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NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

SIGNS AND WONDERS IN LUKE-ACTS AND CHURCH
HISTORY, WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

BY

STEPHEN PATRICK ACHILLAH

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SIGNS AND WONDERS IN LUKE - ACTS
AND CHURCH HISTORY
STEPHEN PATRICK ACHILLAH

Approved: -----

Supervisor: P. Johnston
Peter Johnston, Ph.D.

Second Reader: Samuel Ngewa
Samuel Ngewa, Ph.D.

External Reader: Michael Kyomya
Michael Kyomya, Th.D.

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Dedicated to the memory of my maternal
grandfather -the Rt. Rev. Asanasio Maraka,
Anglican Bishop of Soroti, Uganda (d. 1975). Without him
I may not have been able to pursue higher studies

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Problem

Within the Church of Jesus Christ today, Christians are generally divided into three camps regarding the topic of "Signs and Wonders". One camp consists of those believing that signs and wonders are valid for today's church. A second camp consists of those opposed to signs and wonders as being valid phenomena for today's church. The third group consists of those totally indifferent to the whole discussion on signs and wonders. The call however, for every Christian believer, as C.S. Butler states, is a call for clear thinking on this topic:

Evangelicals should no longer be content to sit on the fence over this issue. If the gifts are to be manifested in our day, then we must examine our Bibles and the present phenomena to see if these things are genuine. We must not say, as some do, "I believe it is all right for those who feel so inclined to follow after the gifts. Either the gifts are for today and we should all seek to manifest our own gift, or the gifts are not for today, in which case the charismatic movement is in error. [emphasis mine]¹

This searching statement spells out clearly the critical issues for all Bible believing Christians today. Many believers have not reached their conclusions on this topic of "signs and wonders" through a careful study of Scripture, but rather through traditional beliefs and practices. There is a need to settle the question of the validity or invalidity of signs and wonders for today based on a careful Biblical scrutiny.

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II. Significance of the Study

"Signs and Wonders" are significant for the investigation of all Christian believers seeking to be effective witnesses for Christ within their given contexts. More seriously, however, Christian leaders need to pursue clear thinking on this topic (and other topics for that matter), since they influence thought, belief and practice among the people under their charge.

Whereas there is a lively debate on these issues in the Western world, largely by Western theologians, there is a need for this debate to be planted in the African context; especially within African biblical scholarship and ministry which influence African Christianity. Moreover, the prevalence of supernaturalist beliefs on this continent justifies attempts towards clear biblical thinking on these issues. A failure to do so may render our Christian witness to be somewhat irrelevant or ineffective within our given contexts.

III. Objectives in the Study

This thesis' purpose is to study "Signs and Wonders" in Luke - Acts, and after that plug the issues into 20th century Christianity. However, it sees the necessity of briefly looking at Church history to provide a necessary linkage. The thesis' aim is a logical and exegetical examination of the given texts so as to provide a biblical basis for faith and practice for Christian believers and witnesses.

IV. Research Questions

Some of the questions that have been addressed in the thesis include the following:

- 1) Is there a Biblical basis for a "signs and wonders" ministry today?
- 2) Did the supernatural (signs and wonders) aspects of ministry indeed end with the apostolic era, as some have argued?
- 3) How does the Gospel of Christ minister meaningfully to those increasingly getting involved in satanic deception today in its various forms?
- 4) How do we interpret Luke - Acts? Are there any normative truths for a perennial application to Christian ministry?
- 5) How were signs and wonders seen in both the Old and New Testament milieus?
- 6) Looking at δυναμεις in Acts 1:8 in the light of the language of "endowment" for ministry seen in Luke 24:29, What are the implications for Christian ministry today?
- 7) What is the future of "signs and wonders in today's church"? Is it a mere passing fad, or an abiding revolution and revival?

V. Limitations and Assumptions

This thesis limits itself basically to Luke - Acts, and especially to the programmatic texts in both volumes. Furthermore, the application to Church history is a select one, limiting itself to certain prominent individuals or movements involved in and talking about signs and wonders. The same limitation will apply to 20th century Christian movements.

This thesis avoids the philosophical and scientific debates as to the possibility of miracles ever happening. That possibility is assumed, and miracles are assumed to have actually happened in Bible times.

VI. Definition of Terms: Signs and Wonders: and their Usage in the O.T. and N.T. Mileus

A. Introduction

The difficulty in defining "miracle" is quite evident to anyone who pursues such a related topic as "signs and wonders." Roger Cowley, for example, would rather have us use "signs and wonders" in the place of both "miracle" and "supernatural".² However, Biblical revelation uses all the three words: "signs", "wonders" and "miracles". It is perhaps best to take the advice that, "a valuable way of understanding the meaning of miracles is to examine the various terms for miracles in the Bible."³

The Nelson Illustrated Bible Dictionary gives us the following valuable summary:

Both the Old and New Testament use the word sign (Is. 7:11,14; John 2:11) to denote a miracle that points to a deeper revelation. Wonder (Joel 2:30; Mark 13:22) emphasizes the effect of the miracle, causing awe and even terror. A work (Matt. 11:2) points to the presence of God in history, acting for mankind. The New Testament uses the word power (Mark 6:7) to emphasize God's acting in strength. These terms often overlap in meaning (Acts 2:43) They are more specific than the more general term "miracle" [emphasis mine].⁴

B. The Old Testament World and "Signs and Wonders."

1. Signs and Wonders in the Old Testament (Hebrew).

There are three Hebrew words that carry the meaning of "miracle" in the Hebrew Old Testament: פֶּלֶא (pele), אֵימֹת ('ot) and מוֹפֵת (mōpēt). Here is how some scholars have given their distinctive meanings:

(a) (i) פֶּלֶא = pele' a wonder or a marvel - which comes from Yahweh as an act of either judgement or redemption.⁵ [e.g. Ex. 15:11]

(ii) אֵימֹת (nīplā' ot) = this term which is a cognate of pele' means wonderful, marvelous or great deeds (or things) [done by Yahweh in judgement or redemption.]⁶ [e.g. Dan. 11:36]

(b) אֵימֹת = 'ot a sign, a miracle, as a pledge or attestation of divine presence or interposition.⁷ [e.g. Deut. 13:1]

(c) מוֹפֵת = mōpēt a wonder, sign or portent - The idea of wonder speaks of a special display of God's power or that of a false prophet. The idea of sign, or portent speaks of a token of a future event. This sign can be a symbolic act as by a prophet.⁸ [e.g. Deut. 13:1]

It is 'ot and mōpēt which are frequently employed by the Hebrew language. Hans Walter Wolf suggests that whereas 'ot need not indicate anything extra ordinary, mōpēt is that which is completely out of the ordinary and as such has sign character."⁹ In this latter declaration concerning mōpēt Douglas Stuart agrees.¹⁰

There is no unanimity in this declaration, however. William Wilson, for example, makes both "sign and "wonder" have the same meaning. Both according to him are meant to

elicit belief and to attract attention to a declaration of some sort, which may be in dispute.¹¹

These words occur together in the famous warning of Deut: 13:1-3. This passage warns against any so-called prophet of God who is capable of performing signs and wonders, and yet also leads God's people astray to serve other gods. Not only were such signs and wonders by such a dubious prophet "of God" to be disregarded, but the said prophet or dreamer was to be put to death by stoning, so as to purge evil from among the people of God (vv.5-11).

That these signs and wonders should not only be seen in a negative light is evident in the fact that not only were they performed by false prophets and dreamers, but also by Yahweh Himself. Yahweh, for example, predicted and also performed multiplied signs and wonders before Pharaoh in the land of Egypt (Exod. 7:3).

"The decisive factor," therefore, in the evaluation of any signs and wonders occurrence "is the relationship of the sign or wonder to Yahweh" - which relationship "is recognized in the light of previous teaching, the previous acts of Yahweh, and continuing knowledge of Him."¹²

It has been pointed out that the true signs and wonders from Yahweh "are not uniformly distributed throughout the OT."¹³ Thus, some scholars have concluded that these

phenomena occur only at special times of crisis and redemptive history.¹⁴ "They are mentioned in connection with the Exodus from Egypt under Moses, the life and death struggle with Baal worship under Elijah and Elisha, and the trials of Daniel."¹⁵ This, however seems not to be the case as the tables in the appendix would show (pp. 245-247)

The signs and wonders under Moses were meant to teach both Pharaoh and Israel who Yahweh is (Deut. 4:34,35; 34:10-12; 29:2-6).¹⁶ Although there were magical imitations of Yahweh's miracles through Moses, these magicians (identified as Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim 3:8) were "compelled to recognize the limits of their magic."¹⁷ They were to confess in defeat that, "this is the finger of God" (Exod. 8:19).

In Moses' injunction to Israel in Deut. 4:34, Moses emphasizes how God's deliverance of His people from Egypt was effected amidst these signs and wonders. The singular importance in the OT revelation of God's mighty working through Moses in the Exodus episode is shown by the considerable number of times it is mentioned (see Deut. 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3; 34:11; Ps. 78:43; 105:26,27; 135:9; Jer. 32:20f, Neh. 9:10).

As the children of Israel journeyed for 40 years through the desolate wilderness, Yahweh's signs and wonders were again seen as He fed them, watered them, protected them from

both human foes and wild beasts, and preserved their clothing and sandals from wear and tear. Even the conquest of the promised land of Canaan later is seen not as a product of mere military prowess but as an act of God's power (Joshua 23:3).

In the Elijah - Elisha epoch, we again see a number of miracles associated with their ministries. Elijah is first miraculously fed by ravens (I Kings 17:1-7); and later, together with a widow and son, through a never-diminishing jar of meal and cruse of oil, (until he received fresh summons from God - I Kings 17:8-16). Elijah was later able to restore a dead boy to life (I Kings 17:17-24); and to pray down fire from heaven on the historic Mt. Carmel episode (I Kings 18).

As Elijah was miraculously taken to heaven in a fiery chariot, a gateway was opened for his successor Elisha to commence his own unique ministry (2 Kings 2:9-13). Apparently, Elisha's request for "a double portion" of Elijah's spirit was granted (2 Kings 2:9,10), so that he performed greater and more numerous miracles than Elijah did. Elisha is seen crossing the River Jordan in the same miraculous style as Elijah did (cf. 2 Kings 2:8 with 2 Kings 4:14, miraculously cursed some unruly and abusive youths who were promptly devoured by bears (2 Kings 2:23-25); restored a dead son of a Shunammite woman to life (2 Kings 4:8-37); fed

a hundred men to satisfaction with only twenty loaves (2 Kings 4:42-44); commanded a cleansing upon leprous Naaman (2 King 5:1-19); caused an axe-head to float (2 Kings 6:1-7); and experienced miraculous protection by horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:8-13).

We see at another epoch, Daniel and his three friends experiencing preservation from a den of lions and a fiery furnace respectively (Daniel 6 and Daniel 3). There are other signs and wonders in the OT which include the following: the translation of Enoch (Gen. 5:24; cf Heb. 11:5); the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:1ff); the shadow moving backward on the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:8-11; Is. 38:7f); the Immanuel sign of Isaiah (7:14); and Jonah's three day sojourn in the belly of a fish, and his eventual restoration (Jonah 1:17, 2:10 with Matt. 12:39f; cf 16:4; Luke 11:29f).

An examination of these OT miraculous happenings seems to show us an emphasis on Yahweh's control of nature and history for His purposes; and not necessarily showing us how miracles violate the natural order.¹⁹ Apparently, the Old Testament knows nothing "of a natural law as an independent entity on a level with Yahweh."²⁰ Rather, in the OT, "every event goes back to God [since] nothing is impossible for Him" (Gen. 18:14).²⁰

Yahweh granted and worked these miraculous signs in accompaniment of His word, in order to establish its validity.

and reliability.²¹ He did these wonders directly or indirectly by authorized men; and He performed them sometimes without anyone's request (e.g. I Sam. 10:1ff) and at other times upon request in prayer (e.g. Judges 6:17, 36f).²² All of these signs and wonders pointed to Yahweh and were a revelation of His might and glory.²³ An encounter of these miraculous phenomena by Israel and also the world of nations was meant to lead them to a recognition that Yahweh alone is God (cf. Deut. 4:35; I Kings 18:36ff, Ps. 86 [85]:10).²⁴

Since the ultimate goal of signs and wonders is the universal glorification of the divine name (Ps. 72 [71]:18f.), unbelief and disobedience in the face of the demonstrative experience of these wonders are regarded as the expression of an utterly incomprehensible hardness of heart (Num. 14:11,12; Ps. 78 [77]; 95 [94]:8ff.)²⁵ That is why the response of God's people when confronted with such signs and wonders should be one of meditation so as to cause them to be encouraged, and God to be praised.²⁶ David is the best example of this appropriate response (see 2 Sam. 7:23 and I Chron. 17:19f; with Ps. 105:5; 145:5f.)²⁷

2. Usage within the OT (Septuagint Greek)

When we come to the Septuagint (LXX), "the Hebrew 'ִּוֹת and מִּוֹפְתִים are usually translated by sēmeion and teras."²⁸ The appearance of these two words together as sēmeia kai terata ("signs and wonders," from the Hebrew 'ִּוֹתֹת וּמוֹפְתִים), robs

each of them of its distinctive meaning, and rather conveys a common meaning of "Yahweh's marvelous action in history," which action is of a "thoroughly miraculous character."²⁹

3. Usage outside the OT (Classic Greek).

In Classical Greek usage, sēmeion is derived from Sēma ("sign"), "a word common in early Greek epic and synonymous with sēmeion.... The word does not originally come from the sphere of religion, but takes on theological coloring in appropriate contexts."³⁰ Teras "denotes terrible appearances which elicit fright and horror, and which contradict the ordered unity of nature. This gave rise to the meaning of teras as a miraculous sign or portent. The word already has the sense of some uncanny foretold or omen requiring interpretation by a seer; [so] this could reveal links with earlier ideas of popular religion."³¹ These meanings would therefore seem to bear no difference from those in the LXX.

C. The New Testament World and "Signs and Wonders"

(1) Usage Within the New Testament

William M. Taylor in dealing with Miracles of our Saviour takes the three terms: "miracles", "wonders" and "signs" as being descriptive of one and the same kind of effects [emphasis mine].³² However, he goes on to give some definitions of four related words in "miracles":

- (a) **δυναμεις** = powers - looks specifically to the agency by which they are produced, an agency defined exactly in the words "which God did by Him in the midst of you" [e.g. Mk. 6:14].
- (b) **Τερατα** = wonders - has regard to the state of mind produced on the spectator by the sight of them. They are of such a nature, so entirely out of common course of things, and so thoroughly transcending merely human powers that the beholders of them are astonished at them [e.g. Acts 2:19].
- (c) **σημεια** = signs - has particular reference to their significance as being the seals by which God authenticated him who brought them; and as being themselves also a symbolical or parabolical part of the revelation which He brought to man [e.g. Acts 2:19].
- (d) **εργα** = works - descriptive of miracles. Occurs only in John's Gospel and there always on the lips of the Lord Himself [e.g. John 6:28].

It indicates that what by men were regarded with wonder as indicating mighty power, were in the estimation of the Lord Himself simply works requiring no more exertion at His hands than that which was common or ordinary with Him as divine.

Taylor then concludes as follows, "A miracle [then] is a work out of the usual sequence of secondary causes and effects. It cannot be accounted for by the ordinary operation of these causes. It is produced by the agency of God through the instrumentality of one who claims to be His representative, and in attestation of the message..."²³ Although Taylor basically has definitions hinged on God and His revelation to man, it is however clear that Satan also has the ability to perform miracles as the Bible itself testifies.

The term "signs and wonders" is notably frequent in occurrence in the New Testament. Sēmeia kai terata is found

in Matt. 24:24 with Mk. 13:22; Acts 2:9 with Joel 2:30; Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 15:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; 2 Thess 2:9; and Heb. 2:4. As with the Old Testament, signs and wonders are performed by both God and false prophets who were deceivers. When these signs and wonders are demanded from an unbelieving and hard, unrepentant heart, this request is denounced as being an indicative of a refusal to respond to what has already been revealed. (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; cf Lk. 11:16,29; Jn 4:48; I Cor. 1:22).²⁴

In the New Testament, "the Greek word teras occurs only in the plural and in conjunction with sēmeia. However, sēmeion is found on its own in addition to the phrase "signs and wonders."²⁵ We see this word when Jesus refuses to grant a sign to those requesting, and instead referred to the Jonah sign (Matt. 12:38f. par Lk. 11:29f.; cf Matt. 6:1, 3f.; Lk. 11:16). Sēmeion also occurs in a discussion concerning the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:3 par. Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:7; cf. Matt. 24:30; Lk. 21:11, 25). The word again appears in the controversial longer ending of Mark (Mk. 16:17, 20). In the birth narratives as related in Luke (Lk. 2:12,34), we also see this word; and Luke further shows how Herod hoped to see a sign being performed by the Lord (Lk. 23:8).

It is in the Gospel according to John, however, where sēmeion has a special place (Jn. 2:11,18,23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2;

7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18,37; 20:30). These signs of the Master "are grounds for belief."³⁶ It is again in the Fourth Gospel that miraculous acts of Christ are described as "work" (ergon) or "works" (erga) - which works are also attributed to the Father (Jn 4:34; 5:20,36; 7:3,21; 9:3f.; 10:25, 32f.; 14:10-12; 15:24; 17:4; cf also Mt. 11:2,19; Lk. 24:19).³⁷ The verb ergazomai is similarly used to describe Jesus' work (Jn. 3:21; 5:17; 6:27f., 30; 9:4).³⁸

In the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, we find the word dynamis ("power") "also used of a deed of power, a mighty work"; and it is mostly in the plural form dynameis that it occurs: (Mt. 7:22; 11:20f., 23; 13:4, 58; Mk. 6:5; Lk. 10:13; 19:37; Acts 2:22).³⁹ These "mighty works of Jesus are presented as grounds for response. Failure to respond is culpable." The followers of the Master, empowered by the Holy Spirit, were also able to perform these works of power (1 Cor. 12:10, 28f.; Gal. 3:5; Heb. 2:4; 6:5). When the ministry of an apostle is brought into consideration, these mighty works are again seen as validations or signs (2 Cor. 12:12).⁴⁰

(2) Backgrounds to the New Testament Use of "Signs and Wonders."

Harold E. Remus has done some work on whether terminology could distinguish early Christian miracles from their pagan counterparts. He points out that a long tradition of Biblical scholarship has contended that the terms used by early Christian writers for miracles have an intrinsic

difference from those employed by their pagan counterparts. Focusing on sēmeion and teras, Remus examines the arguments of salient representatives of this tradition, and assesses these arguments in the light of early Christian and pagan sources. His observation is that, while these two terms have distinctive meanings, they are used interchangeably - both by pagan and Christian authors. His conclusion is that the distinctions lie in the eyes of the beholders and represent communal and cultural judgements [emphasis mine].⁴¹

As we examine the backgrounds to the New Testament use of "signs and wonders" we will use several helpful, scholarly contributions that give us a clear view of the religious - social milieu of the New Testament.

(a) The Hellenistic - Roman World of the New Testament

(i) Introduction.

Fergusson writes how that in the Hellenistic - Roman Religions, the philosophers were sometimes considered capable of performing miracles.⁴² The Hellenistic - Roman Kings were popularly seen to be divine.⁴³ It is debatable however as to whether they could actually act supernaturally or not. Whereas Fergusson says that kings could not act supernaturally,⁴⁴ Edward Lonse says otherwise; and he gives an account of how emperor Vespasian performed cures.⁴⁵

One thing that is clear, however, is that "there was much interest in healing in the ancient world, and the

evidence for this is very widespread."⁴³ Both "personal and sanctuary documents testify to this."⁴⁴ There were healing cults with several local healing gods behind them.⁴⁵ Since "evil spirits were often, though not always, seen as the cause of sickness, the practice of exorcism was ... quite common."⁴⁶

(ii) The Asclepius Cult.

Although divine cures were attributed to universal gods as well - like Serapis and Isis - "the principal deity associated with healing was Asclepius, [who] was a representative of the healing aspect of Greek and Roman religion."⁴⁷

This god Asclepius was considered as the most humane god among the gods of the Hellenistic - Roman world.⁴⁸ He is said to have stopped a plague, healed the sick and revived the dead.⁴⁹ His wife and children personified abstract concepts related to medicine and health; and his sign which was that of a serpent around a walking stick "evolved into the modern symbol of the medical profession."⁵⁰ The serpent sign showed the origin of Asclepius as a serpent god from Thessaly.⁵¹

The "central shrine of Asclepius was in Epidaurus, where large buildings were constructed in the Hellenistic period."⁵² Near the temple of Asclepius were large halls for beds, which were used by the sick people who came for

healing.⁵³ Healing procedures involved the patients' purification, dieting, exercising, sacrificing, sleeping and dreaming within the sanctuary precincts.⁵⁴ The cure was either effected directly by the god, or through his priests: who received his instructions, interpreted their meaning and prescribed the medical cure. These prescriptions often agree with what is known of the medical practice of the day.⁵⁵

The conclusion of the healing ritual is described as follows by Fergusson:

Custom called for a gift of thanksgiving to the god for healing.... A cock is the sacrifice most often mentioned [and healings were received upon different body organs including] legs, arms, feet, hands and sexual organs.... Some of the cures are reported as miracles of the most astonishing kind [including blind eyes being opened, the lame walking, and ulcers being healed].⁵⁶

The healed patients also brought "gold or silver representations of the healed organ or member" as tokens of their gratitude for the healings received.⁵⁷

It can thus be seen that a combination of religious and medical healing existed in the cult of Asclepius; and an affinity is evident between these cures and some psychological and medical practices of the day. However, the existence of hypnosis in the Asclepius cult, plus other assorted religious practices sometimes went against those of ancient medical theory.⁵⁸

The portraiture of Asclepius influenced artists in depicting both Serapis (a divinity) and Christ.⁵⁹ The mildness and benevolence depicted in his portraits made him

the most Christ-like of the pagan deities.⁶⁰ This cult "flourished in the early centuries of the Roman empire, and Asclepius held out against Christianity longer than the Olympian gods...."⁶¹

When comparisons are made between the healings in the Asclepius cult and those evident in the life of Jesus, some differences become clear. First of all, both Jews and Christians reacted against the prevalence of snakes (non-poisonous though) in the pagan Asclepius cult. They viewed such a phenomenon as being demonic.⁶² Moreover, whereas Jesus effected his cures through His spoken word and touch, the cult of Asclepius gave cures with elaborate ritualism involved.⁶³

(iii) Apollonius of Tyana.

It is in the wandering wonder-workers of the Hellenistic world that a closer parallel is seen with Jesus; and Apollonius of Tyana was the best known representative of these wandering wonder-workers. Apollonius was a Neopythagorean "divine man", magician, ascetic, and philosopher who lived in the first century A.D. and was thus a contemporary of Jesus.⁶⁴

Although no mention of Apollonius is found in the Gospels, he represents a background for the portrayal of Jesus.⁶⁵ However, as Fergusson rightly says, one may doubt whether "Hellenistic Judaism mediated the divine man concept

from Hellenism to Christianity."⁶⁶ The miracles of Apollonius of Tyana included healing the lame, blind, paralytic; and casting out demons.⁶⁷

(iv) Magical Practices in Mystery Religions.

In the Hellenistic era, superstition, notions of fate, the yearning for miracles, and fascination with astrology and magic were evident and found numerous adherents.⁶⁸ The reality of the demonic powers, the incapacitating power of disease, and the "unforeseen strokes of fate, held most people in suspense and fear.⁶⁹ People therefore strove, through assorted magical practices and precautionary measures, to guard themselves against fate.⁷⁰ It was the mystery religions that promised the much needed deliverance to the people. Within these religions, silence (hence "mystery") was strictly adhered to as the adherents engaged in secret activities open only to the initiated.⁷¹

Many people were involved in the use of charms, magical formulas, astrology, and names to ward off evil.⁷² Religious pluralism was clearly at play when we note that "even non-Jewish magicians invoked the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to assure themselves of assistance" in their magical practices.⁷³ In the magical papyri, the Jewish Moses and Solomon were regarded as magicians, with Solomon being a magician par excellence.⁷⁴ It is against such a background that the "divine man" operated, and Jesus' ministry is to be

seen. The holy man was said to be able to take risks by actively managing magical powers and dangerous, destructive spirits. A community so trapped in the tyranny of demonic powers would gladly welcome the holy man with a promise of relief through such a man's ministry.⁷⁵

(v) Then Came Christ.

That the ministry of Christ and His followers seriously impacted on their world through word and deed is brought out by the testimonies of pagans themselves. Such a pagan intellectual as Galen, for example, admitted Christ's superiority over the philosophers through his ability to reform the common people.⁷⁶ Galen also admitted that Christians were drawing their faith from parables (as opposed to philosophical arguments) and miracles.⁷⁷ Thus even in paganism, the genuine power of the Gospel to transform lives, heal the sick and deliver the demonized was recognized.

(b) The Jewish World of the New Testament

(i) Introduction.

When we consider the Jewish world of the New Testament, we find that "rabbinic thought recognized miracles in the Jewish canonical scriptures and also in subsequent times."⁷⁸ The general view of the rabbinical schools, however, was that miracles "were not to be regarded as a test of truth;" instead, "the Torah was [to be] more decisive than either miracles or a voice from heaven."⁷⁹ The Torah was to be the

judge, together "with majority decision."⁸⁰

Rabbinic literature abounded with "many faithful tales of miracles," and some scholars have concluded that Galilee in particular was more prone to superstition, credulity, and charismatic phenomena than Judea.⁸¹ The common people of Galilee were far from being rigid adherents to the laws of purity that affected one's eating, dressing and manner of life.⁸² Rather the faith of the Galileans had more enthusiasm and spontaneity.⁸³ Theirs was a down to earth faith that did not just look to eternal rewards in the world to come, but to relief now in this world.⁸⁴

In this world of Jewish religious thought following the Babylonian exile, "the idea that demons were responsible for all moral and physical evil" had deeply taken root.⁸⁵ The apocryphal Ethiopic book of Enoch, depicted Raphael as "the healing angel to whom God entrusted the reparation of damage caused on earth by the fallen angels, the teachers of sorcery and harmful magic" (1 Enoch 7:1; 8:3ff.).⁸⁶ This period was characterized by a belief that once one understood and properly used "the science of angels" then one could effectively deal with demons.⁸⁷ It was further believed that Noah and Solomon were singularly endowed with this art of mastery over demons.⁸⁸

Into this Jewish world came many charismatic

personalities in the first and second century B.C.⁹⁰ These exorcists and healers were believed to follow the pattern set by prophets like Elijah and Elisha. Not only was this pattern applied to other saints of the Scriptural past like Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel, but also to the contemporary charismatics of the first and second century B.C.⁹⁰ Such charismatics were operating on a higher plane, it was believed, than the common physicians and magical healers who operated through incantations, drugs and elaborate ritualism; for they (the charismatics) could minister relief solely through speech and touch.⁹¹

The powers of these holy men were believed to come, not from secret powers, but from immediate contact with God.⁹² These ancient hassidim ("devouts" or "holymen") who were presumed to be the forerunners of the Essenes, were also presumed to have such a power in their prayers so as to work healings, exorcisms, and other miracles.⁹³

(ii) Honi (Onias) the Circle-Drawer (First Century B.C.).

This was the best known of the charismatics, although there were many others.⁹⁴ He is called Honi, the Circle-Drawer by the rabbis, and Onias the Righteous by Josephus.⁹⁵ At one time a request was made to him to pray for rain. At first his prayer did not get results; but at the second attempt at prayer, he drew a circle, stood in it and prayed until a drizzle came. This is how he was nicknamed the

"Circle-Drawer." As Honi continued to pray, a cloud came, followed by an abundance of rain.⁹⁶ Before the rain came, Honi had warned the people to carry inside their houses their clay pots which had been left outside to dry, lest the rain come to damage them.⁹⁷

This incident clearly illustrates the belief of the efficaciousness of Honi's intercessory prayers as both the rabbinic Mishnah and Josephus agree in their accounts.⁹⁸ Although the rabbinic tradition is generally not very friendly to Honi, other rabbinic traditions are (as does Josephus), and they even claim that Honi was next only to Elijah in turning the hearts of people to serve God.⁹⁹ Honi seems to have been active in Jerusalem before he was killed in political partisanship in Hasmonean times. However, the Talmud has an account of how he rose again after seven decades, before he finally died again.¹⁰⁰ Two of Honi's grandsons, Hanan and Abba Hilkiyah, were also renowned as miraculous rainmakers.¹⁰¹

(iii) Hanina ben Dosa (First Century A.D.).

Of all the Hassids, this one "in a minor key" offers remarkable resemblances to Jesus.¹⁰² He lived in a village called Arab in Galilee and is said to have been a pupil of the great centenarian Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. He is also said to have been a contemporary of Rabban Gamaliel (Paul's master).¹⁰³

Hanina ben Dosa was famous for his ability to heal without the physical presence of the sick persons. He could also know and announce an immediate cure of these sufferers.¹⁰⁴ One of such healings is said to have been performed by him to the son of Rabban Gamaliel,¹⁰⁵ and to the Son of Yohanan ben Zakkai.¹⁰⁶ Hanina is represented in the primary rabbinic lore as a hassid of extraordinary devotion and miraculous healing talents.¹⁰⁷ In the Mishnah, he is depicted as a disciplined man of prayer. He was so disciplined that a snakebite could not even stir him up from praying. Instead of Hanina suffering from the snakebite, it was the snake which was later to be found dead.¹⁰⁸

The main point of this story is that a "total trust in God and communion with him render the holy man immune;" and this becomes relevant for us when we realize that "the ideal fulfilled by Hanina is not unlike that which Jesus set before His disciples (Mk. 16:18; Lk. 10:19; cf. Acts 28:3-5)."¹⁰⁹

Not only did Hanina heal the sick, he was also an exorcist; and an audible heavenly voice heard also by an evil spirit (a queen of demons) testified to the hassid's holiness.¹¹⁰ "Like Honi, Hanina was also credited with the ability to influence natural phenomena," like rain.¹¹¹

When the origin of Hassidism is pursued, it seems to

lead us to a conclusion that Hassids were "the forerunners of the Essene Sectarrians."¹¹² According to Philo of Alexandria, the Essenes are said to have been living in large groups in a number of towns and villages of Judaea; so that it would be certain that they were also in Jerusalem.¹¹³ Josephus and the Scrolls of Qumran also attest to this fact.¹¹⁴ Many scholars see similarities between the Essene Communities and those of the early Christians in organization, worship and social structure.¹¹⁵ The Essenes were generally known as healers.¹¹⁶

The Essenes and the Therapeutae were related, for the latter could be seen as an Essenic order.¹¹⁷ The Therapeutae were Jewish ascetics who settled on the shores of Lake Marceotis near Alexandria, in Egypt, during the first century A.D.¹¹⁸ Their origin and fate is unknown, with Philo being the only source for our knowledge of them.¹¹⁹ The Therapeutae were engaged in worship, healing and miracles. And while they were more strict in discipline and in contemplation, the Essenes were involved in active life.¹²⁰

(iv) Jesus The Jew.

