Healings Can Be Obtained.”

³² *Bible Prayer*, pp. 9, 12, 50-51, 120.

³³ *Bible Prayer*, p. 115.

³⁴ *What To Do*, pp. 103, 106.

³⁵ *What To Do*, p. 51.

³⁶ *The Real Faith*, pp. 19-20.

³⁷ K. E. Hagin, *I Believe in Visions* (Old Tappan: Revell, 1972), pp. 27-28.

³⁸ *Bible Prayer*, p. 14.

same time, Biblical support for God subjecting people to such treatment to prove their faith concerning an apparent promise of healing is lacking. The fluidity of his definition of faith is thus again noted; elsewhere, he argues that the authority to be healed has been delegated by Jesus to the believer, though he does not appear to appreciate the incongruity of God withholding such a right from the believer and thus aiding the Devil whom he views as being the instigator of the sickness in the first place.

2.4 Faith Is a Force with Innate Power

Hagin interprets Mark 5:34 as an occasion when “Jesus said ‘your faith did it,’”³⁹ elsewhere writing, “your own faith can initiate healing...You don’t have to wait for God to move.”⁴⁰ He views faith as a law that God has instituted in the universe, as a result of which automatic responses can be achieved; he states that if one, even an unbeliever, engages in “co-operating with the law of God - the law of faith,” s/he would get “results.”⁴¹ That unbelievers can “use” this faith indicates that God’s promises to believers are apparently able to be appropriated by unbelievers. He advocates a quasi-magical technique in which the concept of faith becomes the key for transformation. God is not part of the equation; instead, faith is recognized as the authoritative quality needed. In this regard, faith is little more than a cosmic channel that allows mankind to harness divine resources whenever it chooses without entering into any covenantal relationship with God. None of the above beliefs are reflected in the teaching or ministry of Jesus.

2.5 Medicine Is Equivalent to a Lack of Faith

Hagin regards it as illegitimate for a believer to visit a doctor for therapy believing that healing for the Christian should only be by supernatural means.⁴² As a result of an apparent divine revelation, he informed his hearers that healing via medicine is second best, supernatural healing being preferable.⁴³

³⁹ “The Individual’s Faith.”

⁴⁰ *What To Do*, p. 61.

⁴¹ K. E. Hagin, *Having Faith in your Faith* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1980), pp. 3-4.

⁴² *Having Faith*, p. 151.

⁴³ “Healing Can Be Lost” (audio-cassette; Knutsford: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.).

Interpretations of Scripture offered to support his view are illegitimate. He eisegetically interprets the statement that Hezekiah “turned away to the wall” (Isaiah 38:2) as meaning “he turned away from man...from his own symptoms...his own sufferings...medical skill,”⁴⁴ as a result of which “now God could do something for him.”⁴⁵ There is no suggestion that Jesus objected to medical therapies. It is significant that such is mentioned in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). Elsewhere, the New Testament advocates medical therapy (1 Tim 5:23).

2.6 Faith Can Be Developed

Hagin advocates that believers “find the Scriptures that promise you the things you are praying for” and then “go over them again, and again, and again.”⁴⁶ This reveals that, for Hagin, faith may be developed on the basis of an intellectual awareness of the promises. That which eludes clarification is the measurement of when faith has been achieved so as to effect the healing. He does not, for example, explain why it is necessary to continuously meditate on the promises, though the implication is that the more one reads them, the greater impact they will have on one’s psyche.

He provides inadequate textual interpretation to substantiate the view that faith for healing may be developed. He offers, as evidence, Matthew 8:26, 14:31 which refer to “little faith”; Matthew 8:10 to “great faith”; Mark 4:36 to “no faith” and 2 Thessalonians 1:3 to the view that faith grows. On the basis of these texts, he articulates the opinion that the more faith one has in the belief that healing is the right of the believer, the more likelihood that healing will be achieved.⁴⁷ He offers Matthew 18:19 as the basis for the encouragement for increasing one’s faith as a result of which healing may be effected. He also assumes that agreeing with others concerning healing will effect a change because the quality of the faith expressed is thus apparently developed. He remarks that this practice is another “method to achieve one’s healing though this is only for those who cannot believe for their healing themselves...the best

