6. THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

6.1 Introduction

Research conducted among individual members of the Bazalwane churches led to the following conclusions:

1. The divinity of Jesus Christ is affirmed by a large majority of the Bazalwane-respondents. The relationship between Jesus Christ, the Father and the Spirit is articulated in terms of the doctrine of the Trinity.

2. Jesus Christ is generally seen as a powerful and victorious saviour who is able to protect his followers from all sorts of dangers: natural (e.g. accidents), spiritual (e.g. falling into sin), supernatural (e.g. demonic influence). The faith of Bazalwane-Christians may be described as triumphant.

3. There seems to be less acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the controlling authority in a believer’s life. Although 40% of the respondents see Jesus as the Lord of their lives, this is primarily understood in terms of His benevolent power to protect and deliver from negative forces, and only secondarily in terms of His authority to rule their lives through his Word and Spirit.

In order to shed more light on these issues, a more qualitative type of research was employed in the second phase of study. Two methods were used: content analysis of written and oral material, and field research (primarily: in-depth interviews).

Content analysis of written and oral material

A variety of written material was studied:
- books and articles on the history and theology of Pentecostal churches in S.A.
- foreign books (mostly from the USA) that are perused by Pentecostals in S.A.
- pamphlets and magazines published by various Pentecostal and charismatic churches in South Africa
The scrutiny of sermons delivered by pastors in Pentecostal and charismatic churches, which have been recorded on tape, also formed part of this stage of research. Some of these churches in Soshanguve have a tape ministry. One of them (Praise Tabernacle Church) has its Sunday morning services broadcast on Radio Soshanguve, the local radio station. A total of 25 sermons were analyzed.

Field research
The field research consisted mainly of in-depth interviews with some twenty church members and church leaders of different Bazalwane churches, some of whom I met often. Among those interviewed were pastors and leaders of the local branches of Apostolic Faith Mission, International Assemblies of God, and Praise Tabernacle Church. I attended church services at Apostolic Faith Mission (Block GG, Soshanguve), Praise Tabernacle Church (Block DD, Soshanguve) and Forward in Faith (Block LL, Soshanguve).

Two mini-questionnaires were distributed among 30 members of different Bazalwane churches, one relating to church hymns, the other to the Lord’s Supper.

6.2 Two church services

What follows is my impression of two church services I attended, the one at the Apostolic Faith Mission church in Soshanguve, Block GG, the other at Forward in Faith Ministries in Soshanguve, Block LL.

Church service: Apostolic Faith Mission
I went to this church with a friend of mine, who is a member there. We were welcomed by two young ladies who showed us to our seats. It was a large building, still under construction at the time. Some 300 people attended the service. My friend told me that today was special as there was to be a visiting minister from another branch in Soshanguve. This man was in the music ministry. Prior to the service
commencing someone playing the keyboard accompanied the singing of gospel songs. The volume level was high.

The resident pastor opened the service by welcoming all members and guests, including me.Shortly afterwards the microphone was handed to the visiting minister. He asked the congregation to read Acts 9:12-18 with him, the story of Paul’s conversion. It was read in English and Zulu by brothers in the congregation. A short sermon of 5 minutes duration followed wherein the minister explained that Saul had been a ‘tsotsi’ (a criminal) who had been totally changed by the power of Jesus. He went on to say that the same thing can still happen today.

On completion of his sermon the minister invited those ‘who wanted the Holy Spirit’ (“ba ba batlang Moya o halalelang”) to come forward. About fifteen people responded to the invitation, most of them women. While the keyboard played and the congregation sang hymns, the preacher put his hand on the forehead of each one, shouting repeatedly (in English): “Receive! Receive! Jesus! Receive! Receive!” This affected some to such an extent that they fell over backwards. They were caught by four brothers who had been stationed behind them. The response of some of the recipients was rapid and they fell backwards quite quickly, others were more resistant. At times the minister would give somebody a slight push on the forehead causing them to fall down. A number of people who had remained standing returned to their seats shortly afterwards. Those who had been prostrated by the experience were carried to a corner in the building where blankets had been spread out on the floor.