When Jesus is put in the tradition of Charismatic Judaism, clear similarities can be seen between Him and the other healers, exorcists, and miracle workers.¹²¹ One of the clear similarities is the association He and the other healers had with the prophetic tradition of Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:1; 18:45; cf. Mk. 8:28; Mt. 16:14; Lk 9:8,19).¹²² Jesus also fitted into the tradition of Hassidic piety by detaching

Himself from earthly possessions, and absolutely relying on God (Mt. 6:25-33; Mk. 10:21; Mt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58).¹²³ Then again, the "complete lack of interest in legal and ritual affairs, and a corresponding exclusive concentration on moral questions," made Christ fit in within Charismatic Judaism. Such charismatics, as did Jesus, considered God's deeds of mercy as being over and above expertise in the law.¹²⁴

It is interesting to note that Jesus Christ came from Galilee, like the other Hassids known in Charismatic Judaism. Geza Vermes believes that:

It is safe and justifiable to conclude that the unsophisticated ambience of Galilee was apt to produce holy men of the Hassidic type, and that their success in that province was attributable to their simple spiritual demands of the Galilean, and perhaps also to a lively local folk memory concerning the miraculous deeds of the Great prophet Elijah.¹²⁵

If this assessment of Vermes is correct concerning the unsophistication of Galilee as compared to the other areas of Judaea, it is of interest to us in this thesis. The modern Western world has generally been described as being sophisticated and mechanistic, as opposed to the Third World which is generally seen as being unsophisticated and supernaturalistic. Perhaps this can be a chief reason why miraculous phenomena are recorded more in the Third World than in the West.

The general picture of Jesus that the Gospels paint for us against the historical background, can therefore be seen

to be "reasonably consistent and historically credible."¹²⁶ It can be said of Jesus that:

He was an Aramaic-speaking Galilean, of rural rather than urbanized Hellenistic culture, an amateur teacher not a professional scribe. Despite similarities between facets of His teaching and that of Pharisaic and Essene Sectarianism, He seems to have aligned Himself with the common people, with the "poor" and "sinners", rather than the pious. He was renowned as a healer and exorcist, like others we know from the period....¹²⁷

Colin Brown, however, sees "a decisive difference between [Hassidic] miracles and those of Jesus [as lying] in the fact that these miracles were not associated with particular teaching or messianic claims."¹²⁸ Brown states that:

Jesus' miracles, on the other hand, were associated with His distinctive teaching and practices. Moreover they were presented in the New Testament as the work of the Spirit anointed Christ.¹²⁹

This study seems to show then that Jesus Christ our Lord should not be treated (as some older scholars used to do) as a legendary Hellenistic holy man and wonder-worker. He rather should be seen more against the background of the charismatics within Judaism as modern scholarship correctly observes. But beyond this platform, Christ is exalted as the Messiah, and is shown in the Gospels as powerfully bringing in God's Kingdom (or reign).¹³⁰

D. Conclusion

It can be observed from the OT and the NT, within their milieu, that "signs and wonders" and other related terms are basically similar in meaning. Some are even interchangeable,

like sēmeia and terata. The Hebrew usage when translated into Greek - in the LXX and the NT - is the same.

Simply put then, for the purposes in this thesis, Signs and Wonders are those extra-ordinary phenomena which accrue from and attest to divinity, so as to elicit belief and amazement. It is clear to every Bible believing Christian, that the signs and wonders in the ministry of Jesus and His followers came from God. The Bible also makes it clear that Satan and his followers performed signs and wonders.

Three points could summarize the examination done in this study of signs and wonders outside the New Testament. First of all, signs and wonders were established phenomena surrounding both pagan shrines with their wonder-working personalities, and charismatic Judaism. These miraculous phenomena of healings, exorcisms and interventions to avert calamities were seen to follow the "ministries" of the respective wonder-workers even before Christ and His Apostles came on the scene.

Secondly, Christ and His followers did not stop operating in the miraculous, even though these phenomena were evident in paganism and Judaism. Thirdly, the superiority of the power of Christ over any other power was seen even by unbelievers among both pagans and Jews. This power was seen in the way it transformed lives, healed the sick, and

delivered the demonized.

Over and above the "charismatic chaos" that obtained in the New Testament milieu, Christ also came with signs and wonders, but more importantly, with the unique message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was the Messiah who had come to bring down God's reign into the world.¹³¹

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64. Helmut Koester, The Hellenistic Age, 374-375. Koester argues that although the Neopythagoreanism from which Apollonius of Tyana hailed was a descendant of the old Pythagoreanism, the two movements had marked differences. The old order under Pythagoras, the famous philosopher, mathematician and "divine man" was a religious philosophical and political one; while the new order in the time of Apollonius of Tyana was basically religio-philosophical. Asceticism marked both the old and the new orders. In Neopythagoreanism, a very peculiar ideal of the conduct of life existed. "The power and superiority of the human self [were] visibly presented in the life of the philosophers; ...[and] these philosophers often went from place to place as wandering preachers," spreading their unique philosophy. Apollonius of Tyana presented the best example for the ideal life of the Pythagorean philosopher.
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CHAPTER TWO

SIGNS AND WONDERS IN LUKE-ACTS

I. The Unity of Luke-Acts

A. The Fact of Unity

It has been declared that, "One of the most certain results of modern New Testament Study is that the third Gospel (Luke) and Acts are written by the same author" [emphasis mine].¹ This opinion is said to be from so virtual a consensus² that even critical New Testament scholars "far removed in standpoint from each other, for example, H. Holzmann... and Zockler...(agree) in this conviction."³ This belief on the same authorship of Luke-Acts expressed by many biblical scholars made Alfred Plummer assert that, "this position is so generally admitted by critics of all schools that not much time need be spent in discussing it."⁴ We will accordingly follow his advice at this point, and mention only a few critical points.⁵

Right from the Second century, it was believed firmly "that Luke, the beloved physician (Col 4:14), wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts."⁶ This early Church tradition has been tested by J. C. Hawkins "by a minute comparison of the language and style of Luke and Acts."⁷ Hawkins' relatively earlier research is confirmed by more recent research, notably that of H. J. Cadbury: whereby "a great similarity" was noted between the two books.⁸

It was Cadbury who first suggested that, "in order to emphasize the historic unity of the two volumes... the

expression 'Luke-Acts' is perhaps justifiable."⁹ Most scholars therefore see Luke-Acts as a two-volume work by a single author (Luke). "The two form an obvious pair and both were written in the same literary Greek style."¹⁰ Moreover, the reference to the 'former book' that is mentioned in the Acts preface, "almost certainly" referred to the Gospel according to Saint Luke."¹¹

Luke according to R. R. Williams, seems set to impress his readers "with the idea that behind Christianity was the unlimited power of God."¹² So while Luke constitutes part One of the great drama, Acts constitutes part Two of the same drama.¹³ Whereas the Master was principally involved in the Gospel, the Master's men were also clearly involved in Acts; and both the Master and His men were supernaturally enabled to accomplish their respective ministries.

Although some objections to the Luke-Acts Unity have been raised by some scholars, their arguments have generally been "comparatively slight."¹⁴ In this study, the writer will assume the Luke and Acts common authorship position.

B. The Significance of the "Unity"

The significance of the above discussion on the unity of Luke-Acts is seen in the purpose of Luke in "Luke-Acts." If the unity of Luke-Acts can be said to have an unanimous scholarly backing, the purpose of Luke in the two volume work is far from achieving any unanimity among biblical scholars.

Michael Prior has documented at least nine modern scholarly views on Luke's purpose. Briefly stated, they are as follows:

- (1) Hans Conzelmann (1953) - "argued that Luke's work was his response to the embarrassment of the delay of the Parousia."
- (2) B. S. Easton (1954) - "argued that in protesting the innocence of Jesus in the passion account, and of Paul in Acts 13-28, and in insisting that Christianity was nothing other than fulfilled Judaism, Luke-Acts was an apologia of Christianity to Rome."
- (3) A. J. Mattil, Jr. (1970) - on the other hand, "argued that it was an apologia for Paul against Jewish Christian charges."
- (4) J. C. O'Neill (1970) - "concluded that Luke-Acts [115-130 A.D.] was Luke's apologia for the Christian faith, which had a burning inner purpose of bringing non-Christian people to the faith."
- (5) I. H. Marshall (1970, 1978) - "concluded that Luke-Acts was primarily for Christian believers, and secondarily for the evangelization of non-believers."
- (6) E. Earle Ellis (1972, 1974) - "argued that Luke-Acts has a triple purpose," viz.,
 - a. "to combat the agnostic dehistoricizing of the Gospel,"
 - b. "to correct the view of those who saw the Kingdom of God solely in terms of an imminent returning of Jesus," and
 - c. "to describe the relationship of Judaism to Christianity."
- (7) S. G. Wilson (1973) - "concluded that Luke's history writing had a pastoral purpose, namely the offering of counsel to his fellow - believers."
- (8) C. H. Talbert (1966) - expressed the view that "Luke-Acts was written for the express purpose of serving as a defence against Gnosticism."
- (9) R. Maddox (1982) - got the answer in the preface of Luke. To Maddox, the work "aimed at reassuring the Christian Community about the significance of the

tradition and faith in which it stands." Such a reassurance was meant to motivate the saints in wholehearted worship and worldwide witness through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

Michael Prior, having examined these scholarly views on the purposes of Luke-Acts expresses his own view. It is that, "the key of the purpose lies in the preface in which the author indicates his intentions, namely, to give an orderly account of what happened in the ministry of Jesus," [who was empowered by the Spirit of God, and of the continuation of that ministry by the disciples, also empowered by the same Spirit of God.]¹⁶ In this two-fold ministry of Jesus and his followers, the Gospel, as Luke records it progresses from Jerusalem, the Jewish capital to Rome, the Gentile capital.¹⁷

The writer finds Prior's view, (which is akin to that of Maddox) attractive, since it is fully anchored to the text: both the preface of the Gospel and Acts, and the actual narratives in both. It is clear that Luke is the only evangelist who continues the story of Jesus by telling the story of the early Church. The very form of Luke's work shows his concern to draw a connection between the ministry of Jesus and that of the Church.¹⁸ But this connection even goes further back to God's dealings with the people of Israel; for God's mighty acts can be seen in "the things that have been fulfilled" within the life history of the early Christian community.¹⁹

Although it can be seen clearly that the God-head Three

are the primary Actors in both Luke and Acts, yet the human element is of vital importance in Luke's purpose.²⁰ As Gasque puts it:

The Christian Community... is the locus of this divine activity [of the Holy Trinity]; and its leaders, inspired by and under the directions of the Holy Spirit, are the immediate instruments of the divine plan.²¹

In God's plan, salvation was prepared by God Himself (Lk. 2:30-31) bestowed by Christ (LK 2:11), and offered to all people (Lk. 2:31-32).²² It is clear in "Luke" that Christ did His work under the Holy Spirit's leading and empowering - as we will see later. That God's offer of salvation is universal is an issue that the writer hopes to pursue later when he hopes to create an understanding of the Gospel outreach "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Most biblical scholars would agree that not the least of Luke's themes in "Luke-Acts" is the theme of Christ as a pneumatic figure who both spoke and acted in power by the Holy Spirit.²³ Indeed, this is how Luke portrayed the Master in Acts 1:1. As we will be seeing in details later, the mission of Christ is seen as being unique yet paradigmatic for His disciples. This study seeks to establish whether or not the same mission is also for Christ's disciples today.

Once this unity of Luke-Acts is directed to a particular theological proposition (like: "The Salvation that came to be manifested in Jesus Christ, God's Son in the flesh in the New

Testament era, is the same salvation that was manifested through the early disciples, and is the same salvation that is still being manifested today from the glorified Christ - with its wholistic implications), then a platform for stormy arguments is at once set. It is little wonder that the Luke-Acts debate has been called "a storm - center in biblical scholarship."²⁴ This debate keeps calling for more exegesis of Luke-Acts in order to enhance a better understanding of the two-volume work.²⁵

This study responds to this call, on the area of "signs and wonders." We shall now go on to closely look at some pertinent texts in Luke-Acts that have a special reference to "signs and wonders.

II. Signs and Wonders in the Gospel according to Luke

A. Introduction

Stephen Neill has described the third Gospel as "this radiant Gospel."²⁶ He continues to summarize the Gospel as follows:

In [this Gospel], the transfiguration of Jesus is indeed recorded, but only as an episode in that transfigured life, which stretches from the moment at which Jesus comes back from the wilderness to Galilee in the power of the Spirit to that in which He yields up His Spirit to the Father in quiet and tranquil confidence that the will of the Father has been done and His purpose accomplished. Luke has shown us the Gospel as that message which by its sheer beauty wins and controls the hearts of men, and introduces them into the Kingdom in which the joy of the Lord reigns supreme.²⁷

When Luke portrays the Lord Jesus beginning His public

ministry as a Spirit-anointed individual, he picks up a theme that he has already stressed in Jesus' conception (Lk. 1:35), expectation of His coming (Lk 1:6, 7; 2:26-27), and baptism (Lk. 3:16,22).²⁸ Moreover, the temptation of Jesus after His baptism and before His public ministry came about because Jesus was Spirit-led into the wilderness.²⁹

B. The Start of Jesus' Public Ministry (Luke 4:16-30)

(1) Introduction

This event at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry is unique to Luke alone. It is not found in any other Gospel record. It is clear that Jesus has already paid the visits to other Galilee synagogues where His fame as a teacher was felt (4:14-15). But now He is at His hometown of Nazareth, and He enters the Synagogue - as was His custom - on the Sabbath day. He stands up to read and is given the book of Prophet Isaiah. He finds a specific Scripture portion which He proceeds to read. This portion of Scripture is given in Lk. 4:18,19. After the reading of the text, Jesus closes the book, gives it back to the synagogue attendant and sits down with the eyes of the whole congregation fixed on Him (4:20). He then proceeds to make a momentous declaration that the specific Scripture He has just read "is fulfilled" in the hearing of His audience "today"!(4:21).³⁰

The congregation's immediate response is that of marvelling at His gracious words; but then they remember that He is only "Joseph's Son" (4:22). Jesus' allusion to His

mission as that of a prophet (4:22-27) chagrined His audience so much that their earlier response of marvelling changed to that of "wrath" - a wrath that propelled them to reject Him, thrust Him out of town and attempt to kill Him (4:28-29). Somehow, however, Jesus mysteriously passed through their midst and "went His way" (4:30), which this time meant "down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee." (4:31).

At Capernaum, Jesus continued His itinerary in the synagogues, in a home and in the open desert place. With His Word, Jesus not only taught authoritatively, but also commanded a demon (an unclean spirit) out of its victim, and rebuked a fever. Jesus further continued in the healing of the people's sicknesses (with laying on of hands) and in the exorcism of evil spirits from them. This type of authoritative word and deed ministry drew out astonishment, amazement and an eager crowd from the people. Jesus made it clear that He had to "preach the Kingdom of God" in other cities of Galilee as well; and so He did (4:32-44).

This itinerary of Jesus is action-packed and seems to have taken Him some "Sabbaths" (4:31) to accomplish. Whatever else we may discover as the mission of Jesus, the immediate context tells us at least that it involved proclamation and demonstration, acceptance and rejection. It was authoritative teaching on the one hand, and authoritative healing and deliverance on the other. Both of these were capable of

creating either acceptance or rejection, or a mixture of the two.

Concerning the importance of this periscope (Lk. 4:16-30), Michael Prior has this to say:

Virtually all scholars agree that this text is a key text in Luke's Gospel. Karris' assessment is typical: "Almost all Lukan scholars agree that 4:16-30 is programmatic [emphasis mine]: it describes Jesus' nature and mission.... However, if there is virtual unanimity on the programmatic character of the text, there is no such general agreement about the nature of the programme it prefaces."¹

(2) The text that Jesus quoted (in Lk. 4:18,19) seen against its Background.

It is generally agreed among biblical scholars that the text that Jesus quoted was from Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. When the quotation in Luke is put side by side with the Hebrew (Masoretic text) and the LXX (Septuagint Greek), it seems clear that Luke's text is nearer the LXX than the Hebrew.²² Since Jesus reads from Isaiah, it is necessary for this study to examine Isaiah's text and context before examining the Luke 4 text and context.

(a) A brief look at Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6

An examination of the context of Isaiah 61:1-2 shows us that there is a link between this text and the preceding context.²³ Chapter 60 has spoken about a future restoration of Zion and its people. The once afflicted city will arise and shine with God's own glory. The prophet sings a hymn of restoration in terms of peace, prosperity and glory. So the Is. 61:1-2 text comes in to focus on the agent of God's

restoration and the means he is going to use for that restoration. That restoration will come as a comfort, a consolation and a joy to the once captive and mourning people of God. God's justice demands not only the restoration of the oppressed but also a punishment of the oppressor (Is. 61:2bff).

Scholarly opinions are divided as to whether the mysterious personage in Is. 61 is either a prophet, or a king or a servant of the Lord or a Messiah.³⁴ This study does not seek to conclusively pursue the identity of the personage in Is. 61. It simply accepts the plain fact that in the original context, the prophecy was given by a prophet who was inspired to declare the good news of God's intervention to help His people. The intervention is "expressed in a variety of metaphors."³⁵

Isaiah 58:6 comes in naturally to fit the liberation terminology of Is. 61:1-2. Isaiah 58:6 comes in the middle of a description of a type of fast that pleases God: What it is not and what it is (58:1-12). A true fast unto God is not related to oppression put rather to liberation. The chapter continues to talk about restoration and fruitfulness for the genuine doer of justice - a justice that involves helping the poor with the basic necessities of life. This mention of help to the poor again ties in with the same concept in Isaiah 61.

(b) The Interpretation of Is. 61 in Judaism at the time of Jesus.

It has been said that "Isaiah 61 was one of the favorite passages in Judaism at the time of Jesus..."³⁶ So the audience would have received Jesus' citation from Isaiah "as really good news for them who were poor, and captive to Roman authority, blind with prison blindness, and oppressed."³⁷ The audience's pleasure would have been heightened by Jesus' declaration of immediate fulfillment.³⁸ Two basic Qumranic hermetical axioms are said to have captured the people's expectation at that time.

1. each generation considered itself to be the "True Israel of the End Time"; 2. At the End Time, God's wrath would be directed against Israel's enemies and his blessing would be generously bestowed on Israel.³⁹

It is clear from Luke's account that Jesus' "today" agreed with the first axiom but not with the second.⁴⁰ It is little wonder that the reaction of the people at Jesus' Mission's manifesto was ambivalent; for there was both acceptance and rejection.

(c) The Identity of Jesus

Scholarly opinion is divided as to whether the Luke 4:16-30 periscope depicts Jesus as a prophet or as a Messiah.⁴¹ As we look at the commentary, and the speech Jesus made in response to the people's questionings, we seem to see an allusion to a prophetic identity. But, as Prior says

nationalistic," Jesus' citation, stopping before the mention of vengeance, emphasizes his universalistic mission.

Moreover, His mention of Elijah and Elisha and their ministry of mercy to foreigners strengthens the concept of Jesus' universalistic mission: it embraces both Israel and the Gentiles.⁴²

That the Luke 4 periscope underlines Jesus' role as a prophet (as Prior asserts) is a claim that is validated by the fact that Jesus' prophetic role is also highlighted in a number of passages in the Gospel (e.g 7:16; 9:8,19; 24:19). Moreover, "Acts also reflects the Moses-like prophetic character of Jesus."⁴³ He is the ideal type of prophet - like Moses - who doesn't just announce God's deliverance but actually effects it, as the Lukan context clearly shows: for Jesus preaches, heals and exorcises.

(3) A closer look at Luke 4:18-19

The Lord Jesus spelt out His mission's manifesto in some strong words drawn up from Isaiah. An attempt shall be made to lay out and observe the text and then examine the words more closely.

(a) Layout of the text

Pneuma kuriou ep'eme, hu heineken echrisen me
euangelisasthai ptōchois a pestalke me
iasasthai tous suntetrimenous ten kardian
Kēruyai aichmalotois apheisin

Και
tuphlois anablepsin
apostellai tethrausmenous en aphesei
Kēruyai eniauton kuriou dektion.

(b) Observation of the Layout

The first two lines of the text constitute the theme of the text. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Jesus. This means that He is an anointed individual. The specific purpose of the anointing is to set Him apart to proclaim Good News to the poor. This can be put into one sentence as follows: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Jesus to anoint Him for the specific task of proclaiming the Good News to the poor.

These poor people are broken-hearted, captivated, blind and oppressed. This is the bad news they have been constantly familiar with. It is no wonder that they need someone to come with some Good News of liberation; and that time of liberation is "today."

The infinitives - iasasthai (to heal), kēruyai (to preach), apostellai (to send forth), - start phrases that are governed by the verb apestalke (he sent me) from the theme.

(c) Syntactical relationships in the text.

"πνευμα κυριου" is a genitive of possession specifically showing a relationship (between the persons of the Godhead);⁴⁴ "ἐπ' ἐμε" is a locative of place;⁴⁵ and the infinitives - εὐαγγελισασθαι, ιασασθαι, ἀποστειλαι, and κηρυξαι (x2) are all infinitives of purpose.⁴⁶

(d) Terms in the Text

Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἔμε οὐ εἵνεκεν ἐχρίσεν με

The Spirit of the Lord being upon Jesus means that Jesus has been 'anointed' (ἐχρίσεν με = "He has anointed me") for a specific purpose. ἐχρίσεν is the aor. act. ind. (3rd person singular) of χρίω which means to anoint. Both the Greek word and its equivalent מָשַׁח (māshah) have the meanings of anointing, smearing, spreading a liquid over somebody or something.⁴⁷ However, its O.T. usage - when priests, prophets and kings were anointed⁴⁸ - had a specific reference to oil being "poured on the head."⁴⁹ Such an anointing was seen as a consecration, and a solemn setting a part to an office.⁵⁰ The individuals thus anointed "were regarded as endowed with the Holy Spirit and divine gifts."⁵¹ Commenting on the Isaiah 61:1ff passage, John D. W. Watts says, rightly one would think that "the anointing here is clearly related more to God's gift of His Spirit than to the oil used in ceremonies."⁵²

The verb χρίω (Chrio) "anoint" occurs five times in the NT", with three out of the five occurrences being found in Luke-Acts (Lk. 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38); and "in contrast to general usage in antiquity" which doesn't always distinguish it from its synonym ἀλείφω (aleipho), " χρίω is figurative in all NT occurrences."⁵³ In other words, this anointing is tantamount to a "bestowal and

possession of the Spirit."⁵⁴

As this study focuses on the Luke 4 text, it is important to note that the point in the narrative is not merely "the identification of the speaker as a messianic figure, but rather," as I. Howard Marshall says correctly, "that the functions of this OT figure are now fulfilled in Jesus who has been anointed with the Spirit for this purpose."⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that "māshah" could refer in everyday language to such acts as rubbing a shield with oil.⁵⁶ Since shields are used for battle, it might not be a farfetched speculation to associate the anointing that Jesus claimed with the battle He had come to wage against the demonic forces as the Luke 4 context shows. One could perhaps say that the Master was getting his weapons ready for battle against the spiritual enemy.

It is not difficult for one to see that Jesus received this anointing for His specific task at His baptism at the river Jordan (Lk. 3:22). Grundmann is correct to say that Jesus Himself gives us the answer on His being "Christ" - the anointed one of God. "He is χριστος as the recipient of the Spirit of God by whom He is conceived and who is given to Him personally in baptism."⁵⁷

Jesus then began His ministry as a Spirit anointed, supernaturally sanctioned, blessed, endowed, assigned and appointed⁵⁶ individual to accomplish His task of preaching, healing and exorcism. Perhaps Young is right to say that there is an emphasis on "με" which is mentioned twice in the opening two-phrase thematic statement. If so, then again one can see a stage being set for the speaker who "is a person of unusual significance," who can both announce and carry out the great mission of deliverance.⁵⁷ It is little wonder that Peter's Holy Spirit inspired summary of Jesus' ministry states this mission as common knowledge (Acts 10:38).

εὐαγγελισασθαι πτωχοις ἀπεσταλκε με.

This phrase declares the great mission that Jesus is going to do. He goes armed with the powerful Holy Spirit anointing from the Lord; and He goes as one who is God-sent. ἀπεσταλκε [με] ("He sent me") is the perfect active indicative (3rd person singular) of ἀποστέλλω which basically means "to send forth a messenger, agent, message, or command."⁵⁸ As it has been put down already, Jesus goes forth to begin His ministry as a person of unusual significance. He is the Lord's own "commissioned agent"⁵⁹ and "authoritative representative."⁶⁰

Jesus is sent "to evangelize the poor (people)," (εὐαγγελισασθαι πτωχοις). εὐαγγελισασθαι = aor. mid. inf. of εὐαγγελίζομαι which means "to announce the good tidings of the Gospel."⁶¹ In the New Testament, euangelion =

"good news" or "good tidings". eu = "well" or "good" and angelo = "report" or bring a message. So angelos = messenger. euangelizo, the companion verb to the compound euangelion, means "bring good tidings"; and from it is derived the noun evangelistes which means "one who brings good tidings" = an "evangelist."⁶² It is clear as F. F. Bruce says, that "in the NT, this group of words is used with special reference to the Christian message." This message of liberation may be "the message proclaimed by Jesus Himself, or the message proclaimed by His followers." Such usage characterized the description of the good news of restoration of the exiled people of Judeah and Jerusalem from Babylon when that empire fell under the Persian King Cyrus (Is. 40:9)⁶³

There was a specific group of people described as 'poor' (πτωχοις) to whom the Good tidings was to reach.⁶⁴ There is a need to seek a clear identify of these poor people in order to help us identify their needs in the light of Jesus' mission. Πτωχοις is a pronominal demonstrative masculine plural adj. of πτωσσω which means to "cower."⁶⁵ As a substantive (noun) πτωχος originally meant someone who is a beggar, and therefore dependent on others for support; or simply someone who is "poor." It is in the substantive that the word mostly appears in the N.T., and it is used as the opposite of ὁ πλουσιος ("the rich").⁶⁶ However, the lack of an article here probably stresses the

condition of the poor rather than the individuals themselves.⁶⁹ The connotation here, however, as in the Hebrew אָנָוִים (ʿanāwîm) is one of need and affliction.⁷⁰ In their oppression and disillusionment they are in special need of God's help and they have the Good News therefore preached to them.⁷¹ Such persons in the Psalms are the faithful ones who wait on Yahweh in spite of their personal distress. (cf. Ps 57:15); and such humble and afflicted individuals are also usually broken hearted.⁷² This condition "poignantly describes the dispirited Jewish community around the ruins of Jerusalem before Ezra returned."⁷³

Michael Prior is probably right to say that the meaning of ptōchos should not just "be guided by the Greek usage of the word, which means 'destitute' or 'beggar'." He argues that in the Greek society "the ptōchoi were on the fringe of society, since they had no place in the economy, and for their survival depended entirely on the hospitality of others." Prior then suggests that we should see the meaning of ptōchos in the Jewish terminology as well.⁷⁴

Prior concludes - after examining ptōchos in its different NT contexts - that the same term "may refer to a person in somewhat different social circumstances from one place to another."⁷⁵ Prior's convincing conclusion is that we are left with no doubt that "when Luke speaks of poor people, he means people who are lacking in the essentials for

subsistence." He makes the observation that, "it is obvious, of course, that one is never poor only in a material sense, [since] material poverty involves loss of dignity, status and security; and, in a society sensitive to questions of ritual purity, uncleanness."⁷⁶

The poor therefore in Luke's Gospel, and emphasized in the programmatic text, are both materially and socially needy people.

These poor people aimed at in Jesus' mission are "broken hearted" (συντετριμμενους την καρδιαν) and therefore need someone to come "to heal" (ιασασθαι) them. iasasthai is aor. mid. infin. of ιαομαι which means "to heal" or "cure".⁷⁷ This healing can be both literal (physical healing from sickness) or metaphorical (spiritual healing - a restoration from a state of sin and condemnation).⁷⁸ The heart (καρδια) was "regarded as the seat of feeling, impulse, affection, [or] desire. However, it could also mean "the seat of intellect", "the inner and mental frame" and "the conscience".⁷⁹ These meanings are in agreement with the Hebrew meanings for לֵב (leb) = the "inner man, mind, will, heart."⁸⁰ Apparently, the specific reference in Is. 61:1 is to "moral character"⁸¹ The poor are "broken of heart" (συντετριμμενους). This is the acc. pl. masc. part. perf. passive of συντριβω ("break in piece, crush, shatter"...UBS Dict. p.175). As used in Luke 4:18 it means

to "be contrite."⁸² It would seem then that the healing these broken hearted, contrite poor need is a restoration from a state of sin and condemnation that only Jesus can give.

The good news that Jesus brings to the poor people also comes as a message that is preached or proclaimed, announcing their release as captives, and the opening of their blind eyes. κηρυξαι is the aorist infin. of κηρυσσω meaning to "preach" or "announce"⁸³ The Hebrew equivalent in Is. 61:1 is from קָרָא (qārā) which can mean call, proclaim or read. It would seem that κηρυξαι (ligrō) then means "to proclaim".⁸⁴ What is proclaimed is a release to captives

(αἰχμαλωτοὺς ἀφῆσιν); and to blind (people) recovery of sight (τυφλοὺς ἀναβλεψιν). αἰχμαλωτοὺς means prisoners, captured in war.⁸⁵ The Hebrew equivalent is from (šābā) which means to take captive, hence captives. The captives need a release or freeing (ἀφῆσιν) from ἀφῆσιν which means to let go.⁸⁶ The equivalent of release or liberty in Hebrew is דִּתְרֵן (dētôr). The proclamation Jesus brings also included a recovery of sight to blind (people) [τυφλοὺς]. The blind clearly need the opening of eyes or recovery of sight

According to the structure given above the two phrases that talk of the release of the captives and the opening of blind eyes go together. In the immediate context of Isaiah 61:1, these words are "metaphors for the Jewish sense of what it means to be exiles and subjects during this period."⁸⁷ The words "to proclaim liberty" are also used in the Old

Testament for the year of Jubilee (cf. Lev 25). Apparently the prophets used this concept as a symbol for the release of the exiled Jews from their exile predicament and all that it entailed (cf. Jer. 34:8, 15, 17).

If indeed there is no evidence that the year of Jubilee (the freedom for both land and persons from "bondage" after every 50 years) was ever actually put into practice, then its importance seems to have been its prophetic usage to describe metaphorically the provision of freedom by God for His people in bondage through some chosen instrument in His hands.⁸⁸

It is interesting to note that the phrase "and recovery of sight to the blind" is missing from the Hebrew (MT) and present in the LXX and Luke. Apparently, the Hebrew wordings here "and an opening" lends itself to either of the translations found in different English versions; either "the opening of the prison" or "the opening of blind eyes".⁸⁹ This therefore presents some difficulties in translation which difficulties the Targum tries to resolve in its version by combining the two possible translations into one compound one thus "(to say) to the prisoners, 'Be exposed to the light.'"⁹⁰ Perhaps France is right (given the context in Isaiah of liberation of the Jews from exile) that one should not press for a literal meaning of making physically blind people see. He is of the opinion that "the point of the quotation in Jesus' sermon at Nazareth does not depend on details, but on

the picture as a whole."⁷¹ But if the meaning of "blind" in Luke 4 is metaphorical says France any doubts as to whether Jesus healed the physically blind are dispelled at Luke 7:22 where "the reference is clearly to the literal healing of the blind."⁷²

Jesus also comes to "send away" (ἀποστείλαι = aor. infin. of ἀποστελλω) the crushed or the oppressed (τεθραυσμένους = pt. ptc. pass. of θραύω).⁷³ The phrase here does not appear in the LXX Isaiah 61, but rather in Isaiah 58:6. The latter citation in Luke however fits in well within the Isaiah text which talks about "release". Apparently Judaism in Jesus' time, says M. M. Turner, saw Is 61:1-2 as a prophecy and a hope for the New Exodus, when the "poor" of Israel (the ones who needed salvation) would be released from the captivity of Beliar.⁷⁴

Then Jesus comes forth "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" [ἐννιαυτον κυριου δεκτον] (LXX). The Hebrew is "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour". In the Old Testament, many scholars see here a reference to the year of Jubilee. But, says Watts, there is a closeness this phrase has with the earlier chapters of Isaiah (40:1-11; 51-52; 60). If in the earlier chapters, says Watts, the events are predicted and seen dimly, in Isaiah 61:2 the earlier predictions "are now announced as coming to pass."⁷⁵

Robert Hanna says that "the genitive κυριου in this verse (from the LXX) is presumably a possessive, the 'acceptable year belonging to the Lord': But he also says that "κυριου undoubtedly "combined in a special way with the idea behind δεκτον to convey the meaning that it is 'the year when the Lord will accept man' (i.e. there is a tinge of subjective meaning in the genitive noun)."⁷⁶

ἐννιαυτος was originally an "anniversary". From this came ἔτος (v.25) which means year. δεκτος comes from δεχομαι which means acceptable.⁷⁷ Godet suggested that the year in question is one "in which [God] is pleased to show mankind extraordinary favours."⁷⁸

(e) A synthesis of the analysis of Luke 4:18-19

Jesus comes as a Holy Spirit anointed and set-apart individual from God to fulfill a specific task of proclaiming Good News to poor people. These poor people are poor both economically and socially. Their condition is analogous to that of the Jews awaiting release from the Babylonian exile.