⁴⁴ K. E. Hagin, *Turning Hopeless Situations Around* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1981), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ *Turning Hopeless Situations Around*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ *What To Do*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ “Healings Can Be Obtained” (audio-cassette; Knutsford: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.).

way.”⁴⁸ Such routes to healing are not evidenced in the ministry of Jesus. The faith commended by Jesus is to be equated with a willingness to ask him for help. Jesus did not encourage faith to be developed nor did his response reflect a gradational requirement in faith. What is lacking in Hagin’s view of faith is a clarification of the “faith” needed in order to receive the “promise of healing.” Its fluidity of meaning undermines the ability of the individual to achieve it.

3. Sin

Hagin⁴⁹ interprets Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 28:15 as God permitting sickness “to come as a result of man’s disobedience,” obedience and repentance resulting in healing.⁵⁰ A lack of forgiveness is isolated as a significant reason for a lack of healing.⁵¹ There are problems with these concepts, including that of inconsistency.

Thus, he describes an occasion when, after falling and injuring his right arm, Jesus apparently sat on a chair next to his bed. Jesus explained to him that the injury had occurred because he had moved out of his perfect will. He was told that he would regain 99% of the use of the arm whilst experiencing 1% disability to remind him not to disobey again.⁵² Elsewhere though, he states that sickness could never be used by God to achieve anything positive in the life of a believer,⁵³ deducing, “chastening is not via sickness.”⁵⁴ The fact that Jesus withholds complete healing from him, which is his apparent right, is not addressed. Neither does he acknowledge that Jesus, his paradigm, never left a person partially healed nor was any illness described by Jesus as being pedagogically beneficial. He also offers ineligible exegesis. Thus, he warns that if there is sin in one’s life, “your faith won’t work,” quoting Mark 11:23-25 as evidence⁵⁵ though the latter verse bears no relationship

⁴⁸ “Healings Can Be Obtained.”

⁴⁹ *The Key to Scriptural Healing*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ *The Art of Intercession*, p. 28.

⁵¹ *Bible Prayer*, p. 112.

⁵² *I Believe in Visions*, pp. 93-94.

⁵³ “Where Does Sickness come from?” (audio-cassette; Knutsford: Faith Builder, n.d.).

⁵⁴ *The Key to Scriptural Healing*, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁵ *What To Do*, p. 38.

to prayer for healing, instead being a recognition that reciprocal forgiveness is needed in order to expect divine forgiveness.

Unbiblical beliefs also undergird his views. He believes, for example, that by constantly remembering sins forgiven in the past, God is not able to provide healing; indeed, he encourages believers to recognize that this is a technique of Satan to rob them of their right to healing.⁵⁶ The suggestion that the remembrance of past sins may thwart the possibility of healing is not evidenced in the ministry of Jesus, his apparent model. Sin is not regarded as a hindrance to the desire and will of Jesus to provide healing and neither is personal sin viewed by Jesus as a reason for the occurrence of sickness in one's life.

Furthermore, it is not recorded that Jesus demanded repentance before effecting any healings.

4. Prayer

His perspectives on prayer are, to a large extent, self contradictory. He undermines its necessity, stating, "Jesus...never prayed for the sick,"⁵⁷ his suggestion being that believers should follow the same pattern. However, he states that he has regularly engaged in prayer for the sick over forty five years.⁵⁸

Despite his undermining the need for prayer, he also describes the power of prayer as being so great that when he prayed for his Sunday School superintendent who had died, his authority was such that Jesus, revealing the conversation to him later in a vision, said to the dying man, "Brother Hagin won't let you come."⁵⁹ As for himself, he states, "I can't ever remember, in twenty-nine years, not getting that for which I've asked."⁶⁰

He advocates offering a prayer for healing but states that it should be only offered once, writing, "If a person...asks again, he doesn't believe that he has received, because if he believes that he has received, he would be thanking God for it, then it would be made manifest."⁶¹ He refers to an

⁵⁶ *What To Do*, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁷ *Bible Prayer*, p. 116.