Following the first group the minister invited others to come forward and “receive the Holy Spirit”. They too, received the laying on of hands, with the minister using the same words “Receive! Receive! Jesus! Receive! Receive!” The majority of those going forward were women, most of whom keeled over and were carried away by the brothers. After half an hour the corner of the church closely resembled a battlefield.

I asked my friend: “What is happening now?” He said: “They are working with the Holy Spirit” (“ba berekisa Moya o halalelang”). A lady in front of us started making strange noises. She was crying and her body was moving backwards and forwards. My friend commented: “Something wrong here!” but he did not take action and she did not go forward to the minister either.
Forty-five minutes later the minister had finished his work and concluded by telling the congregation: “When you are anointed with the Holy Spirit, go tlo ba le dienywa (= there will be fruits). Should you wake up in the middle of the night, do what the Spirit tells you to do.”

One of the brothers closed the service, and the announcements were read by the secretary of the congregation. Finally, another brother came forward and said: If there are people in the church who need prayer, stand up, and we will pray for you. Approximately thirty people stood up and the same brother who had ended the service with prayer, now rebuked Satan: “Ke a go kgalemela, Sathane, tsamaya!” (I rebuke you, Satan, go!)

Comments:
Later I accompanied my friend to his home and we discussed the service. He told me that the rebuking of demons took place regularly, but in most services the sermon would be longer. Sometimes the emphasis would be on teaching, at other times on preaching.

Everything is determined by the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to a particular person. If he is a teacher, he should teach. If he is an evangelist, he should preach. If he has been given the gift ‘to work with the Holy Spirit’, he should be allowed to do that.

Upon querying the dramatic behaviour we had witnessed my friend explained that this was indicative of demons who are unwilling to leave a person, but who, on their expulsion cause the person to fall. It means that the demon has gone and that they are free.

Church service: Forward in Faith Ministries
I visited this church at the invitation of a member whom I had spoken to during the week. When I arrived at the church building (a corrugated iron shack), she introduced me to one of the church leaders and I was given a seat in the front row. The service was attended by about 100 people.

After some preliminary announcements, the pastor opened the service. He spoke English which was translated into Sotho. The congregation first sang the song ‘Jesus, you are wonderful’, whereupon the pastor welcomed everybody, including me.

The Scripture reading was taken from 1 Corinthians 1:11-13, 5:1-3, 11:18-19 and Romans 16:17-20. These verses all speak of divisions in the church.
In his sermon the pastor addressed the topic of divisions in the church. Those who cause divisions, should be rebuked. He proceeded to tell us about a pastors’ conference he had attended, where he had been taught many things. One of the topics he wanted to preach about, was ‘vision’. He stressed the importance of having ‘vision’. Some quotes:

“If you don’t have vision, you stumble.”

“People who are poor, are poor because they don’t have vision.”

“Do you have a plan for your life?”

“Your vision, nobody can steal it from you.”

“Your vision is your future.”

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (quote from Proverbs 29:18a)

“Where there is no vision, the church will perish.”

“As Forward in Faith people we have a pastor in Australia and three missionaries in London because we had vision.”

“With vision you can build a big house.”

“According to Genesis 1:26 man was created in the image of God. God is not poor, so how can we be poor? When you have vision, you can’t be poor.”

“Say after me: ‘I am like God; I am like God; I can do great things; I can do great things’.” (repeated twice by the congregation).

The pastor sketched a situation of people in trouble, solely because they did not have vision. Some of them bought a lot on credit: home, furniture, TV, bed, clothes, perm in the hair: all on credit. “God did not create us with credit. If you live like this, you don’t have vision.”

The poverty of the black man in Africa can also be ascribed to a lack of vision. “We blacks were colonized, we used our mind for begging, thinking all day of the 5 Rand I had yesterday, instead of having a vision of the thousand Rand I could have tomorrow.”

The pastor recounted a story of a black colleague who had spoken at the minister’s conference. He had told the delegates that God had instructed him to give R 100.000 to the conference. The man went on to say: “I want to challenge God and I’m giving R 150.000!” That is an example of having vision.