It is little wonder that they need Someone to bring them some Good News. They are familiar with the bad news of economic and social deprivations. Now Jesus has come forth with the Good News which is in a form of a proclamation. It is an announcement that their prison doors have been opened. They can now be set free from their oppression knowing that

God is ready to receive them because He has accepted them.

"Jesus has announced this deliverance from oppression; and He claims that He has been sent by God to bring it to pass as from today! What possibly are the implications of this promised deliverance within my situation as a materially, morally and socially bankrupt individual? Could it be possible, as people have been speculating these days about our being delivered from Rome and Beliar, that today may be the beginning of that liberation? If this is so then it is truly amazing. I can hardly wait to see what will come out of this!"⁹⁷

(4) Interpreting Luke 4:18-19 in its immediate context

It has already been expressed that the following context of Lk. 4:18-19 (which is Lk. 4:20ff) shows Jesus preaching, healing and exorcising. This seems to comprise the interpretation of Jesus' mission manifesto in the Nazareth Synagogue. The deliverance He announced was actually demonstrated in continuing proclamation of the Good News, healing the sick people and delivering those tormented by evil spirits. Many scholars believe that we cannot fully understand our Lk 4 text without connecting it to Luke 7:22... so that both passages must be considered together."⁹⁸

The preceding context of Luke 7:22 shows that John the

Baptist had heard about Jesus authoritative teaching accompanied by miracles of healing, and even the raising of the dead. These astounding deeds of Jesus had caused fear to fall upon the masses and called them to exclaim that, 'a great prophet has risen up among us,' and that 'God has visited His people.' (Lk. 7:16-18). It was such a report of Jesus' words and deeds of power that came to John the Baptist through his disciples while he was in prison. John's response was to send two of his disciples on an inquiry mission to Jesus: to ascertain whether Jesus was "the Coming One" (7:19) John the Baptist's disciples came upon Jesus and found Him still involved in His mission which involved healing and exorcisms (7:21). The answer that Jesus gave to John's disciples was an answer that pointed them to go and report what they themselves could see and hear: the opening of blind eyes, the supernatural healing of lameness so that they could walk again, the cleansing of lepers, the supernatural touch of healing upon the deaf so that they could once more hear, the raising of the dead, and the proclamation of the Good News to the poor (7:22).

It is clear that, the above text shows an exclusive concern with Jesus' works of power; and a reference is made to a variety of unfortunate classes of people who were met at their points of need by Jesus' ministry of preaching and "signs and wonders".⁹⁹ Luke 7:22 "gives a list of actions which according to the Gospel tradition were actually carried

10:38; 26:18.¹⁰⁹

Although many scholarly works have seen a jubiliary language in this text with its implications for socio-economic (if not political redress),¹¹⁰ it is not easy to discern this serious concern in the overall ministry of Jesus. Nolland is perhaps right to say that in this programme of the Master, there is no depiction of Him as a social reformer addressing Himself in any fundamental way to the political structure of the world. The portrait that Luke paints of Jesus in his Gospel account seems to be one of a pneumatic charismatic figure who goes about proclaiming and demonstrating His Good News of forgiveness, healing and deliverance from evil spirits. One may well say that it is only secondarily and by implication that the social, economic and political aspects of His mission can be seen. Michael Prior seems to be on target when he describes Jesus as "a great prophet, but a social reformer of very modest achievement."¹¹¹ He continues to say that,

Little or nothing in the reports we have of His itinerant ministry suggests that His programme of reform involved a socio-political upheaval that could be regarded as a serious threat to the stability of His region of the Roman empire. Neither does the transplanting of His Gospel... appear to have offered any serious challenge to the social stability of Greco-Roman cities...¹¹²

Nevertheless, Prior argues that any "authentic theological reflection cannot be divorced from the social and political realities of life." He sees the good side of

liberation theologies [largely third world] as "a challenge ... to Western dominated theology... [to involve] itself with the realities of the conditions of people, and particularly those in oppression....[for Western theology should also] be seen to offer a new order [in society]."¹¹³ But, argues Prior, liberation theology is a mere "attractive rhetoric" if it is bereft of concrete diagnostic and prescriptive plans on both a long-term and a short-term basis.¹¹⁴

If then the plain look through Luke shows us a charismatic prophet - figure of power in both words and deeds,¹¹⁵ there should perhaps then be little need to look elsewhere for the identity of Jesus' programmatic mission declared on that momentous day at the Nazareth Synagogue. Donald Juel adds a messianic element to the prophetic in Jesus' depiction by Luke as a powerful figure in both words and deeds. These powerful words and deeds were the authentication of Jesus' ministry.¹¹⁶

These signs and wonders of the Messiah - prophet were reminiscent of Elijah's and Elisha's, and more importantly, were parallel to those of Moses, the ideal prophet (Deut. 18:5-10).¹¹⁷ However, it has already been mentioned that even false prophets in the Old Testament could perform "signs and wonders" (Deut. 13:1-5). It is not therefore difficult to believe - as Juel suggests - that some of Jesus' Jewish audience, having this Deuteronomical background might have

wondered about the veracity of Jesus' ministry.¹¹⁸

This clearly underlines the need for the element of discernment in any "signs and wonders" ministries, even in our day. One may recall that the Master Himself warned that authenticity in ministry is judged on the basis of a person's character and not on his charisma(ta) (Matt. 7:15-23).

As it has been seen already, this study accepts as convincing the overwhelming conviction of virtually all scholars that Luke-Acts is programmatic for Luke's whole purpose for Luke 4:16-30. Shelton might not then be far from the truth in seeing Luke's main point in Luke-Acts as a portrayal of Jesus as a Spirit-anointed individual both speaking and performing wonders by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹

In his detailed study of "the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts", James B. Shelton points out the link between the Holy Spirit and miracles in Luke (and Acts). The Holy Spirit empowers both witness and miraculous deeds in the ministry of the Master (and later in His disciples too).¹²⁰ Furthermore, Shelton has carefully noted in his study how Luke uses the words dynamis (power), exousia (authority), and charis, (grace) to link the Holy Spirit with miracles, especially healings.¹²¹

In Luke's Gospel account, therefore (and also in Acts), the Spirit's endowment of grace, power and authority empowered both the Master and the first century believers to proclaim God-inspired words and to perform miracles. It would seem to be difficult then to separate the miraculous nature of inspired speaking from miraculous deeds.¹²²

The interrelationship between words and deeds of power seems to be clear in Luke 4:31-37 (cf. Mark 1:21-28). Both His words and deeds were astonishing. Moreover, the unclean demon recognized Jesus' cleanness of character and cried out in declaration of the truth that Jesus was "the Holy One of God!" (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ).

C. Signs and Wonders and the Kingdom of God

(1) Introduction: The Concept of the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God (Greek - Basileia, Hebrew - malekut) is a concept that finds quite some emphasis in the Synoptic Gospels; and the teaching surrounding this concept, says Donald Guthrie, "must be considered as a major contribution to our understanding of the mission of Jesus [emphasis mine].¹²³ The secular use of the term concerns both authority to rule (Luke 19:12, 15, cf. Rev. 17:12,17), and the "realm over which a reign is exercised" (Lk. 4:6; cf. Matt. 24:7; Mk. 6:23; Rev. 16:10).¹²⁴

Both ideas of realm and reign concerning the Kingdom of

God are also found in the religious sense in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.¹²⁵ In its religious sense, it carries the idea of salvation; for God's Kingdom comes in power to defeat Satan and his powers, and so save men "from the sway of evil."¹²⁶ This Kingdom is both dynamic and mysterious. Its dynamic nature is conveyed by the word "age"; that is, the Kingdom of God has already come into history, it will come to full fruition at the close of this age of evil; and is supernatural in its operation.¹²⁷ The mystery of the Kingdom is seen in its hidden presence here in history, amidst the present evil age of Satan's rule.¹²⁸

Although attempts at conceptualizing the Kingdom have made some people see two different concepts in the addition of either "Heaven" or "God", biblical scholarship today, however, is in general agreement that the two terms are interchangeable.¹²⁹

In the New Testament, the meaning of the term, "Kingdom of God" (or of "Heaven") is generally seen by biblical scholarship to be not so much a realm (domain) but a reign. It is not as much an area over which the King reigns, as the activity of reigning; therefore, it is "a dynamic concept, a view which is in complete agreement with Hebrew usage (cf. Ps.145:11, 13; 103:19)"¹³⁰

It has been said that Luke 17:20-21 ("The Kingdom of God

is in the midst of you" [entos (ἐντος)] is "the most striking Kingdom saying."¹³¹ Guthrie says the following concerning it:

Since this statement is Jesus' answer to a direct question put to Him... regarding the coming of the Kingdom, it must be taken as a specific reference to its present reality compared with the current emphasis on a future Kingdom. It also brings out its non-political character. Jesus virtually says you cannot see this kingdom so as to point to it....¹³²

The central ideas in understanding the Kingdom of God then are: "it is now but also not yet"; "it is supernatural, dynamic and mysterious"; and "it is saving, and as such also in conflict" with the Satanic kingdom. All of these central ideas are important when signs and wonders are considered within the concept of the Kingdom of God.

(2) The "Conflict" element in the nature of the Kingdom of God

The exorcism incident in Luke 4 clearly brings to one's attention a conflict that is going on. L. D. Hurst has noted that Luke sees the Kingdom of God as being "present as a divine power breaking in upon the Kingdom of Satan and overthrowing the power of Satan in the world."¹³³ Jerome Neyrey agrees with this, and sees the Lukan narrative as being "framed by reference to Satanic attacks on God's Christ and His followers."¹³⁴

Not only does Satan appear at the beginning of Jesus' ministry to attack Him (Lk. 4:1-13)¹³⁵ and returns at the end to attack His disciples (Lk. 22:3,31); even the Master

Himself is once more attacked (Lk. 22:53).¹⁹⁶ Within Luke's narrative, Satan is depicted as an enemy of faith, who takes away the word from the hearers' hearts "that they may not believe and be saved" (Lk. 8:12). This is confirmed in Acts 13:8-10 when Elymas, "the son of the devil" seeks to turn Sergius Paulus, the Consul from the faith.¹⁹⁷

The concept of releasing the prisoners of war that is found in the Luke 4:18, 19 text becomes quite significant as one considers the conflict nature of the Kingdom. Jesus comes to take the war into the Devil's camp, confronts his power to cause sin, demonization and sickness; and thus releases them to a free life of forgiveness, deliverance and healing. When Jesus healed a crippled woman in Luke 13:16, for example, the Scripture is clear that her crippled state was a result of "a spirit of infirmity" (13:11) [ἀσθενεῖας]. The Satanic spirit (v.16) was responsible for the woman's condition of "want of strength", "weakness" or "feebleness"¹⁹⁸ Jesus both spoke to and laid hands on the woman in the process of ridding her of both the Satanic spirit and the physical condition of infirmity brought about by that spirit (vs. 12-13).

In Luke 11:21-22, one seems to see a portrait of the Devil by Jesus. Satan can truly be described as "a strong man", "fully armed", and "guarding his own place" in order to "secure his goods." In the context of the passage, these

goods are humans whom he possesses and oppresses within his kingdom (v.18). So Jesus comes - He who is stronger than Satan - and both disarms and dispoils Satan (v.22). It has to be remembered that this teaching by Jesus followed an incident when He exorcised "a mute demon". The departure of the demon was a deliverance for its victim who promptly spoke - to the marvel of the multitudes (v. 14). But not all of the multitudes marvelled. Others ridiculed and scoffed, by attributing Jesus' power of exorcism to Satan (vs. 15, 18).

It is clear that exorcists were in existence (outside Jesus' own circle of disciples) (vs.19). Their power of exorcism was derived from the Satanic realm (v.19). In Jesus' clarification of the source of His power to effect exorcism, the answer - as Jesus Himself gives it - is in the power of "the finger of God." In the parallel passage of Matthew 11:28, the identity of this "finger" is clearly spelled-out as "the Spirit of God" (cf. Exod. 7:19).

It would not be difficult to figure out the Spiritual warfare that is depicted here. It took the power of the liberating Holy Spirit to tackle the tormenting power of the Satanic spirits. It is not surprising that Susan R. Garret in her serious study of magic and the demonic in Luke's writings comes to the same conclusions. She concluded her study of Luke 11:21-22 by saying that Jesus spoils Satan's Kingdom whenever He releases people held captive by sin, illness and

demonization.¹³⁹ Neyrey also agrees and sees "this antagonistic role of Satan" as being "dramatized more fully in Luke's presentation of two kingdoms at war, God's and Satan's."¹⁴⁰ It is clear as Lk. 11:24-26 shows that demonic spirits are at war to possess and oppress humans.

And as for the outcome of the kingdoms in conflict, one is left without a shadow of a doubt. Not only did Jesus show mastery over Satan in temptation (Lk. 4:1-13) thus proving that He is the Son of God and an agent of God's Kingdom (Lk. 11:20); it is also confirmed by Peter in Acts 10:38. The ruin of Satan was even proclaimed by Jesus when He exclaimed, "I saw Satan fall like lightning (Lk. 10:18)."¹⁴¹ Although it is clear that there is a satanic power in the hands of Satanic agents, yet the Holy Spirit power in the hands of God's Special Agent - Jesus, and in the hands of His disciples overcomes Satan's power which is seen to be inferior.¹⁴²

Since this study refers to Africa with a living belief in the reality of the Spirit-World, these observations are of paramount importance for Christian ministry.

In the Nazareth Synagogue, Jesus declared that on that very day ("today" - *σημερον*) that announcement of deliverance in the text He had read had begun being fulfilled (Lk. 4:18-21). In other words, as the analysis of the text has shown, the poor people could start receiving forgiveness

of sin, healing from sickness and deliverance from demons. But since the Good News of the Kingdom of God have both present and future realizations - in the perfect state of total freedom from any form of oppression - the reality of the "now" and "not yet" tension in the Kingdom of God had to be kept in mind.

Although the breaking-in of the Kingdom of God was already present with its all transforming power, yet it awaited consummation.¹⁴³ Graham Grey has said correctly that the Kingdom of God could and was resisted up to the crucifixion; but the resurrection set approval upon all that Christ achieved (Lk. 24:19-49). Therefore, continues Grey, although the ministry of the Kingdom could be seen in the power to heal and deliver, it was predominantly seen, however, in the weakness of the cross.¹⁴⁴ On Christ's Kingdom agenda then, concludes Grey, both triumphalism and pessimism was excluded.¹⁴⁵ What was experienced by Christ in His life and ministry was also to be experienced by Christ's disciples.

D. The Commission of Jesus to His Disciples [Lk. 9:1-2; 10:1,2,9, 17-20.]

It is clear that the power (*δυναμις*) to do signs and wonders could be given also to Jesus' disciples with a triple commission to cast out demons, heal the sick and preach the Kingdom of God. Luke's Gospel clearly shows that the mission of the 70 (2) was no less successful than had

been that of the twelve.¹⁴⁶

Looking at Luke 24:44-49, the context anticipates the Spirit as empowering the disciples for a witnessing ministry ahead. So the same Spirit that rested on Jesus would rest on the disciples (Lk. 4:14; 5:17); and that empowering had been prefigured in that of Luke 9:1,2.¹⁴⁷ The disciples would "in the future" carry Christ's ministry forward "when He sits exalted at the right hand of God;" and William J. Abraham may be right to suggest that just as the mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha, so Jesus' anointing was to pass onto the disciples.¹⁴⁸ It can be seen that although Jesus was unique in life and ministry, nevertheless He served as a paradigm for His followers, so that they too would go out preaching, healing and delivering the demonized.¹⁴⁹

III. Signs and Wonders in The Acts of the Apostles¹⁵⁰

A. Introduction

John R. W. Stott has emphasized the indispensable place of the Book of Acts in the Bible; for although we are given four accounts of Jesus, only one is given us of the early church (at least part of it). The New Testament would therefore have been greatly impoverished without it.¹⁵¹ Stott has observed that because of the unique importance of this book, an enormous literature has been produced to the extent that it is "almost impossible for anybody to read it all."¹⁵² If, as Sir William Ramsay has written, that, "it is

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impossible to find anything to say about Acts that has been said before by somebody,"¹⁵³ then how can one justify this present study? Perhaps we can justify our present study in terms of application to Christian ministry here in Africa: since a lot of literature on Acts is orientated to the first century.

From Luke 24:46-49, Juel rightly sees the promise of power from on high as providing a direct link to the story of Pentecost and the Church in the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁵⁴ This is significant when we also consider what Nolland calls the sharing of a teaching, healing and exorcism ministry by Jesus and His Apostles (Lk. 9:1-6); for it anticipates the Post-Pentecost Mission in which the Apostles and others would be empowered by the exalted Lord to be His witnesses "to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8).¹⁵⁵

B. The Importance of Acts 1 to this Thesis

(1) Acts 1:1

As we have already noted, this study takes the position that Luke is the author of both Luke (the Gospel) and Acts. We will visit this position again briefly in the words of F. Bruce:

These five verses (of Acts 1:1-5) provide a connection between the two parts of Luke's history, and partly summarize the closing scenes of the Gospel. They are a prologue to the two-fold work of Luke-Acts.¹⁵⁶

The position sees ἤρξατο (began) [3d pers. sing. aor.

mid. ind. of ἀρχω = "to begin"] being of paramount

importance, for it believes that Jesus is continuing to do and teach through His Apostles and other followers in Acts what He began to do and teach in the Gospel.¹⁵⁷ M. Baumgarten expressed this same position in the end of the last century,¹⁵⁸ and John Stott maintains it towards the end of this century.¹⁵⁹ John Stott emphatically states that, "Jesus' ministry on earth, exercised personally and publicly, was followed by His ministry from heaven, exercised through His Holy Spirit by His Apostles."¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the ascension (Acts 1:9) is the watershed between Christ's earthly ministry and His heavenly ministry.¹⁶¹

However, Horatio B. Hackett does not agree, on the basis of no clear statement by Luke to this effect.¹⁶² This study assumes nevertheless, that Luke's purpose is implied. As the rest of Acts 1ff. shows, the endowment of power by The Holy Spirit that Christ promised His disciples in Luke 24:49 is repeated and later received (in Ch. 2). John MacArthur also takes up the position of Jesus' continuing ministry: and includes not only the Apostles in Christ's unfinished work but also us today.¹⁶³ This study will attempt to ascertain whether indeed this continuing ministry of Jesus includes "us" also today; and if so, how it does.

(2) Power for Witness (Acts 1:8)

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and

supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit in the upper room (Acts 1:14). The coming of this promised Holy Spirit power emboldened them to bear witness to Jesus, as the book of Acts shows.

The disciples would be effective witnesses to Jesus.

μαρτυρες is a nom. masc. pl. noun of μαρτυς which, in the NT sense is a "witness, a testifier of a doctrine; [and sometimes also] a "martyr".¹⁷⁰ These witness were both witnesses of Jesus ("my witnesses" - μου cf. UBS) and witnesses to Jesus ("witnesses to Me" - μου cf. Majority text). They were "not only witnesses to the facts of their Lord's life, cf. 1:22, 10:39; but also His witnesses, His by a direct personal relationship."¹⁷¹ "Because the men who were the faithful witnesses of the facts of Christ's history were exposed to suffering and death, martyr and witness became almost synonymous."

In this context however, it may be farfetched to read the latter meaning of "martyrs", rather, one should perhaps read simply "witnesses".¹⁷² F.F. Bruce rightly sees the concept of "witness" as being "prominent in the preaching throughout Acts; cf. v. 22; 2:32, 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 41, 43; 13:21; 15:8; 22:15, 20; 23:11; 26:16."¹⁷³ He continues by saying that "Luke is interested" not in the succession of ecclesiastical authority "or of orthodox tradition but of apostolic testimony to Christ..."¹⁷⁴ The disciples were therefore to be simply witnesses to and of Jesus.

Specific places of this witness are mentioned:

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of earth. That Luke distinguishes Jerusalem from Judea as a separate district could be a proof of the current practice of Rabbinical phraseology.¹⁷⁵ Some have argued for a geographical progression of the Gospel in the mention of these places; but it is also noted that, "it appears somewhat strained to see in St. Paul's preaching in Rome a witness to 'the utmost parts of the earth.'"¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, current literature could provide scanty evidence that Rome was regarded as the end of the earth.¹⁷⁷ It is little wonder that some scholars have resolved this issue by seeing the hand of a redactor here, and therefore prefer to eliminate the phrase from the text.¹⁷⁸ Judea and Samaria were two adjacent but distinct provinces, and perhaps the absence of the article in Samaria is explained by these provinces being adjacent to each other.¹⁷⁹

The end of the earth is the limit of the witness of Jesus' disciples. εσχατος has to do with "something which is last either materially... or in space (Acts 1:8; 13:37...) or time..."¹⁸⁰ It is clear that this word has theological significance in its usage in the NT.¹⁸¹ It is perhaps right to think the meaning here as being "all land taken together" as opposed to sea.¹⁸² It is difficult to think of the limit of "the end of the earth" as being Rome

since Paul desired to preach the Gospel in Spain; and since - as history shows - the Gospel is still being preached today. Indeed it is seeking to reach the utmost part of the earth.

(e) A synthesis of the analysis of Acts 1:8

Jesus promised His disciples a power that the Holy Spirit would bring as He descended upon them. The purpose for that power was clear: to bear witness to Jesus as those who had a special relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit power would enable them also to do what Jesus did: to proclaim the Good News of forgiveness, to heal and to exorcise, as the ongoing chapters in Acts show. This witness could perhaps cause them suffering and death.

The sure progression of this Gospel witness is clear, it is to go from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. It is possible to think that this limit is the very utmost limit of the geographical advancement of the Gospel. History seems to support this view, as the Gospel has kept on advancing beyond Rome and seeks to reach all of the known earth or world.

The disciples were not to speculate about the political realities of the Kingdom of God but to rather get on with the serious business of bearing witness to Jesus as His special representatives.

C. The Significance of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16, 17ff, with Joel 2:28-32)

(1) Introduction

If Acts 1:8 can be said to "spread a canopy of legitimation over the entire book" of Acts,¹⁰⁰ Acts 2:14-22 can be said to be programmatic to Acts just as Luke 4:14-30 is programmatic to Luke-Acts.

The disciples, after ten days of waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, received Him on the day of Pentecost 2:1ff. Supernatural appearances and utterances accompanied that outpouring (Acts 2:1-4). These supernatural phenomena attracted the crowd of Jerusalem pilgrims to the upper-room crowd of disciples. The supernatural utterances through and by the disciples caused some in the pilgrim crowd to ridicule the disciple that they were filled with new wine. Emboldened by the Holy Spirit, Peter, however, stood up to speak on behalf of the upper room company to clarify the reason for the supernatural utterances they were making. Peter associated these supernatural phenomena with Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16).

Peter's inspired address as he interprets Joel's prophecy pointed his hearers to "Jesus the Nazarene" who was sent by God and attested to His audiences "by miracles and wonders and signs" (v.22). Within God's plan, Peter explains, Jesus was crucified, died and was buried; but on the third day He was raised up by God alive, and was exalted to God's right hand (v.33). It is from this exalted position as both

Lord and Christ (v.36) that He received from the Father and poured out the Holy Spirit upon His own in a manner that could be both "seen and heard" (v.33).

Peter's sermon brought both conviction and conversion to his audience, and he challenged them to "repent... be baptized... and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v.38). This heaven-sent solution was a promise destined to assume universal proportions in its application (v.39). The thousands of those who responded positively at Pentecost were enfolded into a close-knit Christian community that experienced, among other things, "many wonders and signs" that created "fear... upon every soul" (v.43).

(2) A closer look at Acts 2:14-22

(a) "This is That"

Peter spelt out the significance of the Pentecost outpouring by referring to the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32). This passage in Acts 2 will not be studied in detail except for the crucial texts to this study. Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit cries out to the crowd at Pentecost: "this is that" (*ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΟ*) which was spoken by Joel the prophet. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit that could be both seen and heard was that prophecy in Joel 2 come true. Peter puts in "a new temporal clause for Joel's 'after this': 'it shall come to pass in the last day, says God'"¹⁰⁴

It seems that "for the NT writers, the Church already

was in the 'last days'"¹⁰⁵ The evidence for this can be seen for example in Heb. 1:2 where God is said to have spoken to the NT believers 'in these last day' in His Son, Jesus.¹⁰⁶ "In the last days" (*ἐν ταῖς ἑσχαταῖς ἡμεραῖς*) was the Church privileged to be involved in:

The last days had broken in upon the Church, but they were only a sample, an 'earnest' a foretaste of what the 'age to come' would be like in all its fullness when Christ returned a second time.¹⁰⁷

(b) A brief look at Joel 2:28-32 in its context

A locust plague comes upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah and devastates the economy of the land (Ch.1). However, this is merely an omen for a worse destruction of the land by a yet greater enemy (Ch.2). Yet there was a restoration of the economy promised, and together with it a restoration of the people. Although these destructions & restorations were expected in the near future, yet there was a future connotation of both the destruction of God's enemies and a restoration of God's people.¹⁰⁸

So there was going to be a unique, universal, and yet personal outpouring of the Holy Spirit in some distant future to Joel's context. However, this abundant lavishing of God's Spirit was conditioned on a restoration of covenant relationship ("afterwards) when the people "have fully turned back to Yahweh."¹⁰⁹

There are two special emphases in this promise: the fullness of the Spirit ('pour out,' *שפך*) and the democratization of the Spirit ('all flesh,' *כל-בשר*). The first addressed by the verbs in the verse ('prophecy' 'have dreams,' 'see visions'), all of which describe revelatory functions associated with the

fullness of God's Spirit.... The second is addressed by the noun subjects (sons and daughters, old men, young men).¹⁹⁰

Whereas in the old age, the Holy Spirit descended upon a select few like prophets and kings, in the new era, everybody was going to have the Spirit!

(c) The Universality of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

This outpouring was to come "upon all flesh" (*ἐπι πανσάν σαρκά*) "*pasan sarka*" means "every person, everyone" which is the LXX for *לְכָל-בָּשָׂר* in Hebrew.¹⁹¹ Although many scholars see this universalism embracing both Jew and Gentile,¹⁹² it might not necessarily be true that Joel or Peter saw it that way.¹⁹³ At least it took a serious visual aid lesson to convince Peter concerning the universality of this outpouring (Acts 10). Perhaps it can safely be stated that God meant that there should be no racial sexual or class distinctions in the reception of this outpouring.¹⁹⁴ In Luke's perspective it is also possible that he was "looking forward... to the Gentile mission".¹⁹⁵ Clearly Joel's prophecy included the lowest of people in social classes: ranging from the young to women and slaves. All were to benefit from this deluge of the Spirit. However, as John Stott correctly says, there are still conditions to be met in the appropriation of this Holy Spirit outpouring: there has to be an "inward readiness to receive the gift."¹⁹⁶ Indeed Scripture says that "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32a; Acts 2:21). The wonder and

uniqueness of this outpouring is that everyone ready can experience the presence of God as a living reality.¹⁹⁷

(d) The Results of the Manifestation of this Outpouring

Joel had said that prophecy, dreams, visions, signs and wonders would accompany the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Prophesying in its oldest forms seems to have been an ecstatic experience with or without song; later, it was essentially regarded as religious instruction, with occasional predictions.¹⁹⁸ Prophesying was done under the influence of a divine Spirit; and what was prophesied was the Word of Yahweh.¹⁹⁹ But the Old Testament is clear that not only were there true prophets of Yahweh; there were also false prophets who prophesied deceptively.

The possibility of interpreting prophecy here as being an all-embracing concept for revelation knowledge seems to be strong, since the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost was specifically speaking in other languages other than prophesying as such.²⁰⁰ Moreover, Paul was to show later that there is a distinct gift of a prophet that was not available to all believers in Christ.

Joel's prophecy also spoke of wonders and signs that would accompany the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Since the meanings of these words have been shown already, it remains now for one to establish their specific meaning here in Acts.

Peter himself did not give a specific commentary on Joel to establish his specific meaning for Christians in the New Testament era. In the LXX, the words "above", "signs" and "below" do not appear.²⁰¹ However, they appear in our Acts 2: text.

F. F. Bruce has suggested that the words "wonders" and "signs" in 2:19 could be anticipatory for the appearance of the same words together with "mighty works" in 2:22.²⁰² John Stott suggests the twin meanings of literal wonders and signs which accompanied the crucifixion, and the metaphorical wonders and signs of the convulsions of history.²⁰³ I. Howard Marshall suggests that the Signs are probably "the gift of tongues and the various healing miracles which are shortly to be recorded. As for Wonders, he is also of the opinion that these could be either the upheavals that appeared in the passion story (cf. Stott) or the future "end' of the last days" convulsions.²⁰⁴

Since these words are used to describe the ministry of our Lord (Acts 2:22) and the ministry of His disciples (for example in Acts 2:43), it would be reasonable, one would think, to associate these words with miraculous deeds that were manifest in those ministries. Moreover, the immediate context seems to support this interpretation.

There is a clear message, however, that should be Good

News to "all flesh" in the light of the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these "last days". The message is that anyone can call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved (vs. 21 with 38). This salvation involves remission of sin and a reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit; and it is to be accompanied by (water) baptism as an outward sign of an inward transaction.

(3) Conclusion

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost is interpreted as a universal phenomenon that is available to all receptive persons irrespective of race, gender and social status. This outpouring marked the beginning of the "last days" in the theology of the New Testament believers. Although there are wonders and signs that mark the beginning of these last days - at least in the form of supernatural revelations, and supernatural deeds - their consummation awaits the very end of the last days. Meanwhile there is a need for all to lay hold of the present opportunity to call upon the Name of the Lord for salvation.

D. Other considerations concerning Signs and Wonders in Acts

Having examined the umbrella and programmatic texts in Acts on the subject of signs and wonders, it remains now to have an overview of the same in the rest of Acts. It seems quite clear that Luke's portrait of the early Christian community is that of one that was "living in an atmosphere of

the miraculous."²⁰⁰ Luke uses the words σημεία and τέρατα very frequently in his account of the early Christian community, beginning from Jerusalem to subsequent missionary outreaches (cf. Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12; σημεία - 4:16, 22; 8:6; σημεία και δυνάμεις - 8:14).²⁰⁰ James Dunn is of the view that,

By using the phrase ["signs and wonders"] so frequently Luke underlines and probably reflects the early community's feeling that they were living in "the new Mosaic age of eschatological redemption", characterized by the same kind of "signs and wonders" that characterized the redemption of Israel from Egypt (7:36f).²⁰⁷

Dunn conveniently divided the miracles in Acts into five groups for the sake of analysis:

- (1) "Ordinary" healings - of the lame man at the "Beautiful Gate" of the temple (3:1-10), of Paul's blindness during his conversion (9:18), of Aeneas' paralysis (9:33f), of a cripple in Lystra (14:8-10) - as well as mentioning the various exorcisms and healings (paralysis and lameness) of Philip in Samaria (8:7) and the healings (fever and diseases) by Paul in Malta (28:8f).
- (2) More striking miracles of restoration from death - of Tabitha by Peter (9:36-41) and of Eutychus by Paul (20:9-12).
- (3) More striking still are healings through Peter's shadow (5:15f) and through handkerchiefs or scarfs touched by Paul (19:11f).
- (4) Most striking of all are miracles of judgment - of the blindness of Elymas (13:8-11) and of the death of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11).
- (5) Miracles of liberation - of Peter from prison by angelic intervention (5:19-24; 12:6-11), of Paul also from prison by means of an earthquake (16:26), and Paul's escape from a viper (28:3-6).