⁵⁸ *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1980), pp. 15-16.

⁵⁹ *The Art of Intercession*, pp. 124-25 (italics in original).

⁶⁰ *Bible Prayer*, p. 21.

⁶¹ *Bible Prayer*, pp. 50, 113.

occasion when 2000 people prayed for a man who had suffered a heart attack, after which the leader of the congregation asked, “how many of you believe God heard us?” He, along with 90% of the crowd, raised their hands. However, when most of the congregation responded positively to the leader’s question, “how many of you are going to keep on praying for brother S.?” he did not. His assessment was, “if that man had been depending on the crowd, he would have died. Because if they kept on praying, they would have nullified the effects of their prayers.”⁶²

He interprets Matthew 7:7-11 as meaning “the minute you seek, it is yours. The minute you knock, the door is opened to you” and applies this promise to divine healing in particular.⁶³ These interpretations lack validity and do not take into consideration a range of issues including the conditions implicit in the passage and the present continuous nature of the Greek tenses used. At the same time, he contradicts himself by recounting an occasion when he prayed for three days until a man was healed⁶⁴ and a period of six weeks during which he prayed concerning a heart problem he was suffering.⁶⁵ Similarly, he writes, “the reason we don’t get more results is because our praying is not intense enough.”⁶⁶

He inexplicably describes praying for the sick and feeling the symptoms of their illness in his body.⁶⁷ He writes, “since 1949, with only one exception, every time I have made intercession for the sick and taken on their symptoms, they always received their healing.”⁶⁸ This is not explored; indeed, it is not only incongruous, it is unprovable and ultimately absurd, since it is obvious that some illnesses may not be replicated in another person’s body. Scriptural evidence for his views is again lacking and a parallel with Jesus in his ministry of healing is not to be found in the Gospels.

It is unclear as to how valid or necessary prayer is for healing in his framework of healing, given his comments on Jesus not praying for the sick, his stress on the authority of the believer to claim healing and his belief in the efficacy of the spoken word. However, he refers to the

⁶² *The Name of Jesus*, pp. 148-49.

⁶³ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 111.

⁶⁴ *The Art of Intercession*, pp. 120-21.

⁶⁵ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ *Turning Hopeless Situations Around*, p. 13.

⁶⁷ *Turning Hopeless Situations Around*, pp. 61-62.

⁶⁸ *The Art of Intercession*, p. 31.

benefit of praying in tongues for healing,⁶⁹ stating, on the alleged evidence of Romans 8:26, that as a result of praying in tongues, the latter forming 90% of his praying,⁷⁰ “you increase your power in praying 100%”; consequently, he describes a congregation praying for a paralyzed man but “the father got the job done when he began to pray in the Spirit.”⁷¹ However, he does not explain why this is necessary, given that healing is assumed by him to be a right to be claimed by believers.⁷² Neither does he clarify the meaning of “praying in the Spirit” nor explain why it and the use of tongues are more effective than prayer in a human language, nor is this reflected in Jesus, his apparent model.

His analysis of a prayer of faith is also unbiblical. He describes it as a prayer that “is primarily prayed for yourself...not for someone else - unless they are bona fide baby Christians.”⁷³ He also writes of believers who request prayer for healing who are not fully aware of the teaching of divine healing and states that he “can make a prayer of faith work for them...if they will just remain neutral I can get results for them.”⁷⁴ However, he also writes, “the prayer of faith doesn’t always work in every situation. It isn’t designed to.”⁷⁵ The contradictions and egocentric nature of his assessment of the prayer of faith is again prominent rather than recognition of a theocentric sovereignty that motivates it. He offers no biblical support for his view.

5. The Name of Jesus

The use of the name of Jesus in healing is a fundamental element in Hagin’s healing praxis. There are three aspects to be explored based on deductions he makes.

The power in the name of Jesus is the delegated possession of the believer. Hagin suggests that God has handed over authority to the believer to such an extent that “it is not so much up to God, concerning

⁶⁹ *Laying on of Hands* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1980), pp. 71-72.