The pastor illustrated his message by telling the congregation about his children. “One of them wants to go to the USA, one wants to go to University.” They have vision.
Another illustration: one should have a vision for your marriage. Girls who have many boy-friends don’t have vision. Boys who sleep around, don’t have vision. He referred to 2 Cor. 4:8 “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” The pastor warned: “What you see today, is a nice girl. You see her, you swallow your saliva. Then she gets AIDS. Next year you see her again: she is a skeleton, you spit your saliva!” The pastor said: “When I see a lady that is more beautiful than my own wife, I see a grinning devil behind that lady!”
Another example came from the many men that have come to South Africa from Zimbabwe, Malawi and other African countries. They sought a better future, but did not have vision. Instead they have ended up living in shacks in Winterveld. Why? Because they didn’t have vision.
The final exhortation: “If you don’t have vision, change your life!”
After the sermon I was asked to lead in prayer, which I did. The service was concluded. It was announced that next week it would be ‘big Sunday’ at another Forward-in-Faith branch in Soshanguve. After the service I had a short conversation with the pastor during which he told me that he was from Zimbabwe originally.

Comments:
During his sermon the preacher referred respectfully to Myles Munroe, the founder of Bahamas Faith Ministries. The influence of Munroe will be discussed later in this chapter. With regard to the contents of the sermon it would not be unfair to say that this was more a motivational speech on the importance of ‘vision’, than an exposition of the gospel. The Bible was used only as a reference book.

Evaluation
It is not possible to conclude much on the basis of two church services. Hypothetically one could say: It may be that pastors in the younger Bazalwane-churches (e.g. Praise Tabernacle Church and Forward in Faith) are influenced by American evangelists while pastors in the older Bazalwane-churches do rely on the doctrine that has been developed in them during the years.
6.3 Salvation as Power and Victory

The research among individual Pentecostal respondents revealed a tendency to understand salvation in terms of ‘power’ and ‘victory’. Further research was needed to find out whether the same tendency is found in the Pentecostal movement as a whole. It seemed worthwhile to try and gain an impression of the ‘oral theology’ of the movement. Special attention was given therefore, to the oral theology which becomes apparent in hymns and sermons. The research of hymns was limited, the research of sermons was broader.

HYMNS

We conducted a mini-study of the hymns sung in Bazalwane-churches in Soshanguve. Thirty questionnaires were distributed: 10 among members of Apostolic Faith Mission, 10 among members of International Assemblies of God, 10 among members of Praise Tabernacle Church.

The short questionnaire was comprised of the following:
- what is the hymn book that is used in your church?
- does the congregation sing hymns that are not in the book?
- does the congregation sing choruses during church services?
- please mention the 10 most popular hymns or choruses in your church
- what hymn or chorus is your personal favourite and why?

The results of this mini-study show that these Bazalwane-churches usually have one hymnbook for use during the service, but that many other songs are sung as well. They draw from well known South African hymn books, like Difela tsa Sione (Sotho: hymns of Zion) and Icilongo levangeli (Zulu: the gospel trumpet) and ‘Melodies of Praise’. Additions to the repertoire also come from songs and choruses that have been imported from overseas, e.g. ‘I surrender all’ and ‘Thank you, Jesus’.
Many of these songs, especially the *Difela tsa Sione*, are sung in black churches throughout South Africa, including the Zionist Christian Church and other AIC’s. They form part of the general heritage of black Christians in South Africa, but especially the Sotho-speaking fraction.

A popular hymn among bazalwane-Christians is number 116: ‘Jesu ke Moloki wa ka’ (Jesus is my Saviour). The first verse of this hymn reads as follows:

Ha le lakatsa ho tseba
Kamoo ke pholositsweng
Mamelang ha ke le joela
Ke le supisa tsela.
Jesu ke ‘Moloki wa ka,
O nkhethetse bodulo
Kea mo rata, hob’a nthata
A ‘neile bophelo.

(If you want to know)  
(How I was saved)  
(Listen when I tell you)  
(I show you the way)  
(Jesus is my Saviour)  
(He chose a place for me)  
(I love Him, because He loves me)  
(He gave me life)

Another popular song from the same hymnbook is number 110: ‘Ho lokile’ (It’s all right). The first verse reads as follows:

Ntate, ha ke sa sepela   
Hole le lehæ la heso,  
O thuse, ke tsebe ho re:  
Ho lokile, ho lokile

(Father, when I’m still on my way)  
(Far from the place where I belong)  
(Help me, that I may say:)  
(It’s allright, it’s allright)

These and other hymns from the same book are well-loved in many different churches in Soshanguve. When thinking in terms of oral theology, they do not represent any specific brand of theology, but rather a sort of generic ‘township’-faith.