Dunn's conclusion will perhaps meet with little

opposition when he declares that "it is a sound biblical fact that many healings of a miraculous sort did occur in the early days of the first Christian communities and of the early Christian mission."²⁰⁸ So by either speaking healing in the Name of Jesus (eg. Acts 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 30; also 16:18; cf. 19:13); or by the use of the healer's hands (eg Acts 5:12; 9:12, 17; 14:3; 19:11; 28:8; cf. 3:7; 9:41); or by the use of a shadow, handkerchief or scarf (eg 5:15f. 19:11f; or by supernatural interventions (eg. 5:19-24; 16:26; 28:3-6;)), the early Christians experienced miracles.

One important thing to note in the signs and wonders ministries of these early saints is that they operated not merely through some particular formula or technique but were effective only because they were in relationship to their risen Lord and knew that they were His representatives.²⁰⁹

E. Conclusion

That Christ's experiences in life and ministry have some striking similarities with those of his early disciples becomes clear it has been seen in the above study. Just like Jesus sought His Father in prayer for a Holy Spirit anointing or empowering, so did His disciples. Just as that anointing having been received enabled Jesus to preach, heal and exorcise, so was it the case with the ministries of Jesus' disciples.

Yet we see the other side of the story also being true: namely suffering. Christ was opposed right from the beginning of his ministry. This was both a spiritual opposition (from Satan), and a "human" opposition (through Satanic agents). Eventually, the road of life for Christ was to lead to the Gethsemene of suffering, the Gabatha of Judgement and the Golgotha of crucifixion and death. But the Good News is that, the dead and buried Christ rose again alive from the dead and was exalted to heaven and God as both Lord and Christ. From that position He superintends the ongoing work of liberation that He announced on that momentous day in the Nazareth Synagogue.

So while Christ's disciples followed a path of miracles signs and wonders, they also came across opposition, suffering, apparent denials and death. It was like Master like disciples. Realistically, then, the life and ministry of both Christ and His disciples was one devoid of both triumphalism and pessimism. It was a life and ministry that was well balanced.

But over and above Christ's ability to speak and work in miraculous power was His life of inner purity. Indeed even an unclean spirit was able to identify Him as a Holy One of God. The apostolic band and those under their charge also aimed to live such exemplary lives of purity. This did not mean that there were no inroads of impurity into the early Christian communities. Indeed Scripture is not silent about such. Sin

was not tolerated but rebuked, - sometimes through supernatural judgements, as in the case of Ananias and Saphirra.

IV. On the Interpretation of Luke-Acts

A. Introduction

One of the important questions that can be raised concerning Luke-Acts is its interpretation. To put it more plainly: can we derive theology out of Luke-Acts? This question necessarily leads one to think in terms of the literary nature of this double-volume work. It is clear that the Luke-Acts literature falls under the narrative genre. It is God's revelation to us conveyed in story form.²¹⁰ So "the crucial hermeneutical question" for us is whether biblical narratives that describe what happened in the early Church must happen in the ongoing Church [author's emphasis].²¹¹ Furthermore, "are there instances from Acts of which one may appropriately say, 'We may do this'?"²¹² It is the general assumption of many evangelical scholars that "unless Scripture explicitly tells us we must do something, what is merely narrated or described can never function in a normative way [author's emphasis]."²¹³

Gordon Fee pursues this line of thinking in his book Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics. He says that, "although it may not have been the author's primary purpose, historical narratives do have illustrative

and, sometimes 'pattern' value"²¹⁴ Fee goes ahead to make this significant statement that, for a biblical precedent to justify present action, the principle of the action must be taught somewhere where it is the primary intent so to teach" [emphasis mine]. On the basis of this principle then, one needs to look to some other place where such teaching on signs and wonders is the primary intent. This study then will now focus on one particular text on the issue of the charismata in the Christian community in Paul's First letter to the Corinthians.

B. A Brief Examination of Paul's Teaching on the Spiritual gifts in I Cor 12:31-14:1

(1) Brief Background

Paul founded the Church of Corinth (Acts 18:1-17) and addressed at least two of his letters to that Church (I Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1). Paul wrote to address a number of problems that had cropped up in the church of Corinth. The problems included divisions, lawsuits, sexual sin, abuse of the Lord's Supper, and Spiritual gifts. Paul then was at pains to correct these problems and abuses in the Corinthian church. In the course of this "putting things right" in the church life and ministry, Paul also gave some teachings. A specific concern of this study here is to examine briefly Paul's teaching on Spiritual gifts.

Although Paul condemns the carnal combinations of things such as divisions, lawsuits and immorality in the Corinthian

church, he begins his address by commending the Corinthians for having been "enriched in everything" by Christ through the grace of God (1:45). Paul further mentions - in the same tone of thanksgiving how the Corinthians "come short in no gift" [v.7]. Later, from the twelfth chapter to the fourteenth, Paul deals specifically with spiritual gifts. Among the spiritual gifts he mentions are gifts that are more 'extraordinary' than others: like "healings" (ἰαμάτων) and "miracles" (δυναμεις) - 12:28. Paul is emphatic that these gifts - among others - "God has appointed [or set] in the Church" (ἔθετο... ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ). Paul then goes on to encourage the Corinthian believers to "earnestly desire the best gifts" (12:31)

(2) "Earnestly desire the best gifts" (ζηλοῦτε δε τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα). "ζηλοῦτε" is either the present active indicative second person plural, or the present active imperative second person plural of "ζηλω" which generally has these meanings: "to have strong affection towards, be ardently devoted to..., to make a show of affection and devotion towards...; to desire earnestly, aspire eagerly after...., to be jealous, envious, spiteful...; pass. to be an object of warm regard and devotion..."²¹⁵ Since Paul had earlier on commended with thanksgiving the Corinthians on their not being behind in the Spiritual gifts, one would think that in this specific usage of Paul, his meaning could be "desire earnestly, aspire

eagerly after the best gifts" (cf. 14:1). In the later reference to ζηλω in 14:1, Paul says again, "desire earnestly, aspire eagerly after the spiritual gifts" (ζηλουτε δε τα πνευματικα).

If there is a doubt in 12:31 as to whether one should take ζηλουτε as an indicative or an imperative, the matter seems to be settled in the latter reference to the word (14:1) which is clearly seen to be an imperative. In the context of these imperatives, it can be seen that Paul had been dealing with the nature and diversity of the Spiritual gifts in the previous passages. The gifts should operate as a unity in their diversity as is illustrated by the one body metaphor for the believers in Christ (Ch. 12). In the following context, Paul focuses specifically on the correction of the abuse of tongues in the assembly of believers (Ch.14). The two imperatives then sandwich the famous section on "love" in chapter Thirteen. Commenting on the purpose of these imperatives, Gordon Fee says that they "serve as a transition from the preceding argument(s) to the issue at hand, namely their abuse of tongues in the gathered assembly."²¹⁷

Gordon Fee then suggests the following chiasmic order which may be helpful for one to see the transition that Paul is making in his teaching here:

(12:31) "Be zealous for τα χαρισματα A

Yet I point out the superior way B
 (13) Description/exhortation about love C
 (14:1) Pursue love B'
 Be Zealous for τα πνευματικα A'

Paul's argument seems to be that the Corinthian believers should pursue the way of love and in the context of love also 'eagerly desire the things of the Spirit.' In the latter injunction to eagerly desire the things of the Spirit (Spiritual gifts), Paul pursues his earlier injunction and by so doing clarifies what the greater gifts are in the Christian community, namely, those that edify it.²¹⁸ The representative greater gift that Paul singles out here is the gift of 'prophecy'. The believers were to desire 'especially that you may prophecy' (14:5).²¹⁹

Some scholars have argued that this imperative to "eagerly desire the greater gifts" in 12:31 is a quotation from the Corinthian letter. This study doesn't pursue this argument but simply assumes that both imperatives are from Paul.²²⁰ This study also does not attempt to explain in detail the terms "χαρισματα" and "πνευματικα" but simply assumes that these words embrace the "several extraordinary phenomena" in the early Christian community worship.²²¹

(3) "The Perfect and the Imperfect" in I Cor. 13:10

As Paul taught on the imperative of love as the safest context for the operation of the Spiritual gifts, he talked about a time when what he called το τελειον (perfect)

would overshadow [το] ἐκ μερους (imperfect). It is clear that the condition for the disappearance of whatever is imperfect is that the perfect arrives. As for the precise time for the arrival of and the disappearance of these things scholars have not been in agreement; and there are three groups of theories on the issue, as D. A. Carson says, and is here summarized:

- (a) "The Perfect" refers to maturity of the Church, or individual believers. - in this view, the completion of the Canon - thus ensuring the availability of "maturity material" for the Christian believer(s) -constitutes this perfection.
- (b) "The Perfect" refers to the completion of the canon itself. - in this view, when the canon was completed, the perfect arrived and the imperfect disappeared.
- (c) "The Perfect" is related to the Parousia (Second Coming of Christ).²²²

According to the context of I Cor 13, the imperfect would have to be interpreted as specifically the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, and tongues; and probably most other charismatic gifts.²²³ D. A. Carson is right in saying that "the outcome of the debate over these three positions is very important, because Paul writes that the imperfect disappears when perfection comes" [author's emphasis].²²⁴ This study does not attempt to examine the various positions given above in detail, but takes up the third option, assuming that both the context of the text in question and the majority of biblical scholars and Christian believers believe it to be so.²²⁵ It is therefore assumed that "the end of the age [is] the time when these gifts must finally be abolished."²²⁶ In

other words, the present existence of the Church of Christ as an eschatological community is to be characterized by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They are a sign that we belong "to the beginning of the time of the end."²²⁷

(4) Conclusion

This brief discussion on the teaching of the Apostle Paul on the Spiritual gifts leads one to think that he envisioned an ongoing charismatic community operating in the different manifestations of the Spirit as it awaits that perfect time of the Second Coming of Christ at the end of this age. It is at the Parousia that he seems to have expected the charismata and pneumatika to cease.

It seems also that Paul's discussion of the Spiritual gifts leaves no mandate for someone to claim that any operation of the charismata today is invalid (of course not ruling out the imperative of discernment by all concerned). One would expect that the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit were meant to continue up to the Parousia. At that time they will not be needed. So right now, these Spiritual gifts are needed for the edification of the Church of Christ.

It has already been seen in the examination of signs and wonders in Luke-Acts that the ministries of both Christ and his disciples were characterized by miraculous phenomena

which included powerful proclamation, healing and exorcism. Luke gives up repeated accounts of signs and wonders in both the Gospel and Acts.

Given then the principles for deriving theology out of narrative, we may safely say that the two-volume narrative of Luke-Acts shows us an illustration if not a pattern of how a Christian community could be seen. The Christian community can be seen as a charismatic society where the charismata are repeatedly expected to be in manifestation.

Since Paul gives specific teaching - by intent - on the Spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12-14, and does not want the Christian community to be "ignorant" about them (12:1), and since in Luke-Acts we see precedents of sign-gift ministries, one may then be right to expect the repeated occurrences of signs and wonders in the Christian community today to be normative. Moreover, one may safely see signs and wonders ministries today - that operate within the necessary context of love and discernment - as being valid.

One would think that the ongoing Church must face up to the challenge of earnestly desiring the Spiritual gifts and expect them to operate within the Christian community. This does not mean that one should set aside the unique place both Christ and His apostles occupy in the Christian tradition. It

simply means that the ongoing Church should see herself in a continuing ministry that was started by Christ and was taken up by His apostles.

END NOTES

1. Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, The Acts of the Apostles (Salem, Ohio:Schmul 1959), Introduction.
2. W. L. Knox, The Acts of the Apostles (Cambridge, 1949), 14, quoted in Earle Ellis, The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Luke (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974), 2.
3. R. J. Knowling, "The Acts of the Apostles," The Expositor's Greek Testament, vol.2., ed. W. Robertson Nicole Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 3.
4. Alfred Plummer, The International Critical Commentary: The Gospel According to Saint Luke, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900) xi.
5. It should however be noted as Peter Johnston has observed that "Nowhere in the New Testament Manuscripts or in the Canon of Scripture are Luke and Acts placed side by side." [As expressed to the writer]. NEGST, 1995.
6. Frank Stagg, The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1955), 23.
7. Earle Ellis, The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Luke (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974), 2.
8. Ibid.
9. Henry Cadbury, The Making of Luke - Acts (Macmillan, 1927; 2nd edition, SPCK, 1958), 8-11, quoted in John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts: To the ends of the earth (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2nd edition, 1991), 21.
10. John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts: To the ends of the earth (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2nd edition, 1991), 21.
11. Ibid.
12. R. R. Williams, The Acts of the Apostles (London: SCM Press 1953), 26.
13. Ibid.
14. R. J. Knowling, "The Acts of the Apostles," The Expositor's Greek Testament, 3. Knowling mentions one philologist -Gercke - as an example of an objector to the Unity of Luke - Acts. However, Knowling points out that another scholar - Zeller - had noted the said linguistic differences in Luke - Acts, and had pronounced that, "they

are not of a nature to prove anything against the same origin of the two writings," In Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, The Acts of the Apostles, [(Salem, Ohio: Schmul, 1959), Introduction], we also see how A. C. Clark's denials of any 'linguistic, stylistic, and material points of contact between the two ... documents [Luke -Acts] were carefully answered by W. L. Knox.

15. Michael Prior, Jesus the liberator: Nazareth Liberation Theology, [Luke 4:16-30] (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 43.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 44.
18. W. W. Gasque, A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1989), 347.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 353.
21. Ibid.
22. John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts, 30-31.
23. See for example: James B. Shelton, Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 74
24. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn, eds., Studies in Luke-Acts (London: Abingdon Press, 1966), 17.
25. Ibid., 18
26. Stephen Neill, Jesus Through Many Eyes: Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (Fortress Press, 1976), 135.
27. Ibid.
28. Colin Brown, That You May Believe: Miracles and Faith Then and Now (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1985), 141.
29. Ibid.
30. It is necessary to briefly describe here the order of the synagogue service in the time of Jesus. Darrel L. Bock gives us the following summary:

To have a synagogue service required the presence of ten

adult males. At the service, the Shema was recited (Deut. 6:4-9), followed by prayers, including some set prayers like the Tephillah and the Eighteen Benedictions After this the Scripture was read, beginning with a portion from the Torah (Gen - Deut) and moving next to a section from the Prophets. Introduction then followed. Often the speaker linked the texts through appeal to other passages. The service then closed with a benediction. Jesus appears to speak during the reading of the prophets. [Darrell L. Bock, Luke: The Inter-Varsity Commentary Series (Leicester, England: Inter-varsity Press, 1994), 88]. This study does not enter into the discussion of whether there was a fixed lectionary or not in the synagogue services in the time of Jesus. For such a study see for example, Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 132. This study focuses on the Isaiah text in its context and its meaning in the Lukan context.

31. Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator: Nazareth Liberation Theology [Luke 4:16-30] (Sheffield), England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 15, citing R. J. Karris, "Poor and Rich: The Lukan Sitz in Leben," in C. H. Talbert, Perspective on Luke-Acts (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 117-118.

32. There are a few textual problems present in these parallel texts. The writer accepts the judgement in F. France, The Defence of the Gospel in the New Testament rev. ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1977), 248. France feels that "these minor deviations do not in the least affect the sense of the applicability of the quotation..." A full treatment of the subject can be found in France's work.

33. Talking about the historical context of Isaiah 61, Michael Prior has this to say [in Jesus The Liberator, 134]:

The historical context of the Isaiah text is of some significance for the meaning of the text in the ministry of Jesus. The position taken here is that the material in Isa. 60:1 - 62:12 reflects the period of the return of the Jewish exiles to devastated Jerusalem in 538, after the half-century of captivity in Babylon....

Isaiah 61 is rich in the abundance of metaphors used to convey the sense of the total salvation of God's people, in their bodies and spirits both individually and socially. The Prophet is announcing salvation for the returned exiles of that period. If some of the signs of salvation are in the future, it is not a distant future. Needless to say, the rebuilding of the city and the recovery of wealth will take time to achieve. However, while it is a time of favour for the exiles, it is also the occasion of God's vengeance being shown to their enemies.

This study accepts this historical context for its purposes.

34. James D. G. Dunn takes the personage in Is. 61 as an exchatological prophet [James D. G. Dunn, Jesus and The Spirit: A study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament (London: SCM Press, 1975), 61] Edward J. Young, also agrees and says that the individual in question "is one called to and well endued for the prophetic office." [Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition, and Notes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1972), 458]. William Dyrness sees the Servant of the Lord in both Is. 42:1 and 61: [William Dyrness, Themes in the Old Testament Theology (Exeter: Paternoster, 1979), 206]. John D. W. Watts sees the king "clearly in view" in Is. 61:1, and compares it with Is 45:1 [John D. W. Watts, Isaiah 34-66: Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987, 302)]. This is also the view in R. Laird Harris, ed. Theological Word Book of the O.T.: Vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 530]. Yoder sees "a most explicitly messianic" figure in Is 61. [John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Man! Our Victorious Lamb (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B Eerdmans 1972, 1994), 28].

35. I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, A Commentary on the Greek Text: The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1978) 183.

36. Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 137, citing J. A. Sanders, "From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4", in J. Neusner (ed.), Christianity, Judaism, and other Greco-Roman cults: Studies fro Morton Smith at Sixty, (1975): 89ff.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 137, citing J. A. Sanders, "From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4," in J. Neusner (ed.), Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman cults I (1975): 94-97.

40. Michael Prior, Jesus, 137.

41. Ibid.

42. Perhaps much should not be made of th omission of vengeance in the Lukan text. This is because in the rest of the Gospel according to Luke, there is quite a lot of vengeance being mentioned (e.g 10:13-16, 18; 11:29; 11:37-38; 13:1-5; 14:24; 19:26-27; 20:18; 20:45-47). But clearly the emphasis of Jesus' earthly mission is mercy.

43. Michael Prior, Jesus, 138.

44. James A. Brooks, Carlton L. Wimbery, Syntax of New Testament Greek (London, England: University Press of America, 1979), 9.

45. Ibid., 39.

46. Ibid., 133.

47. The New Browns - Driver - Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, 1979, s. v. " πῶς "; Theological Word Book of the O.T.: vol. 1, 1980, s. v. " πῶς "; Thayer's Greek-Engl. Lexicon of the N.T., 1977, s. v. " χρῖσ."

48. William Wilson correctly says that the word chiefly applied to this triad, plus the sacred things. William Wilson, New Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1987), 14.

49. Browns - Driver - Gesenius, 603.

50. Ibid.

51. Thayer's Lexicon, s. v. " χρισμα."

52. John D. W. Watts, Isaiah 34 - 66: Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1987), 302.

53. Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider, eds, Exegetical Dictionary of the N.T.: vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, English transl., 1993), 486.

54. Ibid.

55. I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke: A commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1978), 183.

56. Theological Word Book of the O.T.: vol 1, 530

57. Grundmann, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: vol vi, ed & transl., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, s. v. " χριστος " in Luke", 534.

58. Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), s. v. " χρῖσ " 484.

59. Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, 459.

60. Harold K. Moulton, ed. The Analytical Greek Lexicon Rev. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House,

1978), 47.

61. Robert B. Sloan, Jr., The Favourable Year of the Lord: A study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke (Austin, Texas: Schola Press, 1977), 41.

62. Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Logers, Linguistic Key to the Greek NT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1980), 148.

63. Harold K. Moulton, The Analytical Greek Lexicon, 172.

64. F. F. Bruce, The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament, rev. ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 1.

65. Ibid.

66. As it has been expressed in the layout of this passage, the writer agrees with John Nolland, among others, that "to evangelize the poor... should be read as an encompassing designation of Jesus' whole ministry which is then expanded upon in the remainder of the verse." John Nolland, Luke 1-9:20: Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1989) 196. See also Joel E. Green, Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ: Essay on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994), 73.

67. Max Zerwick & Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament, unabridged, rev. ed. in one vol. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 186.

68. B - A - G., s. v. " πτωχος " , 728.

69. Max Zerwick, Grammatical Analysis, 186.

70. Ibid.

71. B - A - G., 728.

72. John D. W. Watts, Isaiah, 302.

73. Ibid. See also Brown - Driver - Gesenius, 776.

74. Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 165.

75. Ibid., 170.

76. Ibid., 170-175. Michael Prior gives us a full discussion on the meaning of the poor which this study has not pursued. See also Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, The Gospel According to Luke x-xxiv: The Anchor Bible, a new translation with introduction and commentary (Garden City, New York:

Doubleday, 1985), 532. Fitzmeyer agrees with Prior and says that, "in the Lukan writings, the 'poor' are the economically and socially poor.

77. The Analytical Greek Lexicon, 198.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 213.
80. Brown - Driver - Gesenius, 525.
81. Ibid.
82. The Analytical Greek Lexicon, 392.
83. Max Zerwick, Grammatical Analysis, 186.
84. Brown - Driver - Gesenius, 895.
85. Linguistic Key to the Greek NT., s.v. "Lk 4:18"
86. A Grammatical Analysis, 186.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. R. T. France, Jesus and the Old Testament, 252.
91. Ibid., 253.
92. Ibid.
93. A Grammatical Analysis, 186.
94. M. M. B. Turner, "Holy Spirit", in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 346.
95. Watts, Isaiah, 303.
96. Robert Hanna, A Grammatical Aid to the Greek NT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983), 101.
97. A Grammatical Analysis, 186.
98. Linguistic Key, s.v. "Lk. 4:18"
99. This paragraph is simply an attempt by the writer to

depict the thinking of a receptive person in Jesus audience at Nazareth on that momentous day.

100. I. Howard Marshall, Luke - Historian and Theologian, 121.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid. Marshall notes that, "the healing of the lepers and the raising of the dead are not signs of the 'messianic' age in Isaiah 29, 35, 61. But for the latter see Isaiah 26:19. Both activities are however associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha. It would not be surprising if the eschatological prophet were to follow this pattern."
104. Ibid., 122.
105. Ibid.
106. John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 1:9-20, 197.
107. See for example Robert L. Brawley, Luke-Acts and The Jews: Conflict, Apology and Conciliation (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), 7; Charles H. Talbert, Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel (New York: The Crossroads, 1988), 57; John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 1:9-20, 195.
108. John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary: Luke, 195
109. Charles H. Talbert, Reading Luke, 55. William Dyrness also speaks of the "ethical import of the Spirit" in the Old Testament and cites Is. 61:1 as a proof for this. Dyrness writes that, "above all, the Spirit is related to a vision of God's righteous people in the future." William Dyrness, Themes in Old Testament Theology (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1979), 206. See also Prior, The Liberator, 139.
110. See for example, Robert B. Sloan, Jr., The Favourable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke (Austin, Texas: Schola Press, 1977) p. 111 Sloan sees "the notion of Jubilee throughout the Gospel of Luke." See also, John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Man! Our Victorious Lamb (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1994), 26. Yoder emphasizes the social aspect of the Gospel of Jesus and asserts that this text of Luke 4:14ff, expresses this truth "in the most expressly social terms" Jesus, moreover, is depicted as "a Saviour who was deeply concerned with the agenda of politics and the related issues of power, status, and right relations". In Luke then, Yoder believes that we can see a "specific kind of

Christian pacifism in which 'the cross of Christ is the model of Christian social efficiency' (Bookjacket).

111. Michael Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 195.

112. Ibid. Prior also sees no "justification for concluding that the acceptable year of Isaiah 61 is the Jubilee Year of Lev. 25:13, 28." He further argues that there is no peculiarly jubiliary terminology in Luke (Contra. Sloan); for Luke does not "develop peculiarly Jubilee concepts in the course of his writing" p. 139.

113. Prior, Jesus The Liberator, 195

114. Ibid.

115. James B. Shelton, Mighty in Word and Deed: The role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 81.

116. Donald Juel, Luke-Acts: The Promise of History (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), 45.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid., 46, 47.

119. James B. Shelton, Mighty in Word and Deed, 74.

120. Ibid. Shelton is of the opinion that "to minimize miracles would violate Luke's all-inclusive view of salvation in Luke 4:18ff and elsewhere (cf. Lk. 1:71; 6:9-14; 7:36-50; 8:36, 48, 50; 9:56 [variant]; 17:11-19, 19:1-10; Acts 4:9; 13:26; 16:30)" - f.n. p. 82. A part from these major references, Shelton (p. 75) also points out how "Luke specifically links the Holy Spirit to miracles in the following episodes: 'Jesus' conception (Luke 1:35). Elizabeth and Mary's prenatal discernment of Mary's pregnancy and divine visitation (Lk 1:41-44) [and] Simeon's identification of Jesus as Messiah (Lk. 2:22-35)."

121. Ibid., 75.

1. For dynamis, Shelton sees a specialized meaning in Luke as "the ability to effect miracles" [see Shelton f.n. 83 - Lk 1:35; 4:36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; 10:13,19; 19:37; and also in Acts 1:16, 4:33; 6:3-10. Shelton notes other refs. to dynamis which are not specific enough but yet have supernatural nuances (Lk. 21:26,27; 22:69)].

2. For exousia, Shelton (p.77) sees it explaining the effecting of miracles of speech in the following: Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8 by implication; 9:1; 10:19; and Acts 8:19. This seems to underline the close

relationship and overlapping of meanings between exousia and dynamis.

3. For charis, Jesus' conception (1:28,30), Stephen's ministry (Acts 6:8). Jesus' healing of the blind man (Lk. 7:21), are mentioned by Shelton (p.77) as texts that use the word groups from charis to convey a miraculous meaning. Moreover, says Shelton, Grace in Acts describes the power of God to do miracles (6:8; 11:23; 14:26; 15:40; 8:2-7).

122. Ibid., 78. The often overlapping nature of inspired speaking and miracles can be seen in, for example, Lk 4:32,36; 7:11-17; Acts 10:34-40; 13:9-12). For miracles attesting to the truth of the words spoken see for example Lk 1:20. 1:36-37; 4:33-35; 5:20-26; Acts 2:22; 4:29-33; 6:7-8; 10:44; 13:9-12).

123. Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 409.

124. Walter A. Elwell, ed., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984), 608.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., 608, 609.

128. Ibid.

129. Guthrie, New Testament Theology, 409.

130. Ibid.

131. Ibid., 413.

132. Ibid.

133. L. D. Hurst, "Ethics of Jesus", in Joel B. Green, et al., Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship (Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), pp.210-222. cited in David A. Fraser, The Cultural World of the New Testament: A Sociology of Jesus Syllabus (Center for Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, St. Davids., PA 19087 USA, 1994), 29. [Notes on Luke]. Permission to quote the notes in this thesis was got verbally during an inter-term course Dr. Fraser gave at N.E.G.S.T. in 1994.

134. Jerome Neyrey, S. J., The Passion According to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology (Paulist Press, 1985), p. 31-32. cited in Dr. David Fraser's notes at

N.E.G.S.T. 1994. See "Notes on Luke," p. 31.

135. Lk. 4:14 Says that "when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time" (ἄχρι καίρου).

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

138. Analytical Greek Lexicon, 55.

139. Susan R. Garrett, The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's writings (Fortress, 1989), quoted in D. Fraser "Notes on Luke," 35.

140. Jerome Neyrey, The Passion According to Luke, cited in David Fraser, "Notes on Luke," 31.

141. Ibid.

142. Susan R. Garrett notes that "the Beelzebub controversy (Lk. 11:14-23) in the incident between Peter and Simon Magus (Acts 8:4-25) and between Paul and Bar Jesus (Acts 4-12) as well as the incident of the Seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:8-20) show how the power exercised by Jesus and His apostles goes beyond the false prophets and magicians. They are powerless before it." This is also reminiscent of Moses and the Egyptian magicians.

143. Graham Grey, "A Theology of the Kingdom," Transformation 5, no.4 (October/December 1988): 24.

144. Ibid., 24, 27.

145. Ibid., 28.

146. William J. Abraham, The Logic of Evangelism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1989), 562.

147. Ibid., 1220.

148. Ibid.,

149. John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary: Luke, 428,429; Robert L. Brawley, Luke - Acts and the Jews, 7; Charles H. Talbert, Reading Luke, 57.

150. On the naming of this book, John Stott has sought to arrive at a more concrete title that would at once do justice to the human element and the divine element in the book, and at the same time steer it clear of any confusion with apocryphal books of "Acts". He suggests the cumbersome, though most accurate title, "The continuing Words and Deeds of Jesus by His Spirit through His Apostles." John R. W.

Stott, The Message of Acts: To the ends of the earth 2d edition, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 32-34.

151. John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts, 9

152. Ibid., 10.

153. Sir Williams M. Ramsay, St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen (Hoder & Stoughton, 1895; 11th edition, undated), viii; quoted in John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts, 11.

154. Donald Juel, Luke = Acts, 65.

155. John Nolland, Luke, 425.

156. F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1990), 97

157. Ibid., 98

158. Horatio B. Hackett, A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, a new and greatly enlarged, ed. Alvah Hooley in consultation with Ezra Abbot (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1882), 29, citing Von M. Baumgarten, Die Apostelgeschichte oder der Entwicklungsgang der Kirche von Jerusalem bis Rom (1852).

159. John R. W. Stott, The Message of Acts, 32.

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161. Ibid

162. Horatio B. Hackett, A commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, 2930.

163. John MacArthur, Empowered to serve: Acts 1:1-2:13 (Panorama City: Word of Grace, 1987), 9.

164. Analytical Greek Lexicon, 152, 167.

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166. A Grammatical Analysis, s.v. "δυναμις". See also Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary trans. Basil Blackwell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 143.

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168. Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the NT: vol. 3, Acts (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1930), 10.
169. Ibid.
170. Analytical Greek Lexicon, 258.
171. R. J. Knowling, "The Acts of the Apostles", The Expositor's Greek Testament, s.v. "Acts 1:8".
172. David Thomas, Acts of the Apostles: Expository and Homiletical (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1980), 8; contra Donald Grey Barnhouse, Acts: An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1979), 16. Barnhouse might be pushing the case a little too much for the reading of "martyr."
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181. Ibid.
182. N. I. D. N. T. T., 517.
183. Robert L. Brawley, Luke-Acts and The Jews, 50.
184. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., The Uses of the O.T. in the New (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 93.
185. Ibid.
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188. Hans Walter Wolff, Joel and Amos: Hermenia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, trans. Waldemar Janzen, S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow, ed. S. Dean McBride, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress

Press, 1977), 5-6.

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197. William Dyrness, Themes in Old Testament Theology, 179.
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204. Marshall, Acts, 73
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207. Ibid.
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217. Gordon Fee, God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1994) 215.

218. Ibid.

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220. Ibid., 216 Fee deals with this argument in a full way in his exhaustive study.

221. Ibid., Fee again provides one with a detailed treatment of "ΧΑΡΙΣΜΑΤΑ, ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΑ."

222. D. A. Carson, Showing The Spirit, 68-69.

223. Ibid., 70

224. Ibid.

225. D. A. Carson gives a full discussion of these views which can be pursued to the full in his book Showing the Spirit, 68-72. See also Fee, Presence, 207-209.