⁷⁰ *Bible Prayer*, p. 41.

⁷¹ *Bible Prayer*, p. 41.

⁷² *Bible Prayer*, p. 41.

⁷³ *The Art of Intercession*, p. 1.

⁷⁴ *Bible Prayer*, p. 82.

⁷⁵ *The Art of Intercession*, p. 102.

matters on this earth, as it is up to us.”⁷⁶ On this basis, he records a vision that he apparently received of a demon in the image of a monkey attempting to interrupt a conversation that he was having with Jesus. Hagin claims that Jesus told him that he did not have the authority to deal with it, it being removed by the name of Jesus spoken by Hagin.⁷⁷ Jesus apparently told him, “If you hadn’t done something about that, I couldn’t have,” this point being purportedly emphasized by Jesus four times.⁷⁸

Similarly, he records an incident when he said, “In the Name of Jesus...I break the power of the devil over my brother Dub’s life. I claim his salvation. Within 10 days, he was born again. I had prayed and fasted for him off and on for 15 years, which never seemed to do any good. But the minute I rose up with the Name of Jesus, it worked.”⁷⁹ Not only does this confirm his formulaic view of the name that appears to have a unique authority of its own, it also contradicts his suggestion that “nobody, through prayer and faith, can push something off on someone else which that person does not want. If we could, we would all put salvation off on everybody.”⁸⁰

On the basis of John 16:23, he argues that it is not necessary to use the phrase, “if it is His will” in a prayer that incorporates the name of Jesus.⁸¹ Instead, he writes, “the name of Jesus belongs to us.”⁸² He is convinced that with the authority of the name, “it is just as easy to be healed as it is to be forgiven of your sins.”⁸³ This quasi-magical use of the name of Jesus overlooks the necessity of incorporating into a prayer the recognition of the will of the name bearer. Instead, the name becomes a manipulative key to divine resources.

⁷⁶ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 19.

⁷⁷ *The Believer’s Authority*, pp. 18-19.

⁷⁸ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 30; cf. K. E. Hagin, *Demons and How to Deal with Them* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministry, 1968), pp. 23-24.

⁷⁹ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 38.

⁸⁰ *What To Do*, p. 15.

⁸¹ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 15.

⁸² *The Name of Jesus*, pp. 37, 48, 75, 103, 117, 120-21; cf. K. E. Hagin, *Your Faith in God Will Work* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1991), pp. 28-29.

⁸³ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 126.

5.1 The Name of Jesus Has Legal Implications

He states, “Jesus gave us the right to use His name.”⁸⁴ He approves the suggestion that offering the name of Jesus “places prayer not only on legal grounds, but makes it a business proposition.”⁸⁵ He believes that “what Jesus has done is this: He has signed a check and turned it over to us,”⁸⁶ observing, “His Name guarantees an answer to our prayer.”⁸⁷

He also notes, “I have found that the most effective way to pray can be when you demand your rights. That’s the way I pray: ‘I demand my rights!’”⁸⁸ Thus, he translates John 16:23 as, “whatever you demand in my Name, I will do it,”⁸⁹ incorrectly claiming this to be the actual Greek translation.⁹⁰ Such presumptive attitudes are not reflected in those healed by Jesus. However, he argues, “you’re not demanding of God when you demand your rights; you’re demanding of the devil.”⁹¹ Inexplicably, and in contradiction to the latter, he also records, “you do not command in tones of arrogance, but as a partner...you lay the case before Him”⁹² obviously referring to God.

5.2 There Is Limitless Power in the Name of Jesus

Hagin⁹³ writes, “all the authority that Jesus had is invested in His Name!” noting that “we heal no-one...it is the Name that does it.” This power is so integral to the name that he states, “many prayers have...not worked because they were prayed for Jesus’ sake, instead of in Jesus’ Name.”⁹⁴ He writes, Satan “won’t argue with you about the Name of Jesus - he’s afraid of that Name.”⁹⁵ The formulaic power of the

⁸⁴ *Prevailing...*, pp. 21-22.

⁸⁵ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 17.