There are some songs and choruses, however, that are popular in Bazalwane-churches but not often heard in other churches. In some of these the victory of God (or Jesus, or the believer) is repeated over and over. A few examples:
I have a victory
In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus,
I have the victory, hallelujah
In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus,
I have the victory.
When I call in the name of Jesus, no one can stand before
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I have the victory.

Note: One of the respondents mentioned this hymn as his personal favourite, the reason being: “Because Jesus is the one who gives people victory over their problems and sickness and over all the temptations of the world.”

Re a mo leboga
Re a mo leboga (2 times) (We thank Him)
Re a mo leboga, Modimo wa rona (We thank Him, our God)
Ga go yo a swanang le Yena (2) (There is nobody like Him)
Ga go yo a swanang le Yena, Modimo wa rona (There is nobody like Him, our God)
Modiramehlolo (2) (Worker of miracles)
Modiramehlolo, Modimo wa rona (Worker of miracles, our God)
O a re makatsa (2) (He surprises us)
O a re makatsa, Modimo wa rona (He surprises us, our God)

Note: the song ‘Re a mo leboga’ is sung in many other churches as well, but in most cases only the first lines are heard which are then used as a chorus. As far as I know, the part about the ‘worker of miracles’ is sung in Bazalwane-churches only.

We serve the miracle working God
We serve the miracle working God
We serve the wonder-, o we serve the miracle working God.

Uyinkosi yamakhosi
Uyamazi loJesu (You know this Jesus)
Wanyathela uSathane eGolgotha (He defeated Satan at Golgotha)
Uyinkosi yamakhosi (He is the Kings of kings)
Matla ke a hao
Matla ke a hao, matla ke a hao,  
Matla ke a hao, Jesu  
Matla ke a hao, matla ke a hao,  
Matla ke a hao, Jesu.  
(The power is yours, the power is yours)  
(The power is yours, Jesus)  
(The power is yours, the power is yours)  
(The power is yours, Jesus.)

Note: this chorus is sung in many other churches as well. One of the respondents mentioned it as his personal favourite because “Jesus can control each and everything with his power”.

When evaluating the results of this mini-study I would like to stress that caution is needed. Insufficient evidence does not allow us to draw conclusions, and I would rather speak of a preliminary impression.

The impression gained, then, is that Pentecostal Christians love hymns that express faith in God, being close to God, feeling safe because of God’s protection, and the power of God.

It appears that the Pentecostal churches in Soshanguve share many songs with other churches; these songs represent a general Christian faith in which the love of God, faith in Jesus, being protected and saved, etc. are important elements.

In some respects the Pentecostal churches differ from the latter in that hymns and choruses are added to their repertoire which stress the power of God and the victory over evil forces.

Research on other parts of church life will show whether this impression is a realistic one.

SERMONS

During the course of my research I have listened to 25 sermons delivered by Bazalwane-ministers, 7 of which were held during evangelistic campaigns, and the remaining 18 during church services (15 of these were delivered in one particular church: Praise Tabernacle Church).

Some preliminary remarks from a homiletical viewpoint:
The length of sermons would normally be between 30 and 40 minutes. Many ministers spoke English and were assisted by somebody who translated the message into the local language, Northern Sotho. Some spoke Northern Sotho interspersed with a few English sentences. Zulu is sometimes used.

With regard to preaching styles I found that the evangelists always use a Biblical passage as their text and that they have a deep love for allegory as a method of interpretation.

An example of this is a sermon about Exodus 8:8-11, entitled 'One more night with the frogs'. This is the story about the plague of frogs. When Pharaoh asked Moses to pray to the Lord and take the frogs away, Moses asked Pharaoh to set the time for him to pray. Pharaoh’s answer was: “Tomorrow.”