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CHAPTER THREE

SIGNS AND WONDERS IN CHURCH HISTORY

I. The Patristic Period (c.A.D 100 to 450)

The event depicted in the book of Acts were the experiences of the infant church probably up to the middle of the First century A.D.¹ Church history is not silent concerning the experiences of the Church after the "Acts" epoch. Not only do the later New Testament epistles give us these beliefs and practices of the First century Christian Community, they are also a few ancient texts that have survived to the present.² One such book is the Didache, "a manual on Church discipline," which is generally believed to date from the latter part of the first century.³

In the Didache, the author gives local congregations instructions on how to deal with itinerant Christian ministers notably prophets:

Now in regards the apostles and prophets, act strictly.... Every genuine prophet ... among you... [emphasis mine]⁴

It seems then, that the charismata were still operating at this stage of the church. What would have been the point in giving such instructions if the charismatic phenomena were not evident? A discerning reading of the Didache, however, reveals that there are some beliefs and practices that were not in line with the canonical Scripture writings that have come down to us. It should be understandable to all sincere Christians that the Canonical Scriptures should judge

whatever should be accepted as Christian belief and practice from the Didache.

On the question of the manifestation of supernatural spiritual gifts (such as prophecy), the testimony of the Didache is confirmed by the documents written by church bishops during the patristic period. A number of these bishops were themselves charismatic figures. Ignatius (c.33 - 109 A.D.) is said to have exercised the gift of prophecy; and considered its authority enough to dispel a church dispute. As to whether this practice should be accepted or not is not of course a question to be raised and debated. From his comments, however, we learn that the charismata were still in operation; and were also still highly regarded at the beginning of the Second Century.⁵

When one comes to the second century onwards, an entry is made into a period of leading educated churchmen who were often drawn to Christianity after having had a wide experience in the pagan schools and world.⁶ Many of their writings show clearly their approach to the idea of God; and they went ahead to write about all kinds of experiences that show that their belief in God was down-to-earth and pertinent to Christian living.⁷ The Fathers believed that, "the body has eternal significance, and that out of it a resurrected form arises, not physical as we know it, but somewhat as a seed germinated into a plant." [emphasis mine] (cf. 1 Cor, 15)⁸

As Kesley says:

The implications of this thinking for Christian healing were great. The body had real intrinsic value, not merely because it was associated with the soul, but in its own right. Thus healing the body was a valid act; [emphasis mine] it became a good work whether the soul was influenced or not However, healing of the body was seen to have almost inevitably an effect upon the soul, while healing the soul had its effect on the body; the two were inextricably joined. The sharp sense of separateness which is current today (when we can hardly say that we have [author's emphasis] such a thing as a soul), and was current in the pagan world, simply did not exist for early Christians.⁹

As the early Fathers thought about the saving work of Christ, they believed that man could be rescued not only from sin, but also from sickness.¹⁰ Moreover, these Fathers knew about the evil forces that were defeated by Christ at the cross.¹¹ To the church Fathers who were the thinkers of the church, such evil forces were not mere concepts but "concrete and powerful entities."¹² Moreover, these demonic entities were believed to affect people's minds and bodies,¹³ which idea is an absurdity to some modern thinkers today. So the church Fathers wrote again and again on healing and exorcism¹⁴ - to a greater extent than is seen even in the New Testament.¹⁵

If this was the attitude of the Church Fathers toward the Atoning work of Christ with its implications for deliverance from sin, sickness and demons, it is no wonder that the Christians in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries "expected miracles to occur in the lives of believers;" and indeed "considered their generations to be in direct continuity with

the primitive Church."¹⁶ It is clearly noted that these believers gave prominence to the gift of prophecy; yet their gifts of healing and even resurrections of dead people were also acknowledged.¹⁷

Justin Martyr (c. 100 - 165 A.D.) for example, was one of the early Church Fathers who wrote on healing and exorcism. In his Second Apology he wrote;

For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the Name of Jesus Christ have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs.¹⁸

Justin Martyr also refers to the current use of spiritual gifts as follows:

For prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time ... Now it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God.¹⁹

Justin Martyr believed that the charismata had ceased to appear in Judaism, but were now permanently at work in the Christian Church.²⁰

A document written in the middle of the 2nd Century, called The Shepherd of Hermas, told of how there were prophets in the church of that day. These prophets would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and were thus enabled to speak forth the words of God. Moreover, this particular book is itself an extended prophecy which "was so highly respected by the early Christians that many considered it Scripture;"²¹

though of course, as sincere Christians, we know that it is not."

The belief among Church Fathers that evil spirit beings are responsible for disease, corruption, spiritual and physical death (of soul and of body respectively), and of healing through Jesus' ongoing life, is clearly seen in the writings of Irenaeus (c. 130 - 200 A.D.),²² This Bishop of Lyons had this to say, using the language of his time, and writing Against Heresies:

How can they maintain that the flesh is incapable of receiving healing from [Christ]? For life is brought about through healing, and incorruption through life. He, therefore, who confers healing, the same does also confer life; and He ... [who gives] life, also surrounds His own handiwork with incorruption.²³

Irenaeus who was originally from the Church in Smyrna, and lived in Gaul, wrote voluminously throughout the latter part of the 2nd Century.²⁴ In his writings, "he went so far as to rebuke those who used the existence of false prophets as a pretext for 'expelling the grace of prophecy' from the church."²⁵ This brings to all Christian believers a fitting instruction for our own day, when some people are fond of dismissing all the charismata (on the pretext of the false charismatic occurrences), instead of discerning them in order to embrace the genuine. Irenaeus' insistence on the universal operation of the charismata throughout the true Church of Christ was supported by his own first-hand experience, and reports he had received and documented from reliable witnesses.²⁶

Shortly after the death of Irenaeus, a document entitled, The Passion of the Holy Martyrs: Perpetua and Felicitas came into circulation. This document which records the martyrdom of two Christian women in about 202 A.D., also records the prophetic revelations they received;²⁷ thus proving again the belief and practice of the charismata during this time.

It is said of Tertullian (c. 160 - 225 A.D.), that before he joined the 'heretical' Montanist group, he "instructed new Christians to come up out of the waters of baptism, praying and expecting the gifts of the Spirit to come upon them."²⁸ Tertullian has an account (writing To Scapula) of exorcisms and healings which took place during his time:

All this might be officially brought under your notice, [that] ... the clerk... who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit, was set free from his affliction ... How many men of rank (to say nothing of common people) have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases! Even Severus himself ... was graciously mindful of the Christians; and in gratitude [to the Christian Proculus] for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death.²⁹

Eusebius (c. 260 - 340 A.D.), gave a testimony in his writings "of how the church enjoys the gifts of the Holy Spirit.... In addition, his histories contain numerous accounts of miracles and spiritual giftings in operation" in his day.³⁰ Origen also stated in Against Celsus, that:

By these means [of charismatic gifts] we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind, and madness, and countless other ills, which could be cured neither by men nor devils.³¹

In the writings of Athanasius (c. 296 - 373 A.D.), and Hilary (c. 315 - 367 A.D.), mention is made of how miraculous signs and spiritual gifts were currently functioning in the Church of their day: among both bishops and other Christians.³²

Martin of Tours (c. 336 - 397 A.D.), was a monk who was appointed as bishop in his day. He is said to have used the gifts of healing so abundantly "that scarcely any sick persons came to him for assistance without being at once restored to health."³³ His miracles are said to be "similar to those attributed to the Apostles in the Book of Acts."³⁴ Martin tore down pagan shrines, and preached to the Barbarians; while his message was being confirmed by signs and wonders which convinced his audience that he was proclaiming the truth.³⁵ His miraculous accomplishments include prophecy, healings, exorcisms, the raising of the dead, plus countless others.³⁷

At the end of the Fourth Century, we see Bishop Epiphanius (c. 315 - 403 A.D.) attacking the Montanist heresies. However, he was at the same time upholding the validity of true charismata; and he himself was "reputed to be a prophet."³⁶ Around the same period of time, Cyril, the Jerusalem bishop (c. 315 - 387 A.D.) catechised his new

Christians to expect to receive in baptism the same miraculous gifts given to the first apostles. They were to "believe" as to "receive not just remission of sins, but also do things which pass man's power." They were to "prepare ... for a reception of the heavenly gifts."³⁹

Novation of Rome (c. 210 - 280 A.D.) who gave the Western Church its first full-length treatise on the Trinity, believed in the perennial existence of the charismata in the church until her completion and perfection.⁴⁰ Among the ascetics, Anthony (c. 251 - 356 A.D.) and Hilarion (c. 291 - 371 A.D.) were both reputed to have been involved in supernatural ministries, including healings and exorcisms.⁴¹

Time would fail us to tell of a number of other charismatic figures and writers during the patristic period. There was Chrysostom (the "golden-mouth" 350 - 407); Macrina, the Younger (c. 328 - 379) sister to Basil, Bishop of Caesarea; Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (c. 339 - 397), and Gregory Theumaturgus (the "Wonder-Worker" 4th Century).⁴² However, we will spend this patristic era by talking about Augustine of Hippo (c. 354 - 430 A.D.). This great man, whose thoughts and teachings have shaped Western thought, "pondered the lack of miracles in the Christian community of his day."⁴³ He came up with a statement of his simple conclusion on the matter; that "once the church had been established and extended throughout the world, miracles were not allowed to

continue, because they were no longer needed to 'kindle' faith."⁴⁴

Three decades later, however, Augustine - in the final years of his life - changed his mind, having found out that his earlier statement was proved to be inadequate.⁴⁵ A sudden wave of miracles rocked his North African diocese, and left at least 70 verifiable miracles to be catalogued.⁴⁶ It was with joy that Augustine, the aged bishop received this verifiable testimonies of miraculous happenings.⁴⁷ Paul Thigpen commenting on this states this basic principle of our experience of reality (which we will examine later in this study): "we affirm matters on which we know what we are talking about ... [and] tend to deny the things we haven't experienced."⁴⁸

II. The Medieval Period (c. 450 - 1500 A.D.)

In this period, belief of and experience in the miraculous was still a reality. Signs and wonders were evident in the life of Severus (c. 465 - 538 A.D.) and Benedict (c. 540 -604 A.D.).⁴⁹ The two Gregories (The Pope Gregory I, and the Bishop of Tours - up to the end of the 6th Century) chronicled the miracles and giftings that were evident in the lives of a number of Christian leaders throughout Europe.⁵⁰

Then we find Aidan (d. 651 A.D) Bishop of Lindisfarne

and his successor Cuthbert (d. 687 A.D.) demonstrating signs and wonders in their missionary work in Britain; to the extent that crowds seeking help followed them, especially Cuthbert.⁵¹ The fact that Joseph Hazaaya (b. 710 A.D.) of Syria wrote beautifully on the signs of the Holy Spirit working in the life of the believer, seems to show the practice in the church of his day, if not in his own experience.⁵²

The end of the first millennium and the beginning of the 2nd saw the ministry of signs and wonders in two men: Ulrich (c. 890 - 973 A.D.) of Augsburg in Germany, and Anselm (1033 -1109 A.D.) the theologian and bishop of Canterbury.⁵³ Then came William of Malmesbury (1080 - 1109 A.D.) and Orderic Vitalis (exact dates unknown) collecting miracle accounts, especially of healings in their time.⁵⁴ Many of these accounts had been gained from "individual miracles [as they were] reported to officials, who kept the records with special care...."⁵⁵

In England and France (in the 12th Century), Hugh of Lincoln and Bernard of Clairveaux respectively, became famous for their miracles, healings, prophecies, words of knowledge and wisdom.⁵⁶ Then came Francis of Assisi (1182 - 1226 A.D.) as "one of the most famous medieval miracle workers."⁵⁷ Francis of Assisi who was the founder of the Franciscan Order, had an extensive healing ministry, with a vast number

of miracles occurring.⁵⁸

On one occasion, Francis of Assisi healed an only son of a certain soldier from lameness. As the account goes, overcome by the insistent petitions of the boy's father, Francis "prayed and put his hand upon the boy and, blessing him, raised him up. Immediately with all present looking on and rejoicing, the boy arose completely restored and began to walk here and there about the house."⁵⁹

On another occasion, a man by the name of Peter lay in bed paralyzed for a period of five months. He sent for Francis having heard that he was in the town (Narni). "And so it happened that, when the blessed Francis had come to him and had made the sign of the cross over him from his head to his feet, he was immediately healed and restored to his former health."⁶⁰

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274 A.D.) is undoubtedly the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages. He was not busy hammering out arguments about why miracles no longer took place. Instead in his Summa Theologica, a masterpiece that shaped Western Theology for centuries, he discussed the dynamics of how God works miracles through believers. He also recognized the continuing validity and usefulness of the gift of prophecy in the Church." (emphasis mine).⁶¹ This is a welcome contrast to some of our modern theologians who specialize on arguing against miracles happenings today, and

relegate the proponents of present day Christian signs and wonders to the lunatic fringe.

Catherine of Sienna (1347 - 1380 A.D.) was "perhaps the most famous of the supernaturally gifted Christians of the 14th Century." Her miraculous ministry included prophecy, words of knowledge, and wisdom with the people who came to seek her counsel.⁶² As the account continues:

Catherine's gifts were so widely respected that she counseled kings and even popes. Infact, she once sent a letter rebuking a pope for failing to keep a secret vow he had made to the Lord years before. He had never disclosed the vow to another human, but God revealed it to Catherine so she could hold him accountable.⁶³

There was also "a movement in the Middle Ages whose characteristics included evangelical obedience to the Gospel, religious asceticism, aversion to recognising the ministry of unworthy - living priests, belief in visions, prophecies, and spirit possession." This was the Waldesian Community movement in the Italian Alps.⁶⁴

Another charismatic figure also appeared in this period (1350 - 1419) in the names of Vincent Ferrer. This Dominican preacher who was known as "An Angel of the Judgement" preached across Europe for almost 20 years.⁶⁵ The New Catholic Encyclopedia describes him as having received the commission to preach the Gospel of Christ through a vision. His very mobile ministry took him through Spain, Southern France, Lombardy, Switzerland, Northern France and the low countries. It is said of him that, "miracles in the order of

nature and of grace accompanied his footsteps [and] he is said by some to have had the gift of tongues...."⁶⁶

At the close of the 15th Century, we find one Colette of Corbi (d. 1447) who founded a convent at Besanson in France. Her Father was a carpenter, and she did much to reform convents in France. She became famous for her miracles and labours, and was even believed to raise the dead to life.⁶⁷

In the course of time, it seems that the lessening of persecution during the Medieval period seemed to have gradually drawn the attention of the Christian believers away from Christ as the source of healing, to the relics of the martyrs as the instruments of healing.⁶⁸ "The element of critical discernment found in the pre-Nicene church was often less evident, and the masses who came into the church sometimes failed to distinguish between Christ and their former carnival gods."⁶⁹

This lack of discernment led to the veneration of saints which was an important part of medieval religious life.⁷⁰

"The veneration of saints and pilgrimages to their shrines were indissolubly linked together. Visits to these shrines were further stimulated by widely publicized answers to prayer, especially miracles experienced during such visits. Miraculous answers to prayer were [also] recorded in miracle books."⁷¹

Unchristian aspects could clearly be seen to have drifted into the Christian circles.⁷² Christianity had come to adopt the blessings and benedictions which had existed before

Christianity's influence spread, and ritualism also greatly increased.⁷³

Clearly then, a situation of syncretism was at work in the dark medieval era. This is of interest to us in this study, as we focus on the African context in terms of Gospel proclamation. The danger of syncretism has always been mentioned in Africa as the Gospel seeks to influence the Africans in their traditional socio-religious settings. We will look more at this issue later.

Although this study does not discuss and prove the genuineness of these accounts - given the prevalence of syncretism during the medieval period - it is assumed, however, that there were some genuine signs and wonders in operation, accompanying a genuine Gospel proclamation, by genuine Gospel ministers.

III. The Reformation (1500) and Post-Reformation Period (Up to 1985)

A general statement that can be made about the reformers is that they were "sceptical of post Biblical miracles."⁷⁴ Calvin and Luther were agreed in general on the point that "healing gifts had been withdrawn by God in order to give preeminence to the preached word."⁷⁵

Luther made a declaration that no dead could be raised anymore by anyone, and that what appeared to be considered as healing miracles "seemed to him to be the Devil's artifices and not miracles at all. The day of miracles is past, he concluded, and the real gift of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten Scripture,"⁷⁶ for, he said:

Now that the apostles have preached the Word and have given their writings, and nothing more than what they have written remains to be revealed, no new and special revelation or miracles is necessary.⁷⁷

However, towards the end of his life, Luther modified his view concerning healing.⁷⁸ A time came in 1540 when Luther's friend and co-reformer Phillip Melancthon became seriously ill. "Melancthon was bedridden and his death was imminent. Upon visiting him, Luther knelt and prayed for his recovery. He wrote on the wall the words of Psalm 118:17 'I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord.' Instantly, Melancthon's condition visibly improved. This healing miracle Luther always considered one of the greatest he had ever witnessed."⁷⁹ As Jeff Kirby comments (correctly one would think) concerning Luther's change of attitude, "a theological system is not adequate when confronted with human need."⁸⁰ In the later years of his life, therefore, Luther declared:

It is still true that the same power and working of Christ yet remains Where it is needed the same miracles that happened then can occur now. Indeed has it not often occurred, and still does, that in the Name of Christ, devils are cast out, that through calling His Name, the sick are healed and many who are in dire physical and spiritual straits are helped?⁸¹

And as Arndt summarizes, "Luther... holds that the doing

of miracles in our day is not [dogmatically] excluded. If it should become necessary, he holds that they would be done, and in a measure, they are being done everyday, namely, when Christians pray and God grants their petitions."⁸²

Calvin's position, however, seems to have remained unchanged up to the end of his life. He stated in no uncertain terms that:

The gift of healing disappeared with the other miraculous powers which the Lord was pleased to give for a time, that it might render the new preaching of the Gospel forever wonderful. Therefore, even were we to grant that anointing was a sacrament of those powers which were then administered by the hands of the apostles, it pertains not to us, to whom no such powers have been committed.⁸³

Kesley makes this searching summative assessment of these two Reformation giants:

The influence of these two men can hardly be stressed too much. Practically all Protestant theology begins from one or the other of them. Whatever reason they had for rejecting miracles - whether they were reacting to an emphasis in the medieval church, or perhaps responding to the first whispers of sophisticated humanism, or to the developing implications of Aristotelelian thought - makes little difference. Calvin and Luther alike left the precedent that healing was a dispensation for a former time, and the matter was settled for later "orthodox" Protestants [emphasis mine]. The fact that the Church Fathers up to Aquinas, as well as the Orthodox Churches, had a different point of view does not seem to have been much considered.⁸⁴

When we come to the first generation of reformers in Scotland, we see evidence of the experiences of signs and wonders. John Howie wrote these experiences over two hundred years ago in a book entitled, The Scots Worthies. Howie's contemporary, J. Row, also wrote a contemporary record of

these miraculous phenomena. Both accounts seem to attest to the prevalence of sign-gift ministries in Reformation Scotland and after. Men such as Wishart, Knox, Welsh and others, were said to have been recognized for their authentic prophetic ministries.⁸⁵ Among these Scotland saints, "raising of the dead, healings, prophesyings, words of knowledge," and other miracles, were being experienced in ministry.⁸⁶

Godliness was often accompanied by a deep commitment to spend long seasons in prayer - even whole nights - in the lives of the Scots Worthies.⁸⁷ One record seems to suggest that these saints knew what it meant to use the gifts of the tongues in prayer and singing:

After they had mutually imparted their experience [these three saintly men] all took other in their arms, and shook to and again, and uttered their voices in a kind of cruneing singing way, but not uttering any articulate word, and yet tears running down from them....⁸⁸

It seems that the charismata continued to be experienced even after the Reformation period in Scotland. As Rex Gardner says, "in Presbyterian Scotland, we find continuing evidence of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit."⁸⁹ Exorcisms and healings were still being recorded.⁹⁰ These happenings were in operation even up to the 19th Century.⁹¹ One minister for example, who lived in the 19th Century Scotland had this epitaph written on his gravestone as evidence to show the powerful ministry he was involved in while in life: "He was a man through whom shone the excellency of the power ... the ministerial gifts and graces of primitive times ... in his

person were seen realized."⁹²

Rex Gardner also writes about the great English Christians of the 17th Century. Among them was the puritan divine Richard Baxter. At one time "he had a throat tumour which disappeared at the moment when, overcoming his inhibitions and modesty, he proclaimed God's healing powers."⁹³ In Baxter's writings, it is clear that miraculous healings were not uncommon in his time.⁹⁴

And so it is, that throughout the 17th Century and 18th Centuries, "we have scattered reports of healings, exorcisms, words of knowledge and wisdom, and even tongues among some groups like the Quakers and the Methodists in England and the Moravians in Eastern Europe."⁹⁵ George Fox (1624 - 1691) who founded the Quaker Church, John Wesley (1703 -1791) who founded the Methodist movement, and Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700 - 1760) who established the Moravian Brethren, all acknowledged, experienced, and recorded the occurrences of signs and wonders in their midst.⁹⁶

Within the Catholic wing during the Reformation era, we find Ignatius of Loyola (1491 - 1556) believing in the continuing operation of the charismata.⁹⁷ Then there is Francis Xavier (1506 - 1552) the famous Jesuit priest who is reported to have miraculously spoken in Japanese without prior knowledge of the language.⁹⁸ We also find Ieresa of

Avila (1515 - 1582) the Spanish nun, who became a Carmelite reformer, mystic, and writer. Her descriptions of her frequent ecstasies from God seem to suggest that she exercised the gift of tongues. She talked of, ".... ascending to go.... [in] the language of the Spirit."⁹⁹

Going back to the Protestant side, we find the famous Irishman Valentine Greatlakes (d. 1638) who had a faith - healing ministry which drew great crowds.¹⁰⁰ We also find the French Calvinists called The Huguenots (1559) who had accurate predictions in their prophecies.¹⁰¹ Then there were the Jansenists (c. 1731) whose expectation of signs and wonders "had become almost an integral part of [their] world view by the end of the 17th Century."¹⁰² We then have the Irvingites (followers of Edward Irving (1792 - 1834) who believed that the charismata belonged to all ages, and explained their failure to function as caused by a lack of faith in the church.¹⁰³

Time would fail us to tell of the German Lutheran Pastor Blumhart (1843), of Dorothea Trudel, the young Swiss florist (1851), of Charles Cullis (1833 - 1892), the medical doctor in Boston, of Maria Woodsworth Etter (1844 - 1924), and of Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Italy (1887 - 1968), who were all so exercised in signs and wonders as to make headlines in their generations.¹⁰⁴

In the Post-War period, William Branham's (1909 - 1965) healing ministry made a considerable impact in the U.S.A. and other lands. Sadly enough however, he developed eccentric teachings later which sparked off a cultic following that has remained up to today.¹⁰⁵

Toward the end of the last Century, the Pentecostal movement was born. After studying the books of Acts, Charles Parham (1873 - 1929) a Methodist evangelist entered into the experience of speaking in tongues with some of his Bible School students. They suffered persecution and were referred to as fanatics. Charles Parham has now gone down as the father of modern Pentecostalism.¹⁰⁶ However, the world-wide outreach of this movement was to spring from the now famous Azuza Street under one W.J. Seymour who was a student of Parham. From Azuza, there were reports of power, baptisms, visions and resting in the Spirit.¹⁰⁷

This Pentecostal movement went to Oslo, Norway, through T.B. Barret in 1905, and went to Sunderland, England through A.A. Boddy in 1907, where Smith Wigglesworth (1869 - 1947) became its chief representative. Wigglesworth had a widely recognized sign-gift ministry in different parts of the world that is still being felt up to today.¹⁰⁸

In Maesteg, Wales, The Jeffreys Brothers (Stephen and George) founded the Foursquare Pentecostal Church, and

operated in the miraculous ministry to the extent that as Stephen Jeffreys walked down the aisle, people were instantly healed without any physical contact.¹⁰⁹

In Los Angeles, California, Sister Aimee Semple McPherson became the first radio evangelist with a programme to reach the masses. By this time, Pentecostalism had got itself a place in the world as a considerable power; and soon (1939 -1940) there were large conferences being organized to forge unity among Pentecostals.¹¹⁰

Perhaps the beginnings of the Charismatic Movement (or Charismatic renewal, or neo-pentecostalism) can be traced to one Charles Price, who prophesied in the first half of this Century, that there would be a fulfillment of the Joel 2 prophecy of a world-wide outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh.¹¹¹

This prophecy was made to one, Demos Shakarian whose family had fled the Turkish Persecution of Armenian Christians through obeying a remarkable prophecy to flee to United States of America.¹¹² Thus was the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) founded, and has been one of the movements at the forefront of the promotion of signs and wonders ministries in this century.¹¹³

This charismatic movement started affecting the

Episcopal Church in the 1950s through Dennis Bennet and Frank Maguire in the U.S.A.; and when Trinity Magazine (from 1961) began publishing these charismatic happenings, the charismatic message spread through the denominations.¹¹⁴

From 1960 - 63, David Duplessis who was nicknamed "Mr. Pentecost" (and was influenced by Smith Wigglesworth) together with Frank Maguire and Larry Christenson, helped to spread the charismatic movement in Britain in the Church of England and other established denominations.¹¹⁵

From the early 60s, The Cross and The Switchblade (1962) book by David Wilkerson, and the Renewal magazine (1964) by Foundation Trust, played a major role in the promotion of the charismatic movement.¹¹⁶ Within Catholicism, the movement was sparked off by the Notre Dame Roman Catholic University (U.S.A) meeting; and by it was destined to spread rapidly.¹¹⁷

New groups cropped up, notably, Christian Growth Ministries, with New Wine Magazine; and within the Ministries' leadership, Derek Prince and Don Basham were to spread the "deliverance ministry" throughout North America and the United Kingdom.¹¹⁸ The charismatic movement on entering the 70s, witnessed the experience of having interdenominational conferences.¹¹⁹

As the movement entered the 80s, it saw Kathryn Kuhlman

possibly as its most famous healing evangelist.¹²⁰ The movement has now settled down somewhat and has become generally accepted and respected within evangelical circles.¹²¹ The charismatic movement has also seen the growth of the so-called "House churches" - notably in the United Kingdom led by men such as Bryn Jones, Arthur Wallis, Terry Virgo and Barney Coombs. The leaders of this movement are called Apostles and Prophets. It is estimated that the House Church Movement in the U.K. has more than a hundred thousand house groups averaging 10 adults each, and meeting regularly.¹²²

IV. Conclusion

It would seem to be difficult for any systematic investigator to dismiss claims of the operation of signs and wonders in church history. It may be that for us to question such testimonials would be to question the general validity of church history accounts as well. Perhaps the words of Laroslav Pelikan, former Yale University Professor of History and Religious Studies are a fitting summary to this section. Pelikan's comments are remarkable especially if we bear in mind that he is not a charismatic enthusiast:

The history of the church has never been altogether without the spontaneous gifts of the Holy Spirit. [emphasis mine]. No doubt the historical record doesn't fit the theology of many Christians. Sadly enough, they have tended to ignore the evidence or deny its validity because of a narrow mindset.

Nevertheless, the testimonies to God's power remain:

From the First Century to the 20th, from Antioch to Azuza street, the accounts have been gathered and preserved to challenge the skepticism of unbelievers and to build the faith of believers.

In the light of such overwhelming evidence, the Church of today can look to the past with gratitude for what God has done, to the present with faith in His still-awesome power, and to the future with hope for the great miracles He will yet accomplish.¹²⁹

END NOTES

1. Paul Thigpen, with John Archer, "Did the power of the Spirit ever leave the Church?" Acts: International Edition (Jan/Feb 1995), 4.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. However, we cannot be dogmatic about the dating of the Didache. James A. Kleist states that scholarly opinion rating range from somewhere in the first century to somewhere in the third. Putting it, therefore in the first century would make the Didache overlap probably the Acts of the Apostles in its timing. James A. Kleist, "The Didache," Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, newly translated and annotated, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Newman Press, 1948).

4. Ibid., 22, 23. In the annotation of p. 161, Kleist gives the following information: "The Didache knows three classes of men engaged in teaching Christian doctrine; 1) doctors - men distinguished for their gift of imparting doctrine; 2) apostles - itinerant preachers of the Gospel; we should say 'missionaries'; 3) prophets - resident or itinerant Christians, who are endowed with charisms [emphasis mine] and instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, stimulate their hearers. cf. I Cor. 14:1ff., Eph 3:5."

5. Paul Thigpen with John Archer, "Power of the Spirit," Acts, 5.

6. Morton T. Kesley, Healing and Christianity: In Ancient Thought and Modern Times (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 135.

7. Ibid., 136

8. Morton T. Kesley, Healing and Christianity, 143.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 144. This is not only an article in the creed but a doctrine translated into practice within their experience.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 145.

14. Morton T. Kesley, Healing and Christianity, 136. see also: Lewis B. Smedes, ed. Ministry and the Miraculous: A

case Study at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), 25.

15. Lewis B. Smedes, Ministry and the Miraculous, 25.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), 190.

19. Ibid., 243.

20. Ibid.

21. Paul Thigpen with John Archer, "Power of the Spirit," Acts, 5.

22. Morton T. Kesley, Healing and Christianity, 145.

23. A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol V, Ch. 12, 6.

24. Morton T. Kesley, Healing, 135.

25. Paul Thigpen, "Power of the Spirit," Acts, 6.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol 3, Ch. 5, 107.

30. Paul Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 6.

31. Morton T. Kesley, Healing, 151.

32. A. Cleveland Coxe, The Fathers, vol. III, 24.

33. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 6.

34. Rex Gardner, Healing Miracles: A Doctor Investigates (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986), 68. Gardner takes this quotation from C. Standliffe, St. Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

35. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 7.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Coxe, The Fathers, 5:641.

41. John Wimber with Kevin Springer, Power Evangelism: Signs and Wonders Today (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 153 - 154.

42. Kesley, Healing, 160 - 174.

43. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 2.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 3.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 8.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 9.

57. Ibid.

58. John Wimber, Power Evangelism, 158.

59. Ibid. quoted from Placid Hermann, ed. St. Francis of Assisi (Chicago: Herald Press, n.d.), 59 - 60.

60. Ibid.

61. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 9.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Wimber, Power, 159. It is recorded that the Waldesians also suffered in the midst of a storm of persecutions during the "Papal theocracy." Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church: vol.2 The medieval church (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 237.

65. Wimber, Power, 159.

66. The Catholic Encyclopedia Dictionary (New York: The Gilmary Society, 1941), 1002.

67. Wimber, Power, 160.

68. Smedes, Ministry and the Miraculous, 28.

69. Ibid.

70. Adrian H. Bredero, Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages 1st Eng. ed. (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994 2.

71. Ibid., 4.

72. Ibid., 6.

73. Ibid.

74. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Fully revised, vol. 3, 1986, s.v. "Miracles."

75. George Mallone, Those Controversial Gifts: Prophecy, Dreams, Visions, Tongues, Interpretation, Healing (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), 107.

76. Kesley, Healing, 22.

77. Jaroslav Pelikan, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John," Chs 14 - 16, Luthers Works (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 24:387.

78. Kesley, Healing, 22. Kesley comments that although Luther's view changed later, it was in his earlier sermons that the 11th Century attitude towards healing and miracles was formed. Of the two attitudes extant in Luther's theology, the Protestant Church has generally tended to take the negative one towards healing and miracles.

79. Mallone, Controversial Gifts, 107 - 108.

80 Ibid., 107. This does not mean that theology is

irrelevant to human need, since we all operate under a system of theology. Rather it means that crisis moments may upset our neat theological systems.

81. W. F. Arndt, "Does the Bible teach that only Christians of the Apostolic Age would Possess miraculous powers?" Searching Together (Spring, 1987), 16:15.

82. Ibid.

83. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion IV. 18 (1953), 2:636.

84. Kesley, Healing, 23.

85. Rex Gardner, Healing Miracles, 83.

86. Ibid., 87.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., 88.

90. Ibid

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., 89.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 90.

95. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 9.

96. Ibid., 10.

97. Wimber, Power Evangelism, 161 - 162.

98. C.S. Butler, Test the Spirits: The Charismatic Phenomena (Herts: Evangelical Press, 1985), 30.

99. Wimber, Power Evangelism, 162.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., 165.

102. Kreiser Robert, Miracles, Convulsions, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Early 18th Century Paris (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), n.p., quoted in Wimber, Power Evangelism, 164.