⁸⁶ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 22.

⁸⁷ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 73.

⁸⁸ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 22

⁸⁹ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 23.

⁹¹ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 22.

⁹² K. E. Hagin, *Plead Your Case* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), p. 9.

⁹³ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 13.

⁹⁴ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 14.

⁹⁵ *The Believer’s Authority*, p. 22.

phraseology in which the name is used is reminiscent of the magician's attention to detail and formulaic accuracy. At the same time, the name of Jesus takes on an entity of its own similar to the name magic practised by the Jews and other Ancient Near Eastern people groups.

He exalts the significance of the name of Jesus above faith and prayer, writing, "if I just had enough faith, you might be thinking, I could use that Name. You can use it anyway. It belongs to you...nowhere does Jesus mention faith or belief when He talks about using the Name of Jesus."⁹⁶ Hagin teaches that the name of Jesus is given for believers to heal unbelievers, not themselves, for they already have the authority to claim healing for themselves.⁹⁷ Similarly, he writes, on the basis of Acts, that "very little is said about their praying for the sick...most of the time they simply used the Name of Jesus."⁹⁸

However, he does not interact with the texts in Acts sufficiently and therefore, does not develop a coherent rationale concerning the significance of the name of Jesus, treating it magico-sacramentally.

However, he records incidents where the name of Jesus is used and yet healing is forfeited because the sufferer "didn't have faith to be healed."⁹⁹ This elasticity of belief is confusing and does not reflect biblical teaching. It is not reflected in the teaching of Jesus; it invests, in the name, power that belongs to God that may be resourced and activated without the involvement of God; it exalts the value of the name above prayer and faith and assumes magical and coercive properties enabling anyone to activate events via a supernatural agency; at the same time, notwithstanding the apparently comprehensive power resident in the name, many are not healed, despite its incorporation in a request for healing.

To use the name of Jesus in healing with an expectation of an inevitable release of power is inappropriate and illegitimate, although this undergirds much of the writings and popular beliefs concerning the name in the Faith Movement.¹⁰⁰ Although the name may serve to remind a

⁹⁶ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 117.

⁹⁷ "Seven Things You Should Know."

⁹⁸ *The Name of Jesus*, p. 75.

⁹⁹ *The Name of Jesus*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. K. Warrington, "The Use of the Name (of Jesus) in Healing and Exorcism with Particular Reference to the Teachings of Kenneth Hagin," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 17 (1997), pp. 16-36.

person of the power of the name bearer,¹⁰¹ the will of the owner of that power is to be recognized as being of paramount importance.

The legitimate and authoritative use of the name presumes relationship with the name bearer. Simply put, the person who prays in the name of Jesus is expressing trust in him on the basis of a personal relationship.¹⁰²

Furthermore, the valid and effective use of the name occurs when the will of the name bearer is identified. The use of the name in Jesus' guidance concerning prayer¹⁰³ has value as a reminder of the importance of the will of God in prayer.¹⁰⁴ The name of the Lord is appropriately used when the prayer incorporating it is sanctioned by God, for then it will effect a change.¹⁰⁵

The most important aspect related to the name of Jesus is thus not its presence in a healing prayer but its symbolic value as an indicator of the importance of a recognition of the will of God. Given that it has not been demonstrated that the healing power of Jesus has been delegated to believers to emulate Jesus, it is to be doubted that the use of the name of Jesus may function as a healing catalyst. To assume that it does is to indicate a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching. Although the name is identified in some settings as an element in prayers of restoration, it is to be concluded that unless the above principles are incorporated, it becomes a pseudo-magical implement unrelated to the teaching of Jesus. Those who incorporate the name of Jesus inappropriately cannot rightly claim to be emulating Jesus.

6. Positive Confession

Hagin believes the healing authority of Jesus is delegated to the believer to such an extent that he records that it can be activated by one's

¹⁰¹ W. Wink, *Naming the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 22.

¹⁰² Cf. G. L. Munn, "The Importance of Praying in the Name of Christ," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 38:33 (Summer 1996), pp. 42-44 (43); L. P. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), p. 255; L. Hurtado, "Miracles...Pagan and Christian," *Paraclete* 4:4 (1970), pp. 13-16 (15-16).