The preacher interpreted this text in the following manner: Pharaoh represents the sinner, the frogs represent the filthy sins of this world. Pharaoh wanted to get rid of the frogs, but not immediately: he wanted one more night with his frogs. Likewise the sinner often wants to get rid of his sins and his sinful lifestyle, but not yet... Often he would say: pastor, please give me one more night with my sins, tomorrow I will repent. The evangelist of course pleaded with his audience not to do this. “When you say ‘give me one more night’ you risk your life!”

Congregational ministers would choose a topic and then use various Bible passages to prove and illustrate their message. Alternatively they would start off with a Biblical text, but then use it as a stepping stone (not as a sermon text). During the course of my research I have heard only one expository sermon in which a Biblical text was really worked out (I will draw attention to the implications of this tendency in a separate paragraph).

Another preliminary remark is that evangelists, not surprisingly, were generally more in the business of calling people to repentance while congregational ministers were geared more towards giving guidance on how the Christian life may be strengthened and how the Christian may receive all those blessings he is hoping for.

The sermons preached in Praise Tabernacle Church (PTC) deserve some special attention. They need to be dealt with separately, as it is not to be automatically assumed that the style and contents of preaching in this particular church represents the style and

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100 Tape Mahlakgane 1993.
contents of the preaching in other Bazalwane-churches as well (PTC is one of the so-called younger independent Pentecostal churches).

Some of the sermons preached in PTC may be characterized as ‘teaching’. One of the pastors, for example, devoted some sermons to the topic of ‘the seed concept’\textsuperscript{101}.

In these sermons the pastor explained that sowing leads to reaping, and that ‘planting a seed’ would lead to reaping benefits. This was applied in many different ways: give food to hungry people, and the Lord will reward you with prosperity; choose the career for which you have a talent, and you will be happy; give money to the church, and the Lord will reward you; let’s work hard, and Africa will come right, etcetera.

Other sermons in PTC may be characterized as ‘power preaching’. The minister attempts to elevate the congregation to a high level of religious experience, to the feeling that God (or the Holy Spirit) is present, and to a state in which people are ready to ‘enter into their miracle’ (the focus would be on healing). An example of this is a sermon entitled ‘The day of your visitation’\textsuperscript{102}.

The text used as a reference (not more than that) was Luke 1:68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people” (KJV translation). One part of the sermon went like this:

“What is impossible with man, is possible with God.
All things are possible for those that believe.
If you believe this morning, it will be possible.
Tell your neighbour ‘it shall be well’!
Tell your neighbour ‘it shall be well’!!
It shall be well!
It shall be well!!!
It shall be well!!!!
It shall be well!!!!!
It shall be well!!!!!!
It shall be well!!!!!!!\textsuperscript{103}
Glory to God!
Imbroskempromdaskararabosaya....!

\textsuperscript{101} Tapes Praise 1999f, 1999g, 1999h, 1999i.
\textsuperscript{102} Tape Praise 1999b.
Aaaaaahhhhh……!!

Your God is bigger than what you’re going through.
Your God is bigger than what you are going through!

Now listen, when I preach, God confirms his Word with signs and miracles. So, whatever God will be doing to you, this is a free advert for you. Express what He has done for you. When God touches people, go ahead and make noise. It’s no secret what God has done for you. Tell it and let everybody know. In the place of life there is noise. When the Lord visited the valley of dry bones, it became a noisy valley. Bones flying from one side to the other. Today is your day of being gathered together!

So shall it be!
So shall it be!!
So shall it be!!!

Somebody is about to dance in this place!
Somebody is about to dance in this place!!
Somebody is about to praise in this place!!!
Somebody is about to praise in this place!!!!

I’m saying, I see the Lord!!!
I’m saying, I see the Lord!!!!!
I’m saying, I see the Lord!!!!!!
I’m saying, I see the Lord!!!!!!!
Tell your neighbour ‘get ready’!
Tell your neighbour ‘get ready’!!
Tell your neighbour ‘get ready’!!!
Something is about to happen in this place!
Something is about to happen in this place!!
The anointing of God is here.
Every burden shall be removed and every yoke destroyed.
The anointing of the Lord is here.
I feel the liquid fire!
I feel the liquid fire!!