103. Butler, Test the spirits, 36.

104. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 10.

105. Ibid., 11.

106. Butler, Test, 46.

107. Ibid., 47. This "resting in the spirit" or being "slain in the spirit" is Pentecostal terminology for the phenomenon of someone being irresistibly "knocked down" to the floor presumably by the power of the Holy Spirit.

108. Butler, Test, 48, 49

109. Ibid., 49.

110. Ibid., 50, 51.

111. Ibid., 52.

112. Ibid., 42.

113. Ibid., 53.

114. Ibid., 54.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid., 55.

117. Ibid., 56.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid., 58.

120. Ibid., 61.

121. Ibid., 60.

122. Ibid., 64.

123. Thigpen, "Power," Acts, 12. D. A. Carson, another highly respected evangelical New Testament Scholar also concludes in similar words:

There is enough evidence that some form of "charismatic" gifts continued sporadically across the centuries of church history that it is futile to insist on doctrine grounds that every report is spurious or the fruit of demonic activity or psychological aberration [emphasis mine].

See D. A. Carson, Showing the Spirit (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 166. This present study as has already been expressed, does not attempt to establish ways of determining genuine historical accounts of miracles. It just assumes that some historical accounts of genuine miracles exist. Perhaps other studies on this question should be done. This study leaves the reader to judge by and for himself or herself.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIGNS AND WONDERS TODAY: A BRIEF SURVEY AND COMMENTARY

I. Introduction

The historical outline of the signs and wonders movement in Church history inevitably brought this study to the examination of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. This is clearly because these movements essentially believe that all spiritual gifts are valid for us today.¹

When the Pentecostal Movement came to fruition at the turn of this century, it kept growing and was later followed by the Charismatic movement at the middle of the century. These two movements have been described by some modern missiologists as the First wave and the Second Wave (of the Holy Spirit) respectively.² By 1983, however, talk about a "third wave" of the Holy Spirit started to be heard in some missiological circles.³ This movement following at the heels of the earlier two movements was destined to move so that "all segments of Christendom would be reached: Catholics, Protestants, and even the Eastern Orthodox. This revival movement would occur without the struggle and conflict found in the earlier waves of Pentecostal revival."⁴

The Third Wave Movement "would involve church leaders and members who would be Pentecostal or Charismatic in experience," but not carrying the "Pentecostal" and "Charismatic" labels.⁵ This Third wave movement is thus seen

to include "evangelicals who embrace the reality of the supernatural and charismatic gifts without necessarily changing their theology or denominational identity."⁶

II. Wagner, Wimber and Wonders

A. Introduction

By the mid 80s the Third Wave Movement seems to indeed make inroads into the mainline churches.⁷ Since this movement "was not linked to specific Pentecostal labels or theology, many problems of the past were by-passed."⁸ In his 1983 book entitled, The Holy Spirit in The Latter Days, Harold Lindsell, a highly honoured evangelical, well-known theologian, and former editor of Christianity Today magazine, declared that, "These [spiritual] gifts are still active in our day...." It is possible, says Synan, that this respected evangelical author might be "speaking for a number of leaders who are of the same mind;" and if so, this is indeed a sign that the third wave movement is gaining momentum as it engulfs more and more mainline traditional churches.

At the helm of the Third Wave Movement are two remarkable men in the names of Peter Wagner and John Wimber. It was Peter Wagner in particular who originated the "Third Wave" concept;⁹ and John Wimber pioneered the Modern "Signs and Wonders Movement" (which is an offshoot of the Third Wave Movement).¹⁰ We need to look a little closer now into the lives and ministries of these two men.

B. C. Peter Wagner

Peter Wagner is the Donald A. McGavran Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena California. Before he came to Fuller in 1971, Dr. Wagner was a missionary to Bolivia for 16 years. He has authored more than 30 books on missions and church growth.¹¹ This considerable research by Wagner forced him to realize that "Pentecostalism is a driving force in much of the Third World."¹² He came to realize - the concept of the power encounter: which is "a contest between gods."¹³ This concept was derived from a study of Missions history which is "replete with examples of missionaries who converted animistic tribes by, for example, chopping down their ancestral grove and erecting a Christian shrine on the spot."¹⁴

Peter Wagner, while a missionary in Bolivia, had actively opposed Pentecostalism.¹⁵ However, his attitude "changed completely" as a result of firsthand contact with Pentecostals in Latin America:¹⁶

I saw God at work among [these Pentecostals]. I saw exploding churches. I saw preaching so powerful that hardened sinners broke and yielded to Jesus' love. I saw miraculous healings. I saw Christians and their churches multiplying themselves time and again. I saw broken families reunited. I saw the poor and oppressed liberated and restored to dignity through God's living Word. I saw hate turning to love [emphasis mine].¹⁷

The result of this first hand contact with Pentecostals with their signs and wonders ministries was "a conversion" in Wagner from a spectator to a participant.¹⁸ It was

Wagner's Personal friend John Wimber who gave Wagner "a personal introduction to the realm of the supernatural."¹⁹ This was when John Wimber taught for 4 years on the course variously called, "Signs and Wonders and Church Growth," and "Healing Ministries and Church Growth."²⁰ Wagner describes this experience beautifully:

I will never forget my surprise when the Holy Spirit showed up with power right there in the seminary classroom! Week after week I saw miraculous healings, words of knowledge, resting in the Spirit, and other visible, tangible manifestation of divine power. I myself was healed, and before I could say "pneumatology" I was part of it.²¹

Wagner now ministers in the power of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders regularly as part of his Christian lifestyle.²² This means inside the classroom and outside - within his local church setting and in other places.²³ Wagner's writings are being used today in missions, church growth classes in leading seminaries and Bible colleges.²⁴ The result is that many more evangelicals are embracing "Signs and Wonders" as part of their belief and practice. This is why Wagner gets a special mention in this study.

C. John Wimber

John Wimber is undoubtedly the "father" of the modern Signs and Wonders Movement. He is the Pastor of the Vineyard Church in Southern California. "Now there are over 100 'Vineyards' across the United States."²⁵ This new phenomenon of the Signs and Wonders Movement, being an offshoot of the Third Wave Movement blends evangelical commitment and

charismatic belief and practice. Charismatic labels are rejected, although the miraculous gifts as mentioned in the New Testament are affirmed to continue up to today.²⁶ As Ken Sarles has stated, "the penetration of the Signs and Wonders Movement into mainstream American evangelicalism is certainly one of the most provocative developments of the day;" which makes all concerned to watch and see "what direction evangelicalism takes as a result."²⁷ This clearly justifies a special mention of John Wimber in this study, since he is the movement's acclaimed leader.

A deep sense of dissatisfaction at the pastorate led to a serious self-examination and prayer for the Wimbers, who were pastors of a Quaker Church.²⁸ Having been convicted of a strong anti-Charismatic stance that they had embraced, the Wimbers now desired and eventually received a powerful spiritual renewal which convinced them that God was about to do something new and important in the Church.²⁹ The Wimbers were joined by a few other leaders in the Quaker congregation in a pioneer home group in October 1976.³⁰ When this home group grew from 15 to 50 and 125, they were asked to leave the church; and John Wimber became the pastor of the group, now renamed Calvary Chapel.³¹

After many months of preaching from Luke with an emphasis on the Signs and Wonders ministry of Jesus, and an

earnest prayer for Charismatic manifestations in the Church, Wimber and his church entered into the charismatic dimension.³² In 1981, the concept of "power evangelism" was born; and the church grew, so that by 1985 there were 5,000 members with 120 daughter congregations.³³ Earlier, in 1982, the Church and Movement had been renamed "Vineyard."³⁴

Wimber believes that God has never ceased to validate His truth through signs and wonders.³⁵ Clark Pinnock agrees with Wimber, and believes that such a supernatural validation of Biblical truth is "worth a bookshelf of academic apologetics for Christianity."³⁶ So, "Wimber's essential message is 'we can do what Jesus did.' In fact, he reads it as a command: 'We must do what Jesus did.'³⁷ In Wimber's vocabulary the key word is power and not healing.³⁸

It is clear in Wimber's book (Power Evangelism) that there is a heavy reliance on the renowned Biblical theologian George Eldon Ladd's theology of the Kingdom.³⁹ Ladd "emphasizes the Kingdom of God as an invasive force, not only proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, but demonstrating its superior power over Satan's Kingdom through healings and exorcisms."⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that while George Ladd has been enjoying wide acceptability within evangelicalism, John Wimber who transformed Ladd's orthodoxy into orthopraxy is embroiled in controversy, and is yet to be fully accepted in the wider circles of evangelicalism. In

considering the ministry of John Wimber says Patterson, we see a challenge to evangelicalism: not just "to live by its techniques and its programmes, but by the Spirit...."⁴⁵ We should not harden in our "expectations of the way God ought to act, but to become open to the surprising work of God."⁴⁶ So while John Wimber challenges evangelicalism "not to box God in, his critics would bring the same challenge to him."⁴⁷ This simply means that all of us need to constantly be alert to find out that safe middle-point where a balanced Christianity for belief and practice is found.

D. Wonders beyond Wagner and Wimber

Recent happenings in the modern Signs and Wonders Movement show one that something is taking place that is beyond the manipulation of any one human personality. While famous signs and wonders personalities (like T. L. Osborn, Oral Roberts, Morris Cerullo, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Reinhard Bonnke, and a host of others) are still continuing to be use of God today, "new" supernatural phenomena have been observed in different parts of the world.

Derek Prince writes of how "reports have been coming in from Christian groups in widely separated locations of what appears to be a strange new phenomenon.... [There are] prolonged outbursts of laughter which have no obvious cause. Sometimes [Christian believers] may also act as if they are drunk..."⁴⁸ The particular location which has become widely

associated with these phenomena is Toronto in Canada, and these particular phenomena manifested have been widely known as "The Toronto Blessing."⁴⁹

This "Toronto blessing" is apparently "on every [Christian] leaders' tongues today."⁵⁰ The unusual phenomena include "giggling, convulsive laughter, weeping and deep sobbing, shaking and trembling and people prostrate before the Lord or flat on their backs. The latter is sometimes accompanied with a feeling of a loss of control and an inability to get up."⁵¹ It was at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church that these phenomena gained a world-wide attention.⁵² However, these phenomena have overflowed to the Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London, and to other British Churches.⁵³

While some Christians have hailed these unexpected phenomena as "an outbreak of revival," others have dismissed them as "Satanic counterfeit(s) or an unbiblical display of hysteria..."⁵⁴ Many conservative evangelicals frequently ask the question: "Where is all this in the Bible."⁵⁵ Or again, "Does the Holy Spirit produce in God's people such phenomena?"⁵⁶ This is a clear call for all concerned Christians to exercise discernment and not just dismiss these phenomena as being satanic. Perhaps says Derek Prince, Matt. 12:33 is "the most decisive test that should be applied to all forms of spiritual experience."⁵⁷

Gerald Coates who is a Spiritual leader of repute in Britain also speaks on the assessment of the current "Toronto Blessing." He presents this valuable guideline in testing any supernatural experiences among believers:

There are things God approves of in Scripture, and we call them, Scriptural; there are things God disapproves of in Scripture, and we call them unscriptural; but there are a lot of things that are plainly non-Scriptural [emphasis mine]. The Bible is not a text book, but a test book. We draw our experiences alongside Scripture to see whether they are of God or not...⁵⁶

Derek Prince again goes on to put forth very valuable "general principles.... to apply in various different situations" in our experiences - especially with the supernatural.⁵⁸ First of all, he says, we need to recognize the fact that an emotional or even extraordinary experience "does not necessarily mean that it is not from God."⁶⁰ He cites the following Scriptures to validate this principle: Is. 20:1-3; Ezek. 4:4-15; Mk. 7:32-35; Jn 9:6-7 (plus other instances in Acts).⁶¹

Secondly, Derek Prince suggests a general principle that "caution, and not a blank, negative skepticism should be our attitude as we approach unusual manifestations; and thus this means that we should be a people of discernment: who practice it daily, and who "cultivate a diet of solid (Scriptural) food" (Heb. 5:14).⁶² This crucial point of discernment has been a recurrent issue in discussions on the appreciation of Signs and Wonders ministries. There seems to be no

alternative to it for the Christian community.

Jack Hayford, one of the most well-known pastors in the U.S.A. has this suggestion to make in the light of possible abuses that may be evident in any signs and wonders movement; that they should not be seen as strange, considering our frailty as humans. Moreover, there has never been a place where a blessing has come "and has been with a human perfection."⁶³ Derek Prince also agrees with this, and emphatically reminds us all that "God has no faultless people to work with;" and the wonder is that He can do great things "with weak and fallible people who are truly surrendered to Him." [emphasis mine].⁶⁴

III. World Views and Wonders

A. Introduction

Perhaps it can be stated as an axiom that, "The World view to which one ascribes will determine the way in which one theologizes and participates in a signs and wonders ministry."⁶⁵ An examination of this concept of "World view" is therefore crucial to this thesis. Although "very few persons" may be "conscious that they even hold to a world view," yet all people have and use their world views as their "control box" in judging reality.⁶⁶ Actually Kraft considers our World view as being "by far the most important" in influencing our view of reality.⁶⁷

But what exactly is a world view? Charles H. Kraft who has written on the subject in detail seeks to clarify the concept for us. He notes that there is some considerable confusion in understanding this concept in popular writing and speaking.⁶⁸ For he says:

While some speak of "the Christian world view" [for example, Francis Schaeffer], others speak of the term world view as being synonymous with religion; so that there are Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and secular world views [for example, James Sire, Ninian Smart]. Though it is fairly clear what such authors and speakers intend, their imprecision of their usage can result in a good bit of confusion, especially if the person is using the term anthropologically while another is using it in a more popular sense.⁶⁹

Since Christians in different continents and societies do not have a similar "Christian world view," the concept of the Christian world view, says Kraft, is therefore a myth.⁷⁰ According to Kraft, the fact that "the World views of various societies -even of individuals for that matter-often differ from each other;" and that it is precisely at those crucial cross-cultural points that there are differences; underlines the importance of understanding a given cross-cultural context and the great cross-cultural book which the Bible is.⁷¹ This simply means that the Christian messenger of the Good News of Christ must exegete both the Biblical text under his arm, and the context from which he is coming from and going to.

Kraft then gives us a definition of world view that comprehends our perception of Reality. Worldview is the

culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments that underlie a people's perception of Reality [author's emphasis].⁷² Reality is seen here as the way God understands things.⁷³ This is a useful distinction that understands that there is only one, objective view of things as they are (namely, God's) and many subjective (man's) views of the same.⁷⁴ Reality, which is the understanding of things outside of ourselves as humans, as being both material and non-material is the only reliable understanding; while reality is simply our human perception that exists in our minds.⁷⁵

Kraft brings up an important point that "we see largely what we are taught to see."⁷⁶ So our basic ways of interpreting Reality are what they are and not any others because "our elders taught it to us..."⁷⁷ "We are taught to view Reality in socially prescribed ways and constantly under pressure from the other members of our society to maintain these perspectives."⁷⁸ This is of paramount importance when we consider the state of the Church in the world generally, and in Africa in particular. As the saying goes, the Church is what its leaders are. So whatever world views the schoolmen of the Church and the Church ministers hold generally determine the world views of the people under their charge. This then has to be true in the whole area of signs and wonders that is the concern of this study. This study will deal with this matter in a more concentrated way later as the focus is made on Christian Ministerial training.

B. The Western World view

A chorus of voices is on a general agreement that the modern Western world view of Reality is basically anti-supernaturalist.⁷⁹ This, however, is rather a recent development, since a supernaturalist world view dominated Western civilization until "the Enlightenment" of the 18th Century.⁸⁰ The chief architects of the Enlightenment were men like Immanuel Kant, Isaac Newton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire (pen name of Francois Marie Aronet), Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.⁸¹ These men in general held "a deistic view of God, acknowledging His existence as Creator but leaving the conduct of life to man and his reason."⁸² This was the age which gave birth to the "goddess" called science, which led to a "mechanistic view of the universe commonly held by Euro-Americans."⁸³

Scientific thinking and reason had thus become the magic keys that could release modern man from his disagreeable social, political, and religious chains.⁸⁴ With much of Western schooling steeped in these basic ideas, is it any wonder that an anti-supernaturalist world view came into being?⁸⁵ There was now a driving "desire for a superior, more rational view of everything" which desire has "left its mark on the modern mind; [so that] many of the ideas which are taken for granted in Western society have their origin in the Age of Enlightenment."⁸⁶ The fact of the matter now in the Modern West, as Kraft puts it is this:

Because such enlightenment influence has become so strong in our societies, modern Westerners - both non-Christians and Christians - now find it extremely difficult to believe in angels, Satan, demons, and even God. Whether or not real spiritual power can be exercised through prayer, then, is seriously questioned both outside and inside our churches.⁸⁷

Kraft lists six characteristics of the Western World view as follows: Naturalism, Materialism, Humanism, Rationalism, Individualism, and Openness to change.⁸⁸ This last characteristic of openness to change is the hope for betterment for any world view in general, and the Western World view in particular. There is now a felt need among a growing number of Western peoples that "the traditional naturalistic perspectives" have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; since they have apparently failed to provide "satisfactory answers to at least some of life's problems."⁸⁹

As John Wimber puts it: "The Western world view has [been having] a blind spot which keeps most Westerners from dealing with or understanding problems related to spirits, ancestors or anything supernatural."⁹⁰ Paul Hiebert has called this "the flaw of the excluded middle;" and he correctly maintains that this "excluded middle" is part of the everyday life in most non-Western cultures.⁹¹

In the current radical change in the Western World to fill this neglected "Middle", uncertainty and fear are evident.⁹² Hiebert suggests correctly that such times call

for prophets to proclaim a new world view that has a promise to guide the people back to a better life, on both scientific and religious levels.⁹⁰ "It is within this flux," says Hiebert, "that we must understand the movements of our day in a quest for the miraculous."⁹¹

Charles H. Kraft points out how this quest for the supernatural has led many modern Westerners into demonic deception:

One does not have to travel very far in any of our cities to discover that palm readers, spirit mediums, and the purveyors of the "New Age" are very active.⁹²

It is therefore clear that a paradigm shift is taking place in the World view of the Western world. Not only is this true of the Satanic Supernatural realm, but also of the Christian realm of signs and wonders, as Kraft observes.⁹³ Now an increasing number of evangelicals are embracing Pentecostal and Charismatic experiences; for they have rightly sensed "that there must be more to Christianity than [they] have witnessed so far."⁹⁴

In the light of this resurgence of supernaturalism, a careful study of signs and wonders, as this thesis attempts to do, is never a misplaced endeavour. This again clearly calls for a development of discernment faculties in the Christian communities in general, and in their leaders in particular. The shepherds cannot therefore afford to be indecisive, but to decisively and wisely lead the sheep to

the true paths of Christian signs and wonders. This necessarily calls for costly changes in our orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

C. The African World View

Whereas the Western World view generally sees the universe as being closed, the African World view sees an open universe teeming with myriads of spirits - both malevolent and benevolent - which impinge upon the physical and social world of men.⁹⁵ It is common knowledge that a number of missionaries come from the Western world with a feeling of the superiority of their own world.⁹⁶ Such missionaries tend to have the feeling that, "the African is wrong, primitive, and pagan."⁹⁷ However, blanket words like Animism, Idolatry, Paganism, Heathenism, Fetishism, Witchcraft, Magic, Juju, and Primitive Religion, which have been used to describe religious expressions in Africa have all been weighed in a balance and found wanting.⁹⁸

Most early missionaries were therefore wrong to think that Africans were in a dire "need of freedom from their world in order to imbibe the Western one. They [saw] their mission [generally] as engaging in this liberation."⁹⁹ They were wrong to lightly treat firmly held traditional beliefs - such as spirits, powers, and ancestors which play decisive roles in human society - "as being irrelevant, ignorant, and even ungodly."¹⁰⁰

With our understanding of what a world view means, we can agree with Boer that, "the traditional African world view plays a role not only in the sick room but in all aspects of life, including the lives of Christians."¹⁰⁴ If one has understood this statement properly, it means that most Africans are cognizant of the existence and potency of the spirit-world. They are, as Ross Gaskin has dramatically put it, "drenched" in their African Traditional Religions.¹⁰⁵

Few of us would disagree with the declaration by Tite Tienou, that "there are good elements in African traditional religion;" and that "not everything is the work of the devil."¹⁰⁶ The malevolent and benevolent spirits which are held to be active in the African traditional milieu operate through human mediators - "for better and for worse."¹⁰⁷ The mystical powers inherent in the spirits and their human counterparts are central to the African Traditional Religions.¹⁰⁸ Richard Gehman has observed that "there is a delicate balance maintained between the malevolent and benevolent mystical powers and their human intermediaries."¹⁰⁹

The intermediaries within African Traditional Religions (henceforth ATR) are "specialists" who either inherit these extraordinary powers, or purchase them "from local medicine men."¹¹⁰ The ordinary African taps the numinous powers

"through these specialists who served either the interests of the community or the malicious designs of individuals."¹¹¹ Gehman has listed these specialists as follows: the Medicine-men, the Diviners, the Rainmakers, the Prophets, the Priests, and the Herbalists.¹¹² It is possible to find non religious overtones in the latter specialization, although, like the rest, the herbalist could be controlled by the mystical powers.¹¹³

Within pre-Christian settings, one has to believe that God did and has revealed his glory to His human creation, which generally show this endowment by seeking after God with a certain limited knowledge (Acts 17:26,27; Rom. 1:21).¹¹⁴ However, one has to also believe that this "non-Christian religiosity" is ambiguous, since it is deformed by sin and thus suppresses the true knowledge of God.¹¹⁵ Therefore, one cannot find a true knowledge of God in any non-Christian religion like ATR, unless Christ's light shines through it. (Eph. 2:12).¹¹⁶

This all becomes significant to the one who begins to think of theophanies, signs and miracles in the pre-Christian African milieu.¹¹⁷ The central question for one to ask here is that, has the African Church given the traditional African Christian alternatives to these mystical beliefs and practices, or has the church failed to bridge this gap by naively dismissing pre-Christian supernaturalism as mere

superstition? This study seeks to show that New Testament teaching is indeed capable to fill this vacuum.

D. Conclusion

Having generally examined the Western and African world views, one can see that both world views have things to be rejected and things to be received.

One would welcome the emphasis on truth that has been characteristic of the modern Western world. One would want to love God with all of his mind and redemptively use his or her faculty of reason. Moreover, Jesus our Lord emphatically declared that He is "The Truth" (John 14:6). Again one need to clearly think over the Word of God in order to gain an understanding from God of what He has to say to him or her "in all things" of life (2 Tim 2:7).

However, one needs to steer-clear of a mechanistic view of the universe that sees supernatural interventions of God as being foreign. One needs to say clearly that the Signs of science have not replaced the Signs of the Spirit; and the wonders of Western Civilization have not set aside the wonders of Christian miracles.

As for the African world view, one welcomes its emphasis on the reality of the spirit world - the supernatural world. One needs to redemptively use the concept of power that

pervades African belief and practice. Moreover, the African world view can be seen to be nearer the New Testament one. (Eph. 6:12)

However, one needs to abandon the manipulative magical aspects within the African world view that see power as serving one's ends only. One needs to say emphatically that not everything that glitters - as signs and wonders - is gold; for there are Satanic signs and wonders on one hand and Christian signs and wonders on the other hand.

When one puts the strengths of these two world views together, one gets a good combination of truth and power that can be used effectively in Gospel proclamation. We can be both orthodox and alive spiritually. And since a clear characteristic of the modern world is pluralism in world views, Christians desperately need an ongoing exercise of discernment in order to live balanced Christian lives within their given contexts. This will necessarily lead us to constant paradigm shifts within our world views in line with God's Word.

IV. Examining Experience

It has often been said that one's experiences must be judged by the Word of God, and not vice-versa. Those who embrace signs and wonders have generally been accused of exalting experience above God's written Word. It is also

common for those who have not experienced supernatural operations of the Spirit to be critical of those who have. On the other hand those involved in signs and wonders usually say - in one way or another - that "We cannot help but testify of what we have seen, heard and done." One needs therefore to examine the whole thinking about the part experience plays in one's Christian belief and practice as far as signs and wonders are concerned.

John Schmidt is one scholar who has argued correctly that experience must be placed under Scripture; and that a Christian should measure his or her experience by the revealed truths of God's Word, which are the facts.¹¹⁸ However, true as this is, as Paul Thigpen says, "we tend to measure what God is doing by our own limited experience [emphasis mine] and not strictly by revealed truths of God's Word as Schmidt says."¹¹⁹ And as this study has already shown in the outline of signs and wonders in Church history, Christian thinkers like Augustine and Luther changed their attitude to miracles when they experienced these phenomena in their own given milieus.

When he talks about the influence of the modern Signs and Wonders Movement, Ben Patterson admits that this movement is "a challenge to experience."¹²⁰ He argues that evangelicalism has generally talked about God's unmanageable presence, but now the signs and wonders movement has brought

about the experience of this presence into our midst.¹²¹

Charles H. Kraft who has written ably on world view and experience, states how "the limitations of our experience" are some of the major factors that influence our view of Reality.¹²² He then applies this to the specific area of signs and wonders thus:

Those who have never had the experience of seeing a person healed as a result of prayer may deny that it can happen. All of us are hampered to a greater or less extent in our attempts to understand the experiences of others that we ourselves have not had.¹²³

In his able presentation of "the myth of pure biblical objectivity", Jack Deere, mentions how our personal experience renders all of us to being poor candidates for objectivity.¹²⁴ He maintains that those who argue against the validity of signs and wonders today do not base their arguments on Scripture alone but also on an "appeal to history, either past or present" [emphasis mine].¹²⁵ He concludes that this appeal to history "is actually an argument from experience, or better, an argument from the lack of experience" [author's emphasis].¹²⁶ So, whether people disbelieve in the gifts of the Spirit because the present day gifts are of a substandard quality as compared to the New Testament ones, or they disbelieve in these gifts because of a revulsion against current misuse or perceived misuse, it still comes back to arguments based on experience and not on Scripture.¹²⁷ It stands then that a cessationist attitude towards the charismata is ultimately based on either

personal experience or a lack of it; or on negative experience [author's emphasis].¹²⁰ One find this to be a seriously forceful argument. In other words, those pointing fingers at proponents of signs and wonders and accusing them of being experientially tuned (as opposed to being Scripturally tuned) are also pointing fingers at themselves since their stance is also sometimes based on experience and not on Scripture alone.

V. Conclusion

That three successive supernaturalist Christian movements have burst upon the modern Church scene is an undeniable fact of history. It is also a fact that these movements have made inroads into various established Christian traditions so that it is difficult to talk today of "pure" historical Christian denominations. Although some individuals have featured as leaders in this threefold charismatic phenomenon in our modern Church life, yet there seems to be no serious control of this phenomenon by these individuals.

So every Christian has to grapple with the reality of this modern charismatic outpouring within his or her own world-view placement. The traditions of the elders that generally tend to govern our beliefs and practices are constantly faced with the challenge of re-examination in order to conform to the Biblical pattern. If this study of

Luke-Acts has been successful in presenting a sample of such a pattern, then the challenge continues to present itself to every modern Christian within his or her Christian tradition to embrace the concept of a charismatic Christian community that covets charismata within the context of charity and discernment.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE AFRICAN CHURCH AND SIGNS AND WONDERS

I. Introduction

Our modern world has been described as a global village. Christianity came to Africa mainly through Christian missionaries coming from the Western World: Europe and America. Hysterical historians charged with nationalism often tend to minimize the efforts of these pioneer missionaries. The latter have been accused of being mere stooges of the colonial masters. Attacks against former colonial powers therefore have also tended to be directed against the missionary agencies that came in from these nations. Whatever criticism can be labelled against these pioneer missionaries, it is nevertheless clear that they were used of God to lay a foundation for the Church in Africa.

The reason why a brief survey and commentary was made concerning signs and wonders today is the global village context of Christianity today. In other words, whatever happens in the religious circles outside Africa inevitably drifts in as an irresistible wave washing over this continent. This is true concerning signs and wonders. Before this study surveyed the signs and wonders movement in the African Church, it was therefore necessary to establish the global context first. This global context greatly affects the parochial one on the question of signs and wonders. History has shown that denominationalism with its attendant orthodoxy

and orthopraxy in the West has usually become denominationalism in Africa with the same beliefs and practices.

II. Imperatives to Consider On the Evangelization of Africa

A. The Imperatives of the Exegesis of the Religio-Social Milieu of the people we are to evangelize.

Vincent J. Donovan, a Catholic Holy Ghost Father, spent nearly two decades of missionary work among the Maasai of Tanzania, East Africa. In his searching book, Christianity Rediscovered, "he probes the unique contribution of Christianity [in Africa] stripped of its cultural accretions from the West."¹ Donovan's definition of evangelization is worth stating here: "Evangelization is a process of bringing the Gospel to people where they are, not where you would like them to be."² "The Gospel," therefore, which is "the message of Christianity, the revelation of God to Man," says Donovan, must be brought to everyone - to the entire human race - "to everyone in every segment of the human race."³

A segment of the human race called a tribe, says Donovan correctly, has its own "dress, food, music, ritual, language, values"; and in bringing the Gospel to it, we must "have the courage to go with [that tribe] to a place that neither you nor [it] have ever been before."⁴ Donovan believes that this, in a nutshell, is what evangelization is.⁵ He then goes on to suggest that there are two things that must come together to lead us to that new place, namely, "the Gospel and the sacred

arena of peoples lives."⁶ Thus, "the naked gospel - [that] 'final and fundamental substance of the Christian message [Karl Rahner]' must be brought to bear on the real flesh and blood world in which we live; [and] the result ... could be a new church in a new place, a new ministry of the priesthood of all believers...."⁷

What was seen in the earlier part of this study, Donovan in his own unique style also reiterates: that "the gospel must be brought to the nations in which already resides the possibility of salvation [for]... God enables a people, any people, to reach Salvation through their culture and tribal, racial customs and traditions."⁸ John S. Mbiti has also expressed this truth in his own way thus:

It is African Religion which generated a spirituality that finds ultimate fulfillment in the Gospel... The Christian Faith comes, therefore, to enrich, to fulfill, to crown and to say "yes" to African Religion and not to destroy it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ both judges and saves or sanctifies elements in African Religion. But, however rich African religiosity has been, it could not and did not produce that which the Gospel now offers to African peoples. Yet it tutored the African in religious life, so that they could find in the Gospel that to which this religiosity pointed within the framework of its own revelation of God.⁹

As Tienou correctly says, "we must all recognize this fact and give credit to Mbiti"¹⁰

In our examination of world views within the background of the New Testament religio-social milieus, we have to admit, in agreement with Charles H. Kraft, that "biblical peoples were much more like contemporary non-Western people

than like Euro-Americans..."¹¹ For, as Kraft says, "whereas most of the rest of the world is primarily concerned with how to deal with the Spiritual and human worlds, we in the West are almost exclusively concerned with how to manipulate the material world."¹² So while the African would tend to look at the ultimate (supernatural) causes in life's issues, the Euro-American would tend to look at the intermediate (natural) causes.¹³ It is not however true to argue says Kraft, that one approach is necessarily better than the other, but that each one by itself is inadequate as a total approach; so each one is needed to complement the other.¹⁴

The important thing, nevertheless, is for one to realize that the signs and wonders ministry of Jesus and His Apostles would be more conducive, and therefore pertinent to the African milieu. We would not have to belabour the point of the reality of satanic supernaturalism, for example, to an average African; what we would need instead is to provide him with a Holy Spirit power experience that would ensure his security against such real malevolent spiritual powers [emphasis mine].¹⁵

B. The Imperative of the Exegesis of Scripture in Christian Ministry

Vincent J. Donovan has compellingly described our task as we seek to influence society thus:

In any action taken in the name of the church today, one of the key criteria to measure the fitness of what is

being done is the Bible. "Is it biblical? Is it evangelical? Is it Scriptural? [These] are questions that must be asked time and time again."¹⁶

Donovan then applies this declaration specifically to evangelization. "The missionary effort should, in its main and basic outlines, be biblical."¹⁷ This at once is a challenge to a careful exegesis of biblical texts before we take an application of these texts to our given contexts.