¹⁰³ John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:24, 26.

¹⁰⁴ 1 John 5:14-15.

¹⁰⁵ Exod 5:22-23; Deut 18:18-19; 2 Chro 26:5; John 15:7; James 1:25; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15.

speech. He believes that making positive statements concerning individuals or situations creates a beneficial impact, including healing.¹⁰⁶ On the basis of Hebrews 4:14, he writes, “you are what you say”¹⁰⁷ whilst on the basis of Mark 11:23, he states, “you can have what you say.”¹⁰⁸ Other maxims include, “don’t pray it: say it,”¹⁰⁹ “your lips...can make you a victor or keep you a captive”¹¹⁰ and “what I confess, I possess.”¹¹¹ On the basis of Romans 10:8, he writes, “believing with the heart and saying it with the mouth...creates reality.”¹¹² He further warns that such positive confession must take place before the healing can be granted.¹¹³ However, such a prior statement or belief before healing occurs is not reflected in the ministry of Jesus.

Conversely, he argues that negative confessions are counter productive¹¹⁴ stating, “if you are defeated, you are defeated with your own lips.”¹¹⁵ Thus, he writes that the believer who says, “according to God’s word ‘I’m healed’,” followed by, “yes, I’ve got heart symptoms,” will nullify the first confession as a result of stating the second.¹¹⁶ On the basis of Proverbs 6:2, he argues, “the reason so many are defeated is that they have a negative confession.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, he believes that negative confessions undermine the Word of God and writes, “every time you confess...your weakness and your disease, you are openly confessing that

¹⁰⁶ *What To Do*, pp. 61-65; K. E. Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith* (Tulsa: FLP, 1980), p. 40.

¹⁰⁷ *Bible Faith*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁰⁸ *Bible Faith*, p. 117; K. E. Hagin, *Words* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), p. 3; *You Can Have What You Say* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1980), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁹ *What To Do*, p. 78.

¹¹⁰ *Bible Faith*, p. 91.

¹¹¹ *Bible Faith*, p. 93.

¹¹² *Bible Faith*, p. 89

¹¹³ *Bible Faith*, p. 93.

¹¹⁴ *Bible Prayer*, p. 54.

¹¹⁵ *You Can Have*, p. 10.

¹¹⁶ *The Name of Jesus*, pp. 90, 138.

¹¹⁷ *Bible Faith*, pp. 90-91.

the word of God is not true.”¹¹⁸ As a result of his following such a procedure, he claims not to have had a headache since 1933.¹¹⁹

He further states that he has known the power of God “to go into” people “and often come right back out of them,” the reason being advanced that “they didn’t take hold of it.”¹²⁰ Such impersonal pseudo-dynamic language indicates a dispassionate, insouciant energy that is more familiar with nineteenth century Mind Healing Cults, including Christian Science, than the healing ministry of Jesus.¹²¹ However, he claims, “I learned how to get them healed and keep them healed.”¹²² The suggestion that a method of healing may be learned is unbiblical and is not reflected in the ministry of his alleged model, Jesus.

Such beliefs are to be critiqued. Sarles describes this perspective of authority as “a form of magic, with the spoken word as the incantation. The interior logic...argues that since man is a godlike creature, his words, when spoken in faith, have the same intrinsic creative power as God’s.”¹²³ Although the tongue may be a powerful instrument for good or evil (James 3:5-10), Hagin goes far beyond this. Neuman reasonably concludes that Hagin denies reality, setting up “a dualism which allows him to deny the physical.”¹²⁴

Hagin’s metaphysical language is open to misunderstanding and its usage reflects the ineptitude of Hagin’s argumentation. He advocates a skeptical attitude towards physical evidence when it contradicts his interpretation of Scripture. Thus, sickness is viewed as being “unreal”¹²⁵ and only a symptom of sickness.¹²⁶ In his determination to stress his

¹¹⁸ *Bible Faith*, p. 62.

¹¹⁹ *Words*, p. 6.

¹²⁰ *How to Keep*, p. 5.

¹²¹ Neuman, “Cultic Origins,” pp. 37-48 explores links between Hagin and the Mind Healing cults. The similarities are well demonstrated though dependency is not proven.

¹²² *How to Keep*, p. 19.

¹²³ K. L. Sarles, “A Theological Evaluation of the Prosperity Gospel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (Oct 1986), pp. 329-52.

¹²⁴ Neuman, “Cultic Origins,” 34; J. S. Tinney, “The Prosperity Doctrine; An Accretion to Black Pentecostalism,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 4:1 (April-Sept, 1980), pp. 84-92; C. Farah, “A Critical Analysis: The Roots and Fruits of Faith Formula Theology,” SPS Conference, 1980: 4, 7, 14, 26.

¹²⁵ *The Real Faith*, p. 29.

¹²⁶ *The Key to Scriptural Healing*, pp. 27-28.

belief that sickness is inappropriate for the believer, he writes, “sickness or disease that *seems* to be in our bodies was laid on Jesus.”¹²⁷ At other times, he is less clear, noting the possibility that if he has a headache, his response is not to tell anyone. Instead, he writes, “if somebody asked me how I was feeling, I would say, ‘I’m fine thank you’.”¹²⁸ This, rather than a denial of the reality of sickness, appears to be an attempt to deny its permanency by exerting a positive attitude with the insertion of a lie.

Pertinent to the thesis is that these attitudes are not reflected in the ministry of Jesus who nowhere denies the reality of illness or treats it as only a symptom of a (non-existent) ailment. Allied to this is the recognition that Hagin views the mind as being the power base for a resolution of problems including sickness.¹²⁹ It is as a result of “thinking correctly” that sickness can be removed.¹³⁰ He further maintains that it is not prayer, nor even Jesus, that is of importance in the restoration process; it is oneself.¹³¹ The egocentrism of his view is emphasized in that an important consequence of his stress on positive confession is that it replaces the need for prayer. Thus, he writes, “I don’t believe I prayed more than half a dozen times...in all these years. Why? Because you can have what you say.”¹³² Not only is this severely contradicted by the many statements in which he records his dependency on prayer, but it also indicates that he has an inappropriately high anthropology at the expense of a low Christology. Instead of requesting healing from God, he argues that it is appropriate, by use of the name, to “take” what one wants. Also, the believer is described as having abilities similar to Christ but also superior for s/he can negate that which the risen Lord would wish to accomplish. It is difficult to understand how he can maintain that Jesus functioned as a paradigm for believers when such concepts are absent from the healing ministry of Jesus. It would be anticipated that all who followed Hagin’s guidelines would be healed; the reality proves the opposite. Despite the latter fact, he still promulgates his self - defeating maxim.

¹²⁷ *Seven Things You Should Know*, p. 54 (italics are mine).

¹²⁸ K. E. Hagin, “Words,” *Word of Faith*, Jan. 1979: 10.

¹²⁹ K. H. Hagin, *Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, Death* (Tulsa: n.p., n.d.), p. 24.

¹³⁰ *Right and Wrong Thinking*, pp. 19, 23.

¹³¹ Cf. C. Farah, “Faith Theology: The Sovereignty of Man,” *Logos*, May/June, 1980, pp. 50-55.

¹³² *Words*, p. 9.

7. Conclusion

The views of Hagin concerning healing are manifold though a theology of suffering is noticeable by its absence. The textual evidence examined later will act as a hermeneutical grid for a further analysis of his beliefs. He propounds a belief system that incorporates an apparent guarantee for believers to receive and maintain physical health on the basis of the authority invested in them by Jesus. Simultaneously believing that Jesus provides a model to be emulated, he assumes that believers should function as successfully as he did. However, although he claims biblical precedent for his views, too rarely does he offer biblical evidence, instead, relying on apparently divine revelations and personal experiences. At the same time, he presents his views in the context of confusion and contradiction. Most importantly for this thesis, although he claims to be following the model represented by Jesus, he frequently deviates from it, offering a deviant and defective healing matrix.