Samuel Ngewa expresses the same convictions concerning Christian ministry in Africa today. He believes that since meaning rests in authorial intent, "then the initial task [for] the African theologians" is to dig out "the historical and cultural contexts of the author and analyzing the text grammatically and contextually in order to find out what the author intended the text to communicate to the original readers."¹⁸ Ngewa is correct in saying that "only after that intended meaning has been identified will the interpreter then proceed to answer the question: How does this relate to the African and his situation?"¹⁹

This seems to be a reasonable procedure for every Christian minister desirous of influencing his society for God. Moreover, as Ngewa says, "this approach will emphasize that African theology is an attempt to answer the questions relevant to Africa in light of what we can discover from the Biblical text to have been the author's answer to similar issues of his day."²⁰ So if we want to apply any biblical

text in accuracy "to our situations - be they colonialism, or neo-colonialism, liberationism, oppressionism, paternalism, 'militarism' or any other issues to which African theology should address itself" only the above approach can guarantee us true success.[emphasis mine].²¹

This necessarily applies to this study here as one considers the topic of "signs and wonders." Authorial intent will then force us to ask ourselves the questions: Is the validity of a signs and wonders ministry authenticated by Scripture for us today? And has our interpretation been true and accurate, as opposed to merely being "plausible, reasonable, defensible, and not impossible" [emphasis mine].²²

But the question still stands, that "since the Bible was written thousands of years ago and each Bible book intended to meet a need at its own time which was characterized by different situations we are in, then how does a meaning which is changeless answer today's interpreter's questions which were not the questions of the Bible times?"²³ Hirsch comes to our rescue in this by distinguishing the meaning of a text from its significance;²⁴ so that while there is only one correct meaning intended by a biblical author, there can be multiple but true significances or applications of the one meaning.²⁵

So if true significance can be derived only from one meaning, one would agree with Ngewa that "it is [therefore] so crucial for the African Biblical Scholars to be exegetes before they become theologians."²⁶ To pursue this argument for the benefit of our Signs and Wonders study in Luke -Acts,

one would have to say that whatever Luke meant to say must abide and shape one's Christian understanding of signs and wonders, and that understanding necessarily assumes or demands global dimensions in its operation.²⁷ That understanding will save our Christian theology from being "sterile, bankrupt, and unworthy of the African tradition nourished by Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyconius and Augustine."²⁸

This principle of deriving doctrine from Luke-Acts has already been examined. It needs to be simply stated here that given direct Scriptural teaching on signs and wonders elsewhere (for example in I Corinthians), one can reasonably state that signs and wonders are valid for us today as God gives charismata within the Christian community.

C. The Imperative of Warfare Prayer

A close study of Luke - Acts makes it clear that prayer played a key role both in the ministry of Jesus and His early followers (both the Apostles and the other disciples). We see for example how the revelation of the Messiah was preceded by the fasting prayers of Saintly Simeon and Anna (Luke 2). Before the master Himself started His public ministry, He was baptized in water by John the Baptist "and the Holy Spirit descended ... like a dove upon him" (Luke 3:22). Luke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit carefully records for us that this took place "while He prayed (Luke 3:21).

Then Jesus was to spend a 40 day, Holy Spirit initiated fast (with temptation) in the wilderness (Luke 4:1,2). It is no wonder that He came out to minister not just "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 4:1), but "in the power (*δυναμις*) of the Spirit" (Lk. 4:14). This "power (*δυναμις*) of the Lord was present to heal them [the sick people]" (Lk. 5:17). See also Lk.5:18-21. And as we saw earlier, Luke's purpose was to show how this anointed ministry of teaching, healing and exorcism was programmatic for both Luke and Acts. So in the Life and Ministry of Jesus, the basic principle of tapping Holy Spirit power for ministry through prayer was at work. He could even spend nights in prayer (Lk. 6:12).

It is as Jesus prayed that the supernatural transfiguration experience occurred (Lk. 9:27-36). And when the Master taught His disciples on prayer, it is clear that He practised what He taught. In fact, it was his prayerfulness that provoked a request from His disciples for Him to teach them to pray (Lk. 11:1). Not only did Jesus give a model prayer to His disciples (Lk. 11:1-4), He emphasized the need of perseverance in prayer for the Holy Spirit empowering (Lk. 11:5-13, 18:1-8). A humble, trusting attitude to God, the Master taught, was to characterize His disciples' prayer (Lk. 18:9-14).

In that teaching about the casting out of demons and the binding of (a Satanic spiritual being called) a strong man,

(See also Acts 6:4). Just as the Master was prepared for ministry through prayer, the disciples were prepared in the same way.

The disciples prayed not only for boldness in witness but for a supernatural signs and wonders dimension to be added to their witness (Acts 4:23-31). It is no wonder that that combination of prayer and expectancy was effective, for, as this study has found, early Christian communities were decidedly charismatic. It seems that the early Christian leaders did not just depend on their special callings over the church, but realized their constant dependency on prayer. It is not surprising that the believers under their charge followed closely at their footsteps (Acts 12:5,12).

Through prayer and fasting the first major Gentile mission was supernaturally launched (Acts 13:1-3). That the result of this first Gentile mission led by Paul and Barnabas was clearly a teaching and signs and wonders ministry is clear in Acts 15:12. So one can see that the early followers of Jesus knew that it was through prayer that the Word of God would sound forth through them - attended with signs and wonders.

Perhaps it can be stated as an axiom that "the most powerful influence the church can have on society is through prayer."²⁰ This is because power for Christian ministry comes

through prayer;²¹ and this power can avail so much as to influence the religious - social - political milieu of a people for God (Jas 5:16b). When the Church of Christ counts and pays the dear cost of prayer, the result is that the spiritual powers of darkness that restlessly oppose the advancement of God's Kingdom are bound and there is power in preaching regularly attended with signs and wonders.²² But, says Yongi Cho, "it will take violent dedication to prayer to bring [this] power of God into our lives; [for] this violent earnestness will be the most evident in discipline [since] power in prayer takes much time" [emphasis mine].²³ Such powerful prayer has been proved "to develop spiritual gifts and manifestations."²⁴

Peter Wagner, also, who has researched much into prayer and supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit sees a clear connection between the two phenomena. He believes that "Spirit-directed [warfare] prayer opens the way [in the heavenlies] for the blessings of the Kingdom of God to come upon earth with healings, deliverances, salvation, holiness, compassion for the poor and oppressed, and the fruit of the Spirit; [and] above all, God is glorified, worshipped and praised" [emphasis mine].²⁵ Wagner's significant research in church growth has led him to a clear observation that "the most amazing church growth world wide has been seen among the churches that most explicitly depend on Spiritual power which comes through prayers namely the Pentecostal and charismatic

churches." [emphasis mine].²⁶ Wagner concludes in the following way:

In all of human history not another non-militaristic non-political voluntary human movement has grown as dramatically as the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has grown over the past 25 years... [And] the most fundamental lesson, as I see it, is that they have a more advanced understanding that the real battle for evangelization is spiritual Signs and wonders, deliverance from demonic powers, miraculous healings, sustained and enthusiastic worship, prophecies and warfare prayer are seen by many of them as the normal outworking of Christianity.²⁷

Wagner does not see reasons for genuine excuses for a poor prayer output in ministry; for even if we are not gifted enough to pray as long and as powerfully as others, it is still our responsibility to solicit the prayers of others (especially those among whom we serve) for us.²⁸

Since the fear for the reality of the power of satanic powers is prevalent upon this continent of Africa, one would do well to heed an advice that Paul, the Apostle gave to a people that had the same fear. Paul in Ephesians, as Clinton E. Arnold has carefully pointed out, "affirms that believers have access to this vast Divine power which has already proved itself sufficient to overcome powerful diabolic opposition" (Eph. 1:19-20).²⁹ "Prayer [then becomes] the prerequisite and means of acquiring divine enablement"; for not only is prayer "an essential spiritual weapon," it is also "foundational for the deployment of all the other weapons" for Spiritual warfare that God has given to us. (Eph. 6:18-20) [emphasis mine].³⁰

D. Conclusion

In any attempt to evangelize this continent of Africa, there are certain imperatives that we have to borne in mind. The first imperative is that one should do an adequate exegesis of any given African context. It is clearly a context prepared by God with a possibility of salvation. The African milieu - in its supernaturalist and human emphases, uniquely resembles the New Testament one. It is therefore not difficult to see that a New Testament signs and wonders ministry applied to Africa with wisdom, would be quite conducive and pertinent to its milieu; for the African Christian needs the Holy Spirit's power to secure himself or herself against Satanic power.

The second imperative is for anyone to do a responsible exegesis of the Biblical text, before he or she zealously applies it to his or her respective African contexts. One must first of all understand the meaning that the biblical authors had in mind, before he or she applies or get the significance of that teaching to any given contexts today. Only this will save our African Christian theology from sinking into the quicksands of sterility, bankruptcy, and unworthiness. So when one applies this biblical exegesis to signs and wonders in Luke -Acts, one finds that not only is there a precedent of, but a direct teaching on supernatural charismata within the Christian community (I Cor. 12-14).

This at once makes a charismatic signs and wonders ministry today valid, not only in Africa, but universally also.

The third imperative is prayer - warfare prayer. Both Christ and His early followers knew the combination of prayer and power. They were prepared through prayer for a Holy Spirit anointed ministry of teaching, healing, and exorcism. Even today, the combination of prayer and power have been seen to bring forth great results in terms of salvations, deliverances, gifts and fruits of the Spirit, and the glory of God.

This is all very relevant for Christians in Africa as they seek to meaningfully bring the Gospel to bear upon their people who know what it means to be oppressed by the devil. They had better come to minister to these people with a Gospel that is not just in word but in power.

III. Ministerial Training in Africa and Signs and Wonders

A. Introduction: The Fuller Theological Seminary Case - Study

All the above points of discussion so far become seriously relevant when one considers training for Christian Ministry in and for Africa today. As one Theological Seminary (Fuller) has put it: "We who are called to educate men and women for ministry cannot ... allow ourselves the luxury of uncritical appreciation" in the midst of supernatural awakenings in our midst.¹¹ Fuller Theological Seminary

continues to articulate this challenge in this way:

We owe it to the various churches and professional communities in which our graduates serve, as we owe it to our students and to Christ in whose service we are all engaged, to determine how we can and whether we ought to train men and women for ministry in the practice of healing. We must consider seriously what our specific academic role should be with respect to the ministry of miraculous healings.¹²

When Fuller faculty re-evaluated a Signs and Wonders course which had earlier on been introduced into the curriculum and was taught by Peter Wagner and John Wimber,¹³ they wondered how appropriate it was to allow practical demonstrations of the teachings in a classroom setting.¹⁴ The basic conclusion which came out of that re-evaluation was that "any course in which miraculous healing sessions are a scheduled and prominent feature should be monitored carefully"¹⁵ As a result of this re-evaluation, Fuller cancelled the course for sometime,¹⁶ and revised it in such a way that today demonstrations can be carried out in the local churches outside the classroom or campus; and as such questions on "legal implications and academic strength" of the curriculum are avoided.¹⁷

B. Other Theological Institutions follow Fuller's Example

Fuller's experiment of introducing a Signs and Wonders course into the school curriculum was picked up by other Theological Institutions all over the U.S.A.; so that now "all over the country" power evangelism topics are being taught.¹⁸ This is one of the trends that Pennoyer has observed in teaching power evangelism. Other trends are

recorded as follows: Secondly, the schools that teach power evangelism "represent a broad spectrum of denominational and non-denominational schools, and come from both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal traditions." Thirdly, "an increasing number of academicians are moving into researching and teaching power evangelism topics." Fourthly, "most courses on the subject concentrate on power encounters between the divine and the demonic." Fifthly, "various methodological approaches to deliverance are being taught, including a 'truth encounter' model."¹⁹ These trends are generally less contentious than others.

And moving to the more contentious trends; the Sixth one is that, "Teaching on power evangelism has produced a whole range of on-campus reactions, from revival to resistance." The Seventh trend is that, "institutions have a tendency to put restrictions on in-class, or in-office 'hands - on' healing or deliverance practices." The eighth trend is that, "the terminology of power evangelism is the topic of considerable discussion, with several underlying theological suppositions about believers and demons in debate."²⁰

Pennoyer then goes to give a few details of topics or courses that ten different theological & missionary institutions have developed for a classroom setting.²¹ The important thing to note is that power evangelism can be and has been taught in a classroom setting. And if this can be

and has been done in Western Christian theological institutions, why can it not be done in all African Christian Theological Institutions? Is it not even more natural to expect such courses in Africa where the religio-social milieu has long presented a more conducive and pertinent opportunity for Christian ministry? Is it not an embarrassment that this is not seriously happening in African Christian Leadership training institutions, and it is happening in the Western ones?

C. A Critique of African Christian Theological Training Curriculums.

Few people would disagree with Omar Djoeandy when he says that, "most theological education in Africa today has been heavily influenced by Western theology and Philosophy, along with their inherent weakness and lack of balance."⁵² He goes on to say that, "our theological institutions need to teach a balanced and holistic view of health and have a relevant curriculum."⁵³ Djoeandy has this more to say in his quest for a relevant curriculum:

This curriculum of many theological schools tends to be fairly Western and gives too much attention to Western questions, such as proving the existence of God and the doctrine of inerrancy. Without neglecting these issues, the local questions need to be discovered and addressed to make the curriculum relevant. Courses such as anthropology, exorcism, pastoral counselling, urbanization and modernization would be helpful. With regards to health, demons, sin, guilt must not be overlooked or separated from the physical [emphasis mine].⁵⁴

Djoeandy quotes Igenzoza as suggesting that, "the ministry of exorcism is much needed to contextualize

Christianity in Africa."⁵⁵ Omar Djoeandy is right and bold enough to bring out the bitter truth that "this ministry [of exorcism] is neglected by most mainline churches and few theological schools include it in their curriculum."⁵⁶ Djoeandy is right on target as pertaining to the issues central to this study:

In Africa, especially in rural areas, many pastors might be perceived as the equivalent of the traditional diviner. Without neglecting the intellect and the academic, pastors could also be trained in other gifts, such as discernment of spirits, wisdom, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy (1 Cor 12:1-12); and courses such as primary health care, first aid and community development would enable them to provide a more holistic ministry than just preaching and teaching.⁵⁷

This searching critique puts a finger on a painful spot in Christian theological schools curriculums in Africa. Africans theological students have for long sat at the table of a cognitive approach to ministry. Their theological diet has not been rich enough to include signs and wonders as part of the menu.

If the African Church is not careful, she may be producing theologically malnourished ministers (at least in signs and wonders ministries) and dishing them out to a socio-religious milieu that is not simply happy with a cognitive approach to ministry, but is hungry for a demonstrative approach to it. A half-baked Christian ministry might not be palatable to the taste of a needy African church and world.

This is a painful critique to make, but like bitter medicine, "it hurts good". It is said with a prayer that changes might take place in Africa's Christian schools' curriculums to embrace the concept of ministry training in signs and wonders.

Omar Djoeandy has also pointed out something that agrees with what was said earlier in this study. On considering the place of signs and wonders in the Kingdom of God, it was suggested that an integrated, holistic approach is necessary. We have also seen, and need to emphasize here that both truth and power should to undergird our ministerial approach. But this approach cannot just happen. We need to make it happen by directly adopting it in our Christian ministerial training.

And if Africa's ministerial training schools are to integrate a Signs and Wonders or power evangelism type of course into their curriculums, there is a need to go beyond just lecturing on these issues, but to demonstrating them, so that they will not just have been taught but caught by the students. Whether in the classroom setting or outside, such a course devoid of a demonstrative element proves to be ineffective. Spiritual power clinics, or practical power workshops need to be set in place so that the learning is not just in word but in deed.⁵⁰

Many a theological professor and a student if they were to be frank enough, will agree with professor, theologian and

Pastor Don Williams in the following self-criticism that he underwent:

My arena was the life of the mind. Here reason was king and I could control people and situations through my intellect.... In my theological education I was trained to control everything ... I was given exegetical tools with which to manage the faith, homiletical tools with which to manage people, and business tools with which to manage the church. Today's seminary curriculum is far advanced in this application of the scientific method to the professional clergy.⁵¹

William J. Abraham, bemoaning the absence of signs and wonders in the agenda of most Christian academic institutions, challenges them all to steer - clear of embarrassment and scepticism in their consideration of these matters.⁵² Admittedly, says Abraham, the church schoolmen, generally speaking, "no longer have even the words to shape such a story."⁵³ Abraham then goes on to criticize the generally negative scholarly stance on this subject:

The appropriate intellectual response is not to look for some excuse for discussing such phenomena, such as appealing to the various horror stories, some true and some false, that make the rounds, or pouncing on the abuses of this or that evangelist, or wheeling out the general concerns that every mature theist has about the mystery of God's action in the fashion that phenomena tell us about the total activity of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴

The questions that evangelical schoolmen in Africa perhaps need to ask themselves are these: Why do we not teach our student ministers about the Christian healing ministry, the use of spiritual gifts, prayer counselling, and such power evangelism matters? Why have we failed to give practical experiences to these Christian ministers in training? Why do we instead tend to take a lop-sided approach

that majors on warnings against triumphalism, wrong seekings of signs, dependence on special revelations, rice - Christians, over emphasis on Holy Spirit power, prosperity theology, and the like?™

The truth of the matter is that such a negative approach will never produce a positive Christian ministry of signs and wonders. With all due respect to the risks inherent in a signs and wonders ministry (but who said that the Christian faith in its totality is without risks?), there is still a need to follow the example of the Master, who not only practised such a ministry, but also sent his disciples out to do it.

The challenge then rests upon the shoulders of trainers of Gospel ministers for Africa: Are they going to integrate a power evangelism - signs and wonders course in their academic programmes or not? There is a need to rid ourselves permanently of the mentality that dismisses signs and wonders as mere poppycock by starry-eyed charismatic nincompoops dancing on the lunatic fringe of Christianity. What is needed is the knowledge that a sane and sober biblical scholarship can properly learn, do and teach signs and wonders. It has happened in other Christian ministerial trainings schools. It can and should happen in Christian ministerial institutions in Africa!

IV. Case Studies of Signs and Wonders in Africa

The intention in this section is not to give a detailed historical account of signs and wonders in Africa, but just to get enough case studies to show that signs and wonders have been and are actually taking place in Christian ministry. Samplings are got from various parts of Africa. However, it is good for one to know that through Christian signs and wonders ministries, audio-visual cassettes, direct supernatural interventions, personal ministries and Gospel crusades, signs and wonders are being experienced on an ongoing basis on this continent. Another factor one has to bear in mind is that although much takes place in the signs and wonders ministries, little is documented. The idea of documenting and cataloguing miracles is not a serious concern of most Signs and Wonders ministries in Africa - at least not as serious as in the Western world.

Perhaps the most notable among the Christian signs and wonders Ministries in Africa is that of German Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke. Having started as a missionary in Maseru, Lesotho, Bonnke's ministry was not seriously known. A time came when he underwent a period of self-searching, and he felt the Lord rebuking him for not "doing well" in terms of demonstrating the Gospel, besides proclaiming it. Earlier on in his ministry, Bonnke had experienced a miraculous healing when he had been sick unto death. In that serious condition he received a vision in which he saw his sister away in

Germany agonizing in prayer for his healing. The result of that prayer was the miraculous healing of Bonnke from the sickness that almost took his life.

In the course of time, Bonnke got a "revelation" from God in which God told him that "My Word in your mouth is just as powerful as My Word in my mouth." God was encouraging him to speak that Word of power so that great things would happen to the glory of God. Then came a time when circumstances plunged him into a signs and wonders ministry. They had organized a big Gospel crusade meeting in Maseru, Lesotho and invited a well-known signs and wonders gospel minister. Before he could begin ministry, however, the man of God declared that God was urging him to leave and go to another place and ministry.

In that moment of desperation, Bonnke availed himself to preach in place of the departed man of God, and the results were dramatic. The anointing of God fell on him and on his interpreter - who "fell down crying hot tears." Then God told Bonnke to call the blind people to respond to a call for healing. He spoke in faith saying "Blind eyes open!" Then there was a move, a cry in the congregation, 'I can see, I can see!' and one woman came to the front ... grabbed the microphone read one of our tracts and said, 'I could not see a ray of light but now I can see!' God marvelously moved in that meeting as many more people were healed and delivered

from demons.

It was that meeting that proved to be a turning point in Bonnke's life and ministry. He purposed there and then to speak this word of power and authority in future ministry. The result is that this ministry has taken him into many countries of Africa and the world. He believes that "from Cape Town to Cairo he will go forth preaching this gospel of power. He is convinced that God is moving now by the power of His Spirit, and "Africa will be saved," in fulfillment of a vision he saw of a blood-washed continent.

Besides his regular Gospel crusade ministry, Bonnke also writes books and booklets, and organizes international "Fire" Conferences in which signs and wonders are experienced. This ministry alone could account for untold numbers of African Christian believers joining the signs and wonders movement (in experience). The researcher has attended a number of Bonnke's crusades, and can say that it is true that signs and wonders happen in this man's ministry. Millions today all over the world could say the same.⁶⁴

Another notable ministry that has had a far-reaching impact in Africa in the area of signs and wonders is that of the World famous American Evangelist T. L. Osborn. Having started his ministry as a missionary to India in frustration since no Muslims and Hindus were willing to turn to Christ -

Osborn and his wife returned home to the U.S.A. After an intense period of seeking God through prayer and fasting, Osborn and wife received a supernatural Holy Spirit visitation that propelled them to minister the Gospel with signs and wonders in many nations of the world, notably in Africa. Multiplied thousands attend his crusades, and the preaching done by both him and his wife led to conversions, healings and deliverances from demons.⁶⁵

When T. L. Osborn conducted an evangelistic campaign in Mombasa in 1957, one of his converts was a young man by the name of Joe Kayo. This young man experienced a powerful conversion and physical healing and a fire-baptism that propelled him into an evangelistic ministry attended with signs and wonders. Joe Kayo ministered in Uganda from 1963 to 1969; and from 1969 to 1977 in Kenya - in the wake of a charismatic movement that greatly touched many young people.

Many of these young people who were won to Christ in this movement of the Spirit formed an Ambassadors' Fellowship which eventually came to be called the Deliverance Church in both Uganda and Kenya. Either because their new-found charismatic experience could not be accommodated within the mainline churches where they belonged, or because of a lack of toleration of them by the mainline churches, the Young Ambassadors started nation-wide ministries in the Universities, schools and colleges throughout Kenya and Uganda.

Dynamic preaching, healing and exorcism has been the common practice in the Deliverance Churches throughout the years, up to now. The churches now number over 600 in both Kenya and Uganda. The movement is going strong, especially in urban centres, although its early leaders like Joe Kayo and Stephen Mungoma left it in the late 70s for other separate ministries.⁶⁶

Since those early days of the Charismatic movement in East Africa, many other signs and wonders churches have mushroomed all over these countries. They are an addition to the already existing old-time Pentecostal Churches like the Assemblies of God and Elim. It is clear that the waves of the charismatic movement have affected all parts of Africa including the mainline churches like The Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church. It is common knowledge that there are many churches in Africa which do not bear the name Charismatic or Pentecostal, but house many Christians with Charismatic experiences.

Anglican church Charismatic leader, the Rev. Michael Harper, has confirmed the widespread nature of the Charismatic movement. He has this to say particularly about his own church (Anglican):

The Charismatic renewal ... is now the largest spiritual

movement in the Anglican Church.... The renewal has grown rapidly since 1980, particularly in the Church of England; that, however, is nothing compared to its growth in the Churches of Latin America, Africa and some parts of Asia.⁶⁷

Michael Harper's own Anglican Charismatic Organization called SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad) founded in the late 70s operates as "one of many new-style apostolic" parachurch organizations. SOMA's "apostolic teams travel at their own expense all over the world to share the spiritual gifts of God wherever they are invited."⁶⁸ Harper concludes his account as follows:

Major Leadership conferences have been held in Singapore, Kenya, Tanzania and Fiji. Dr. David Barrett, editor of The World Christian Encyclopedia, called the conference in Kenya "one of the most significant held on African soil." The Charismatic renewal does not need to be Africanized; it is African in its very essence. In fact, in another sense it is "all things to all men." It fits all kinds of spiritualities and culture patterns (emphasis mine).⁶⁹

Those who have studied the East African Revival (which generally affected the Anglican and Presbyterian churches) have frequently heard that signs and wonders were clearly in operation in the early part of the movement. Since there was no clear understanding on these miraculous phenomena, they were generally neglected, with the poor excuse that even Satanic agents were involved in them.⁷⁰ The general attitude among the early revivalists was passive, namely that we should "seek cleansing from sin and the spiritual gifts will be released."⁷¹ It is probable that such negative and passive attitudes towards signs and miracles led to an eclipse of their operation in the East African Revival.

It is interesting to note that in the early days of Christianity in Uganda, signs and wonders were seen in operation, notably in the ministry of the now famous Anglican Canon Apolo Kivebulaya (from mid 19th Century to early 20th Century). This African saint is well-known for pioneering the evangelization of the pygmy Forest People in the Congo (Now Zaire).⁷² Canon Apolo was "a man of prayer" who had "healing power" in his ministry; and "he had faith to trust God and act as God directed him."⁷³ Apolo Kivebulaya was at home with supernatural revelations through visions and dreams; and in those experiences, he records Jesus appearing to him to bring comfort in persecution and specific directions in ministry.⁷⁴

Kivebulaya ministered both in word and deed. It is said of him that people "hung on his words" and stood "in awe of him."⁷⁵ There were strange examples of his power including the following: while wild pigs devoured the crops in other people's gardens, his own were miraculously preserved. He restored a two-year old child who was sick to death into life, he healed a woman with a haemorrhage, and another woman of acute abdominal pains. Such miracles helped people to get converted.⁷⁶

There is another ministry that is making one of the greatest impacts in the world in the area of signs and

wonders. This is the Morris Cerullo World Evangelism. It is led by an American Evangelist of Jewish ancestry called Morris Cerullo. One does not have to search for long before realizing that Morris Cerullo is a living legend "a household name" in charismatic in Africa circles and outside.⁷⁷

Morris Cerullo received a remarkable conversion in an orphanage in North America when he was fourteen and a half years of age. "A unique witness and a tremendous spiritual visitation from God, the Messiah, in all His fullness was supernaturally revealed to him."⁷⁸

At fifteen [year of age] he was brought into the heavenlies and given a clear and unmistakable vision for his life. Morris accepted this vision as God's personal call to him for a worldwide ministry. This call of God has taken Morris Cerullo into nearly every country of the world to minister God's salvation and healing power. Some of the largest audiences in the world to ever attend a religious meeting have been recorded in these special evangelistic efforts (over 100,000 in a single service). These meetings have been attended with an unusual manifestation of God's love and presence to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases. The [Morris Cerullo organization] is now working in over forty countries in the world.⁷⁹

Morris Cerullo's "greatest strength" has been described as "his extraordinary ability to cross some cultural boundaries - for example, with black people, especially from the Third World."⁸⁰ Says Tim Pain, "He's easily the best white evangelist for black people whom I've ever seen."⁸¹ Morris Cerullo "spends nine or ten months of each year in the Third World⁸² Pain concludes his assessment of Morris Cerullo thus:

In America, he would be regarded as one of the top 100

evangelists, but he wouldn't be in the top fifty. In the Third World - South or Central America, say Asia or Africa - he would be in the top three.⁸³

The clear impact of the signs and wonders ministry of Morris Cerullo can be seen in the huge crowds that are drawn by his gospel crusades and ministers' seminars. The researcher has attended one such a ministers' school where, because the crowds were expected to overflow any existing building here in Nairobi, Kenya, a large Papyrus Cathedral seating over 10,000 people was built. Morris Cerullo's monthly video ministry operates in many cities and towns in Africa today. Besides, his prolific publications spread-out not only across this continent, but all over the world. It is not easy to assess the full impact of such a ministry as this for generating expectations and realizations for signs and wonders ministries in Africa. What is clear is that hundreds of thousands of Gospel ministries have been influenced by this ministry.

Morris Cerullo essentially teaches in every ministerial conference he conducts that, "You can do what Jesus and his disciples did - accompany the proclamation of the Gospel with demonstrations of Holy Spirit power. The early disciples 'sat where you sit.' They were normal humans endued with a supernatural ability. We need to tarry as they did for a baptism of POWER that will propel us to achieve world evangelization before it is too late."⁸⁴

Speaking about Spiritual Power and Church Growth, Peter Wagner says that "there are places in the world where the most rapidly growing churches would not be listed as Pentecostal, but which exhibit many Pentecostal characteristics such as healing the sick, casting out demons, miracles and signs."⁹⁵ Wagner cites the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia as an example:

In recent years they have been among the fastest growing churches in the world. When a Norwegian Lutheran research team studied the reasons for such phenomenal growth they discovered that, depending on the location, from 60 to 80 percent of the new believers had been drawn to the Gospel through firsthand contact with supernatural signs and wonders.⁹⁶

If such is true in a mainline church in Ethiopia, one needs to bear in mind that this has generally been true in the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches there.

When one considers the region of Southern Africa, we can see that apart from the ministry of Evangelist Bonnke, there are other signs and wonders ministries. We shall now consider two such ministries. Kurt E. Koch gives an account of one of these movements in his book entitled, God Among The Zulus.

When Erlo Stegen, a South African evangelist of German Lutheran background started working among the Zulus of South Africa in the late 1950s, he experienced a deep dissatisfaction in his ministry; for he realized that his type of ministry was far removed from the New Testament one.⁹⁷ Erlo's heart searching was coupled with the searching

of Scripture and the searching for the secret of a powerful Christian life in the lives of God's great servants; and "he pledged himself to intensive prayer and ... the proclamation of the gospel."⁹⁸

Erlo eventually organized a Bible study among the Christians, and they embarked on the study of the book of Acts. These meetings were characterized by deep heart searchings, Bible Study and fasting prayer. Then came a Holy Spirit outpouring, reminiscent of that at Pentecost in Acts 2, and which ushered Erlo's team into a Preaching, Healing, and Deliverance ministry. This was 1967. Soon afterwards, "the wonder-working power of the Gospel became so widely known that people from near and far streamed in to hear the Word."⁹⁹ Salvation, healing, and deliverance is the threefold message of this ministry as it was of the disciples in Acts; and this Erlo team ministry is continuing up to today.¹⁰⁰

The other ministry of signs and wonders that sprung from South Africa is called the New Universal Church. In this ministry's testimonies newspaper entitled Stop Suffering!! multiplied testimonies are regularly recorded of people who have experienced miracles of salvation, healing, financial provisions, and deliverance from demonization. The ministry which is led by bishops, is rapidly spreading throughout many African countries, including Kenya, Lesotho and Malawi.¹⁰¹

Many Christian Ministries operating in Signs and Wonders exist in West Africa. In Nigeria, the ministries of people like Benson Idahosa and Ayo Ontsejafor not only operate in Nigeria but in most African countries and overseas.²²

A remarkable testimony of a converted sorcerer from Nigeria has been published by Scripture Union. Emmanuel Eni tells of how his father's family was beset by a series of tragedies that claimed the lives of both parents and his sister. Their deaths were alleged to have been induced through witchcraft. He suffered severe hardships as he grew up, and when he was 13 years of age he was on his own.²³ Failing to find love and care from the church,²⁴ Eni was lured into Witchcraft and initiated as a sorcerer. He was involved in the deep things of Satan including signs and wonders.²⁵

By a gracious move of God, Eni was converted through a supernatural revelation of Jesus.²⁶ Emmanuel Eni is now involved in Christian ministry: warning people about the dangers of occult practices and ministering deliverance to those so trapped. This ministry has taken him to different countries of Africa.

Mahesh Chavda is another American evangelist whom God has used mightily in Africa with healings and miracles. Here is an account of one ministry experience he had in Kinshasa,

Zaire on one Monday, 10 June, 1985:

At the close of the [Christian leaders] meeting, an elderly woman whose body was covered with cancerous tumors was instantly healed in front of everyone. The tumors had completely disappeared. The news of this miraculous healing spread like a forest fire in an August drought. That evening 100,000 people came to the meeting! They came with every disease imaginable; some were even brought in wheelbarrows. That night so many people were healed that even witches and sorcerers who had come to disrupt the meeting were converted, publicly repenting and declaring their faith in Jesus.²⁷

Other miracles in Chavda's ministry include the healing of his own son, four months prematurely born. The doctors has declared that even if he were to survive his brain was not going to develop properly so that he would simply be a "vegetable." In answer to prayer, however, God miraculously preserved the baby who has now grown up to be a normal ten year old boy.²⁸

Chavda's ministry also has recorded a clear resurrection from the dead of a six year old boy. He was certified dead by the hospital authorities having suffered cerebral malaria. While pondering on this declaration, the boy's father prayed that if God willed, that He should raise up his son, and he clearly heard God speaking to him that he should go to the man of God - Chavda, and that God would raise the boy from the dead in answer to this evangelist's prayer. This word was also communicated in the Spirit to the evangelist himself who called the father out of the crowd of 30,000 people. Chavda heard the Spirit saying: "There is a man here whose son died this morning. Invite him to come forward. I want to do

something wonderful for him."??

The evangelist spoke these words to the crowd exactly as he had heard from the Spirit. The boy's father ran forward shouting 'It is I, It is I!' "Immediately Mahesh [the evangelist] placed his hands on [the boy's father's] head and prayed, 'Lord Jesus, in your name I bind the powers of darkness and death that are at work in this man's son, and I ask you to send your Spirit of resurrection to bring him back to life.'" Upon arriving back into the hospital, he found that the boy had stirred, sneezed and risen to life asking for some food to eat! The news of this resurrection miracle sent the hospital in uproar, drew a capacity crowd of over 200,000 people to hear the Gospel and led to the salvation and healing of many people.¹⁰⁰

Another ministry whose impact is beginning to be felt in Africa and abroad is that of Zacharias Tane Fomum from Cameroon. He was converted while doing his undergraduate studies in the University in Cameroon, then later, he received Spirit baptism that ushered him into a more intense prayer life and Gospel ministry.¹⁰¹ After his doctoral studies, in Physical Sciences, he taught at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda; and then went back to teach in Cameroon his home country.¹⁰²

While involved in his university work, Fomum makes great

use of his free time to minister the Gospel through preaching and writing. His ministry is attended with signs and wonders. He records a few of these which include a man healed from sterility, a man healed from hypertension, a woman healed of piles, and a woman delivered from bitterness and healed.¹⁰³

John Wimber records a healing miracle which drew a whole village in Kenya to a conversion experience with Christ. A recently born baby was dying of malaria, and its parents and relatives were crying. As people kept gathering, one Gospel minister was there witnessing the desperate situation. The minister gives the following account of what happened next:

No medicine was available at that time. Something had to be done. I thought it would be a good idea to pray and see what we would do next. I asked to be given the child.... put her in my arms[and] began to pray ... I simply asked the Lord to heal the child in the Name of Jesus. Then I gave the child back to the mother. The moment I gave her back, she ... began to cry... was nursed and she was well.... Everybody present [wondered] to see how the Lord worked so quickly.¹⁰⁴

This seriously fatal illness and miracle has opened the door for a whole village to respond to the call of Christ.¹⁰⁵

Another story from Zaire not only shows us the reality of Satanic supernatural power, but of the superior power of Jesus to deliver those so oppressed:

Mukendi, was groomed by Satan with the help of his father to perform Satanic acts. When Satan invited him to train in his Bible School with 140 others from all over the world, the former said he had known Mukendi from birth. Satan drank his blood and gave him eight more years to live, but not before forcing him to sign

the register with his own blood. He was then sent back to earth to destabilize the church of Jesus Christ, with special assignment to church number 34 in Zaire. But there were some people whom Mukendi had realized as having special protection: those who were the sanctified, born again Christians, covered by the blood of Jesus and having the testimony of the Word of God.¹⁰⁶

When by God's grace Mukendi was led to Christ sometime in the late 80s through a signs and wonders deliverance ministry, many demons were cast out of him during this encounter with Christ. Mukendi now ministers in many cities and towns in Africa, and his ministry is associated with the Chrisco Fellowship of Churches founded by Apostle Harry Das.¹⁰⁷

The above case studies are just a little sampling, a tip of the iceberg, of what is constantly taking place in this continent. Many Christian signs and wonders ministries abound in Africa, and each of them could document multiplied hundreds or thousands of testimonies of miraculous healings, deliverances, or other types of miracles. Time would fail one to speak of the early Kimbangu ministry during the colonial days in Zaire, of Catholic archbishop Mlingo's ministry in Zambia, of Nicholas Benghu's ministry in South Africa, of the Redeemed Gospel Church ministry in East Africa, and countless other ministries. These have been included simply to show that signs and wonders are actually taking place today in Africa.

V. Conclusion

The evangelization of Africa should clearly be the burden of every Christian institution on this continent. It may be stated that, an overly cognitive approach to Christian ministerial training devoid of a Holy Spirit demonstrative element, does not prepare Gospel ministers well enough for Christian ministry in Africa particularly, and the world at large. Unless this truth is received and applied by curriculum designers in African Christian ministerial training institutions, The African Church may not easily produce Christian ministers who will not only teach the truth of the Word, but also demonstrate the power of it -through signs and wonders.

That signs and wonders courses are lacking or neglected in our African Christian institutions' curriculums is perhaps not only inexcusable, but may also be positively embarrassing. For why should such courses begin to operate in Western Christian Institutions and not in the ones in Africa, where it is even more conducive and pertinent to actualize them. Whereas one should welcome the cognitive approach in the curriculums, a criticism should be made of its overemphasis -to the neglect of the demonstrative approach that a power evangelism, signs and wonders course would provide. The call is for us to be both cognitive and charismatic in our curriculums.

END NOTES

As Christian believers seek to effectively evangelize their continent, the imperative of a biblical exegesis seems to be needed to be combined with the imperatives of "a people exegesis" and warfare prayer. Only such a combination may guarantee a viable paradigm in Christian ministry in Africa. This does not mean that the Church should lean on the side of signs and wonders to the neglect of teaching and social work. It means rather, that we are to pursue an integrated approach of signs and wonders, teaching and social work. Africa desperately needs such an integrated approach to Christian ministry.

It is abundantly clear that the ministry of signs and wonders is prevalent in the evangelization of Africa. These miraculous phenomena can be shown to be taking place not only in the usually recognized Charismatic or Pentecostal ministries, but also in the mainline denominations. The question really is not "Are signs and wonders operating in the Christian Church of Africa", but rather, "Is the Church properly developing this type of ministry so as to facilitate her evangelization endeavours?"

1. These are comments made by the Messenger, on the book jacket of the book Christianity Rediscovered.

2. Vincent J. Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered (MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978), vi.

3. Ibid., 56.

4. Ibid., vii.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. John S. Mbiti, "Christianity and African Religion," 12. This is a paper Mbiti wrote and which Tite Tienou quotes in "Issues in the Theological Task in Africa Today," East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology 1 (Double Issue, 1982) 7.

10. Tite Tienou, "Issues," E.A.J.E.T., 7.

11. Charles H. Kraft, Christianity With Power, 57.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. That the reality of the Satanic supernatural was unquestionable in NT times, and that Christian leaders (notably Paul) were at pains to secure the saints against such powers, is evident; for example in the searching study by Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians: Power and Magic (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 122. The whole book seeks to establish this background, with Ephesus as the primary focus. It doesn't demand special enlightenment for an average African Christian to identify himself or herself with those early Christian saints at Ephesus. The reality of this fear of the demonic, in Africa, is brought out for example in John V. Taylor, The Primal Vision: Christian Presence Amid African Religion (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1963), 185; and in C. Peter Wagner, Spiritual Power and Church Growth, 37.

16. Vincent J. Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 33.

17. Ibid.

18. Samuel Ngewa, "Communication and World view," in Perspectives On Leadership Training: Issues In Christian Service eds. V. B. Cole, R.F. Gaskin, R.J. Sim (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Press, 1993), 68.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 70

22. P. D. Juhl, Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 197, cited in Samuel Ngewa, "Communication," Perspectives, 68.

23. Ibid., 70, 71.

24. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. Validity in Interpretation. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 8; also, The Aims of Interpretation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 1-13; cited in Samuel Ngewa, "Communication and World view," Perspectives, 71.

25. Samuel Ngewa, "Communication," Perspectives, 71.

26. Ibid., A distinction is therefore here given by implication, that a Biblical scholar basically seeks for meaning, while a theologian is basically after significance or application.

27. Ibid., 72.

28. Ibid.

29. Edward W. Fashole - Luke, "The Quest for African Christian Theologies," In Journal of Religious Thought 32.2 (1975): 8; also in the Ecumenical Review 27 (1975): 259-269; and in SJT 29 (1976): 159-75; quoted in Samuel Ngewa, "Communication and World view," Perspectives, 74.

30. Floyd McClung, How Christians can rise to the Urban Challenge: Seeing the City With the Eyes of God. (Tarrytown, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1991), 16.

31. Paul Y. Cho, Prayer: Key to Revival (Waco, Texas: Word, 1984), 20; see also E. M. Bounds, Power Through Prayer.

32. Paul Y. Cho, Prayer, 22.

33. Ibid., 23.

34. Ibid., 43.

35. C. Peter Wagner, Warfare Prayer: Strategies for Combating the rulers of darkness (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), 28.

36. Ibid., 47.

37. Ibid., 47, 48.

38. C. Peter Wagner, Prayer Shield: How to Intercede for Pastors, Christian Leaders and Others on the Spiritual Frontlines. (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), 83. Wagner's main point is that "the most underutilized source of spiritual power in our churches today is intercession for Christian leaders; [and] He argues carefully and biblically that prayer for Christian leaders is essential for the effectiveness of their ministry," (Book jacket comments).

39. Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians: Power and Magic, 108.

40. Ibid., 112.

41. Lewis B. Smedes, ed. Miracles and the Miraculous, 12.

42. Ibid.

43. C. Peter Wagner, Spiritual Power, 14.

44. Lewis B. Smedes, Miracles and the Ministry, 12

45. Robert P. Lightner, review of Ministry and the Miraculous, by Lewis B. Smedes, ed., Bibliotheca Sacra (April - June 1988): 221.

46. Majorie Lee Chandler, "Fuller Seminary Cancels Course on Signs and Wonders," Christianity Today (Feb. 1986): 48

47. F. Douglas Pennoyer, "Trends and Topics in Teaching Power Evangelism," in Wrestling With Dark Angels: Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare, eds. C. Peter Wagner and F. Douglas Pennoyer (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Monarch, 1990), 365.

48. Ibid., 357.

49. Ibid., The full information on trends is found in Pennoyers account on pp. 358-367.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 367-374.

52. Omar Djoeandy, "A Critique of Theological Education in Africa Today," in Perspectives: On Leadership Training, 238; See also Richmon Chiundiza, "High Level Powers in Zimbabwe," in C. Peter Wagner ed. Territorial Spirits: Insights on Strategic-level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991), 127.

53. Ibid

54. Ibid., 238, 239.

55. A. D. Igenzoza, "African Weltanschauung and Exorcism: The Quest for the Contextualization of the Kerygma", Africa Theological Journal 12:3 (1985), 179-193; cited in Omar Djoeandy, "A Critique," Perspectives, 239.

56. Omar Djoeandy, "A Critique," Perspectives, 239. See also Roger Cowley, "Expectancy," Signs and Wonders, 103.

57. Ibid. This training, especially in the charismata cannot probably be done only on a theoretical basis. A demonstrative element has to be added to the training in order to make it work.

58. F. Douglas Pennoyer has put it tersely thus: "Signs and Wonders cannot effectively be taught without confirmation, for the student who investigates the Biblical record will yearn for personal validation of Biblical truths. People don't want to just read about the miraculous; if it truly works, they want to experience it!" [emphasis mine]. F.D. Pennoyer, "Teaching Power Evangelism," Wrestling with Dark Angels, 364.

59. Charles H. Kraft, Christianity With Power, 40.

60. William J. Abraham, The Logic of Evangelism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1989), 154.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., 156.

63. Roger Cowley, "Response to Bill Lees," in Signs and Wonders, 131. Perhaps the real issue is our mind-set concerning the question of the charismata. It may be that when we change our mind-set, we might not need to change our curriculums, but rather revitalize them.

64. The above information is got from several audio-messages (one in the researcher's possession), several audio-visual messages, and from several messages given in person by Bonnke in Gospel crusades where the researcher was present.

To those who have followed this man's ministry, this information is common knowledge. However, it can be verified from any of Bonnke's ministry offices, notably, Christ For All Nations, P.O. Box 51121, Nairobi, Kenya.

65. This information is gathered from a number of messages on audio-cassettes, and in person - given by T. L. Osborn and his wife Daisy Washburn Osborn, where the researcher was present. To those who have followed their ministries this information is common knowledge.

66. The researcher had written a paper on the Deliverance Church Ministries during a History of the Church in Africa Course in N.E.G.S.T.: Stephen Patrick Achillah, "The History and Ethos of the Deliverance Indigenous Church Ministry in Africa." In the possession of the researcher. Much of the above information comes from this paper.

67. Michael Harper, "Renewal For Mission: An Anglican Perspective," International Review of Mission LXXV 298 (April 1986), 129; See also Julia Dunn, "What Does the Future Hold for Charismatic Renewal," Christianity Today (May 16, 1986), 40.

68. Ibid., 131.

69. Ibid.

70. Donald R. Jacobs, "Out of Africa: Evangelism and Spiritual Warfare," In Wrestling with Dark Angels, 322-323.

71. Ibid., 322.

72. Anne Luck, African Saint: The Story of Apolo Kivebulaya (Bloomsbury, London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), 120-134.

73. Ibid., 156-157.

74. Ibid., 76, 123.

75. Ibid., 156.

76. Ibid., 157-158.

77. Tim Pain, "The Mystery of Morris Cerullo," In Aware (June/July 1994), 32.

78. Morris Cerullo, The New Anointing is Here: Handbook For The Harvest (San Diego, California: A World Evangelism Publication, 1972), 4.

79. Ibid.

80. Tim Pain, "The Mystery," Aware, 33.

- 81. Ibid.
- 82. Ibid., 34.
- 83. Ibid.

84. The researcher has been to numerous meetings where Morris Cerullo teaches either personally or through a Global Satellite video network, and has heard these declarations again and again both by Morris Cerullo and his assistant Gospel ministers.

- 85. C. Peter Wagner, Spiritual Power and Church Growth, 12.
- 86. Ibid.
- 87. Kurt E. Koch, "God Among The Zulus," In Herald of His Coming, 41:1-481 (January 1982), 1.
- 88. Ibid.
- 89. Ibid.
- 90. Ibid., 4.

91. Stop Suffering!!, 12, Year One - International Distribution, [South Africa: Universal Church (n.d)].

92. The researcher has been in meetings where these men were ministering and sharing their testimonies either personally or through video.

93. Emmanuel Eni, Delivered From The Powers of Darkness 2d ed. (Ibadan, Nigeria: Scripture Union (Nig.) Press and Books, 1988), 6.

- 94. Ibid., 8.
- 95. Ibid., 9-19
- 96. Ibid., 37-38.
- 97. Jack Deere, Surprised by the Power of the Spirit, 203-204.
- 98. Ibid., 203-206.
- 99. Ibid., 205.
- 100. Ibid., 205-206.

101. Zacharias Taneé Fomum, You Can Receive the Baptism Into the Holy Spirit Now 2d ed. (Yaounde, Cameroon: I.G.H., 1989), 3.

102. The researcher has personally listened to Fomum as he ministered the gospel.

103. Zacharias Taneé Fomum, Jesus Loves You and Wants to Heal You 2d, ed. (Yaounde, Cameroon: I.G.H., 1989), 7-26.

104. John Wimber, Power Evangelism, 30-31.

105. Ibid.

106. Kaniaki and Mukendi, Snatched From Satan's Claws: An Amazing Deliverance by Christ rev. ed. (Nairobi, Kenya: Enkei Media Services Ltd, 1994, book jacket

107. Ibid., i - iii.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

I. Summing up the Case

A. Signs and Wonders: Definition and Usage.

Signs and Wonders have been suitably defined in this thesis as those extraordinary phenomena which accrue from and attest to divinity so as to elicit belief and amazement. Whereas there were in the past genuine signs and wonders phenomena coming from God through godly men, there were also satanic signs and wonders coming through false prophets. These miraculous phenomena were evident in the Old Testament. There, however, seems to be a similarity in meanings between signs and wonders under Yahweh and those within the Pagan classical Greek era.

In the New Testament era, Jesus and His followers were involved in a milieu that was first of all familiar with signs and wonders as established phenomena surrounding pagan shrines and charismatic personalities. The latter were evident in both Paganism and Judaism. Healings, exorcisms and supernatural interventions to avert calamities were seen to follow the "ministries" of those pre-Christian charismatics.

Secondly, one finds Christ and His followers performing signs and wonders in spite of the fact that the Pagans and the Jews also did the same. However, a third point can be

observed: that the power of Christ could be seen by both Pagans and Jews as being superior to any other supernatural power. Transformation of lives, healings and deliverances in mercy and love were clearly evident in the manifestation of this power.

The signs and wonders under the ministry of Christ and His disciples appeared and superseded those of both Pagans and Jews. Yet most important was the unique and transforming Good News message that came with the arrival of Christendom; namely, that God had come down in Christ to usher in His kingdom in the world.

B. Christ, The Early Disciples, Signs and Wonders and the Interpretation of Luke-Acts on this topic for today.

When the ministry of Christ is compared to that of His early disciples, one thing that can be noted is their similarity. Prior to Christ's public ministry was a supernatural anointing and serious prayer sessions. So was it also with His disciples. Both ministries involved preaching and demonstration of signs and wonders. On the other hand, suffering and opposition attended both ministries.

The ministry of the risen Christ was continued on earth from His ascended position in heaven through His disciples. Both Christ and His early disciples knew a balanced ministry that steered-clear of both triumphalism and pessimism. It was

a ministry of both power and purity. The early disciples were at pains to live up to such a ministry, even though there were inroads of sin that needed to be rebuked.

One may wonder whether or not such a ministry of signs and wonders should be seen as being valid for today's Church also. It is the main question that has governed this thesis. Paul, who was active in a signs and wonders ministry in Acts also taught concerning these phenomena in I Cor. 12-14. Paul's teaching seems to expect the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit to continue up to the Parousia. It is only then that they will no longer be needed.

It may be safely said, that the Luke-Acts accounts of ministries involving signs and wonders serve as illustrations and patterns of how a Christian community could be envisaged. A Christian community could well be seen as a Charismatic society where signs and wonders are repeatedly expected to be in manifestation at least by some of the congregation. It is these repeated occurrences of signs and wonders within the Christian community that could be seen as being generally normative in the experience of the Christian community. Operating within the context of love and discernment, such ministries of signs and wonders can be seen as having a valid place.

Whereas Christ and His apostles occupy a unique place in

the Christian tradition, that unique position does not seem to preclude the operation of signs and wonders in the ongoing universal Church of Christ. It would seem that today's Church is faced with a challenge of earnestly desiring signs and wonders to be manifested in her midst, and to see herself in a continuing ministry that Christ inaugurated, and which was taken up by His apostles.

C. Signs and Wonders in Church History and the Modern Church.

An examination of Church history seems to show that such signs and wonders ministries were indeed repeatedly seen to be in operation - to a greater or lesser extent. The evidence for this can be seen to be reasonably convincing throughout the ages of the Church.

When a survey is made of the modern church scene, one can see that signs and wonders movements have become more and more common within established Christian traditions. This seems to leave all Bible believing Christians with the need to come to terms with the reality of this modern charismatic outpouring within their given world-views and experiences.

D. On the Evangelization of Africa.

The great task of the evangelization of Africa as a continent is a perennial challenge to all Bible-believing Christians. It may well be stated that such a task needs to combine both a cognitive and a charismatic approach in

ministry if it is to achieve its full potential. Demonstration of signs and wonders should be seen to go hand in hand with proclamation. This would seem to be at once a challenge to both ministerial training institutions in particular and Christian ministries generally.

Since social work can be seen as a serious implication of the Christian message, a viable paradigm in ministry could be envisaged; including teaching, signs and wonders, and social action. Each of these strands can be seen in operation on the African continent. However, instead of seeing them in competition, they ought to be seen as complementing one another in the great task of Africa's evangelization.

It is a sad fact that the misuse of signs and wonders ministries, coupled with gullibility and syncretism have always tended to cause a reaction of dismissal among many well-meaning Christian believers. But if the Church of Christ today is to learn from the example of her Master and His disciples, her resolve should rather be that of discerning use of signs and wonders within the context of love in the Christian community.

II. Signs and Wonders and the Future

That there is a distinct trend today towards being open to signs and wonders ministries is evident across the church denominational spectrum. One may well ask whether this is a

mere passing fad or a genuine revival and renewal. Both Scripture and history can give the answer. If one accept the Scriptural position of the existence of the charismata in the Church until the Parousia, one would have to say that signs and wonders will always be in existence as long as this world lasts. God's supernatural interventions can be expected today as the church moves along to the very end of this age.

Yet also one finds that in the history of God's dealings with His people, there seem to be times of special workings of God. Christian believers may debate as to whether this is God's responsibility or their responsibility. The truth usually seems to lie in between. Matthew Henry, the famous Bible commentator is reputed to have said that, "when God intends great mercies for His people, he sends them a praying." One observable trend today is a growing emphasis on prayer. This is evident all across the church denominational spectrum.

This study has shown that supernatural manifestations usually follow heroic efforts at prayer -even when those praying may not expect them (as in the experience of Augustine and Luther). It would therefore be reasonable for one to say that supernatural manifestations may well be seen on a greater and not a lesser extent in the future.

A number of suggestions could be made here as to what the direction of further research in signs and wonders should be. At least six can be made here. One concerns field research in Signs and Wonders ministries. There is a need to follow these ministries today in order to teach Christians good examples to follow and bad examples to avoid. It is also good to get some tangible, certified testimonies from these ministries (possibly with certified medical personnel in assistance). This can help answer some sceptics and also encourage the faith of the Christian community.

Another area for further study is the curriculum. A concern that has been raised in this study is for either a revitalization or a revision of our existing curriculums in order to integrate a demonstrative element in teaching power-encounter, power-evangelism, or signs and wonders. Studies could be made as to how this can be done. These studies could then be put into use and revised as they are experimented upon.

A testimony has been given on how one Bible School in Zaire sent its students out to minister in a difficult area infested with witchcraft practices. It was a fearsome task that bowed the students down to prayer. The result was that these students were emboldened and empowered to proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel by signs and wonders to the oppressed people they were reaching, and many conversions were

recorded.¹ This does not mean that signs and wonders may always be the sign of a successful Christian ministry.

Then there is the area of designing viable integrated Christian ministries. Africa desperately needs such approaches to ministry that can embrace all the didactic, charismatic, and social concerns. An appeal for example right now presents itself in the Sudan. One ethnic group that has long been resistant to Gospel proclamation has suddenly become open to the Gospel. In the midst of poverty, disease and spiritual hunger, a call has been made: Can the Christian community respond to such a call by sending ministry teams to preach the Gospel, to take signs and wonders ministries, as the Holy Spirit leads, provide medical facilities, and do social work?² Such calls could be made from different parts of Africa where there is dire need.

There has been a frequent concern expressed in this study for discernment amidst the dangers of syncretism. Field research could be made to examine some indigenous "Christian" signs and wonders, "Church" movements that present cultic symptoms. This should be done with an awareness that Satanic deception is possible and demonization could be present. This would demand adequate spiritual preparation in prayer and fasting besides the other types of preparations already mentioned. Such an investigation of such a cultic "Church" movement has been done³ and others could

still be done. Such research work could educate Christians on how syncretism presents itself, and on how they can exercise discernment in Christian ministry.

A final suggestion is in the area of Biblical studies.

Studies should be done on different biblical texts in the area of signs and wonders; for example in the other Gospels, or in the Epistles. Since a concern for a careful exegesis of Scripture has been mentioned in this study, such studies could strengthen the Church's resolve to develop a wider biblical basis for the evangelization of Africa.

END NOTES

1. Matundu Zulu, a testimony given in the N.E.G.S.T chapel during the "Mission Week, 1995."

2. Wesley Bokati Natana, a testimony given in the N.E.G.S.T. chapel during the "Mission Week, 1995."

3. Alfred Acur, a research done on the 'Church' of "Mary Akatsa," for the N.E.G.S.T Missions Department, 1995.

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Appendix*

Were There Only
Three Periods of Miracles?

Scripture	Description
<i>Genesis</i>	
1-3	The creation of the earth and the fall of man
5:24	The rapture of Enoch
6:2ff.	The sons of God (angelic/demonic beings) married the daughters of men
6:9-8:19	The Noahic flood
11:1ff.	The confusing of human language at the Tower of Babel
12:1-3	The supernatural call of Abraham
12:17	The plague on Pharaoh's house
15:12-21	Abraham's trance, the smoking firepot, and blazing torch
16:7	The angel of the Lord appears to Hagar
17:1ff.	The Lord appears to Abraham
18:1ff.	The Lord and angels appear to Abraham and eat a meal with him
19:11	The angels blind the men of Sodom
19:23ff.	The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah
19:26	Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt
20:3ff.	God warns Abimelech in a dream not to touch Sarah

* The material here is from Jack Deere, Surprised by the Spirit, pp. 255-261. Deere deals with this subject in detail in his book.

Scripture	Description
<i>Genesis (cont.)</i>	
20:17ff.	God supernaturally saves the life of Hagar and Ishmael
21:1ff.	Sarah miraculously conceives Isaac
22:11	The angel of the Lord prevents Abraham from sacrificing Isaac
24:12ff.	Abraham's servant is supernaturally led to Rebekah
25:21	Rebekah supernaturally conceives twins
25:23ff.	The Lord speaks to Rebekah concerning the destiny of the twins in her womb
26:2	The Lord appears to Isaac
26:24	The Lord appears to Isaac again
28:12ff.	The Lord appears to Jacob
31:3	The Lord speaks to Jacob, commanding him to return to Palestine
32:1	The angels of God meet Jacob
32:24ff.	Jacob wrestles with the angel of the Lord all night
35:9	God appears to Jacob and blesses him
37:5ff.	Joseph's dreams
38:2ff.	The Lord kills Er and Onan
40:1ff.	Joseph interprets the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker
41:1ff.	Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream
<i>Judges</i>	
2:1-5	The angel of the Lord appears to all Israel

Scripture	Description
3:9ff.	The Spirit of the Lord empowers Othniel to deliver Israel
3:31	Shamgar kills 600 Philistines with an oxgoad
4:4ff.	Deborah prophesies to Barak
6:11	The angel of the Lord appears to Gideon
6:36	The miracle of Gideon's fleece
7:1ff.	The Lord sends divine panic against Midian so that Gideon can defeat them with only 300 men
11:29ff.	The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jephthah to deliver Israel from the Ammonites
13:3ff.	The angel of the Lord appears to Manoah and his wife
14-16	Samson's supernatural feats
<i>1 Samuel</i>	
1:19ff.	Hannah supernaturally conceives Samuel
3:1ff.	The Lord appears to Samuel the first time
3:19-21	The Lord lets none of Samuel's words fall to the ground
5:1-5	The destruction of the idol Dagon
5:6ff.	The Lord strikes the Philistines with tumors
6:19ff.	The Lord kills some of the men of Bethshevesh
9-10	Samuel's prophetic ministry to Saul
10:20ff.	Saul is chosen by lot to be king over Israel
11:6ff.	The Spirit of the Lord empowers Saul to deliver Israel from the Ammonites
16:1ff.	Samuel's prophetic ministry to David
16:13	The Spirit of the Lord comes upon David

VITA

Stephen Patrick Achillah was born on 17th November, 1956 in Kumi District, Uganda. He had a personal encounter with Christ in 1973 while in secondary school, and was involved in Scripture Union leadership throughout his secondary school education. He was also a Christian Union leader during his undergraduate studies at Makerere University, Kampala; where he earned a B.A. (F.A) Hons. and P.G.D.E.

Upon finishing his undergraduate studies, Stephen taught in Secondary school for almost ten years. He got married to Asen Tina, who was also a secondary school teacher. They have three children: Victor Michael - 9, Ruth Dawn - 7, and Ann Gloria - 4. Apart from their secondary school teaching involvements, Stephen and Tina were actively involved as Patrons of the Scripture Union Club of their school.

In the course of time, Stephen and Tina were involved in pioneering and pastoring a local church (in their town) of the Fellowship of the Deeper-Life Ministries Uganda, from 1987-1990. This association of churches are a product of a charismatic Renewal wave which irresistibly swept the East African Region from the late 60s to the early 70s.

In 1990, Stephen and Tina responded to the pressing call upon their lives to do formal theological studies. This call brought them to Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, where Stephen has earned an M.Div. and a M.Th.

Upon finishing their studies at N.E.G.S.T., the Achillahs left for Uganda to be involved in a pastoral, teaching and leadership training Gospel ministry.

Scripture	Description
2 Kings (cont'd)	
21:10ff.	The Lord prophesies judgment on Judah through his prophets
22:14ff.	The prophets Judah prophesies judgment on Judah but blessing on Josiah
1 Chronicles	
12:18	The Holy Spirit prompts Amasai to prophesy to David
21:1	Satan incites David to take a census of Israel
21:16	David sees the angel of the Lord
21:20	Araunah sees the same angel
21:26	The Lord sends fire from heaven to David's altar
2 Chronicles	
7:1	Fire comes down from heaven and consumes Solomon's offerings
11:2	Shemariah prophesies to King Rehoboam not to fight against Israel
12:5	Shemariah prophesies against Rehoboam
12:7	Shemariah prophesies again to Rehoboam that God will have a measure of mercy on him
13:15ff.	God supernaturally delivers Judah
13:20	The Lord kills Jeroboam
14:12ff.	The Lord supernaturally delivers Judah from the Ethiopians
15:1ff.	Azariah prophesies to King Asa
16:7ff.	Hananii, the seer, prophesies judgment on King Asa

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Scripture	Description
25:7ff.	A man of God prophesies to Amaziiah not to take the army of Israel into battle with him
25:15ff.	A prophet prophesies judgment on Amaziiah for his rebhahy
28:9ff.	Obed prophesied judgment against the Israelite army if they refuse to release their captives from Judah
Ezra	
5:1	Haggai and Zechariah prophesy to the Jews who are in Judah
Job	
1-2	Supernatural satanic persecution of Job by God's permission
38-42	God's conversation with Job and the restoration of Job's fortune
Daniel	
2:1ff.	God supernaturally reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to Daniel
3:1ff.	Daniel's three friends walk in the fiery furnace with the preincarnate Christ and are preserved
4:19-27	Daniel interprets a second dream of Nebuchadnezzar
4:28ff.	God afflicts Nebuchadnezzar with insanity
5:5ff.	A hand supernaturally appears and writes Belshazzar's judgment on the wall
5:17ff.	Daniel interprets the writing
6:1ff.	Daniel is supernaturally preserved in the lions' den
7-12	Supernatural visions of the last days and angelic visitations are given to Daniel