Your burdens are being removed, your yokes are being destroyed, your sicknesses are being healed, your demons are being cast out, there is so much anointing in this place, somebody give praise to the Lord!!!

Increasing number of exclamation marks indicates increasing volume.
His presence is here!
His presence if here!!
Somebody is getting healed already!
Somebody is getting healed already!!
Glory to God.
Somebody’s headache is going. His presence is here. Somebody’s ulcer is getting healed.
His presence is here…!"

Our research question regarding sermon contents was: what do these sermons show about salvation being interpreted in terms of power and victory. After listening to a (limited) number of sermons in PTC, it became clear that power and victory are important elements. Sermon titles such as ‘the power of faith’, ‘the quest for supernatural power’, and ‘the power of the gospel’ indicate this.

An important question is: how and where this power is seen to be at work. Is it seen as ‘power in weakness’ (2 Cor. 12:9)? Is ‘power’ ever understood in terms of a Christian persevering in faith despite being ill? Or is ‘power’ always understood in terms of overcoming the illness, having prosperity, etcetera?

According to the sermons delivered in PTC there seems to be no power in weakness. An example from a sermon entitled ‘the quest for the supernatural power’104:

"Paul says: I did not come to you in talking, I came to you in the power of God. Beloved, the time for talking is over, we need to demonstrate the power of God. We need to demonstrate the power of God. That will take away my sickness, my poverty. What we need is the power of God, to fulfill the purpose of God, to be able to fulfill the commission, to be able to pray, to be able to lay hands on the sick, to drive out demons. Power! Power!! Power!!! Power!!!! Power!!!!! People of God, the power of God is upon you."
The power of God is seen at work in: the healing of the sick, the driving out of demons, the alleviation of poverty, the protection against dangers, and more specifically, accidents. These are often mentioned together in the same paragraph. One example of this:

"Once we have committed our faith in God and we become courageous, the works of the devil will be destroyed. Everything the devil did against you, will be destroyed. Every form of sickness, pain, disease, will be destroyed. Poverty will be destroyed. Demon oppression will be destroyed."

Further quotes demonstrate how the experience of God’s power will produce different results. With regard to healing the sick one minister, preaching about Isaiah 35, said:

"Once we believe in God, dear saints, we will see healing miracles take place. For the highway of God is not a highway for the blind, for the dumb, for the deaf. It is not a highway for the crippled. Once they enter this highway, they must be healed."

Another preacher put it like this:

"Some people when they are sick, and who remain sick for a long time, say: God, if it is your will, heal me... That's rubbish! It can't be His will that you get sick."

Still another preacher says:

"The Word has the power to cut the cancer in your marrow, and you enter into your health. Apply the Word to you situation, mix it with faith, and you will live."

Not only is healing possible, it is even possible to suspend death. One preacher, referring to the text “It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26), said:

"Simeon did not die, because the Holy Ghost revealed to him. There was every possibility that Simeon could die, but today he got the revelation. You can suspend death! You can suspend death! Some people love funerals. I hate them. You need to declare war on death."

The next quote comes from the same sermon on Isaiah 35 and concerns the driving out of demons. The minister explained vers 9 "No lion will be there nor will any ferocious beast get up on it", as referring to the devil.
"The beast here, and the lion here, refer to the devil and his demon spirits. In this highway of the Lord there will be no room for demons to operate. And let me make this announcement as the servant of the Lord: The time is coming and that time is now, when demon spirits will not be a problem for us, we will be a problem for demon spirits. A time when witchcraft and witches will never be a problem to us, we will be a problem to them. (...) If you came here oppressed by demon spirits, they are gone and they will never affect your life again."

Regarding the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of prosperity, one preacher told the congregation this story:\footnote{111}{Tape Praise 1998a.}

"Some of you have got businesses, and people don’t come and buy your cakes. Refuse to accept that people don’t come to your spaza shop. Tell them to come. Don’t tell the physical people, no, tell them through the spiritual world. Say ‘in the name of Jesus...’ There was one pastor who owned a motel, and people didn’t come to his motel. He refused to accept that. He went and said: “In the name of Jesus, I release people to come and sleep here”, and he went away. The next thing the manager phones him and says: “We are booked for six months!”

The same minister provided another illustration:\footnote{112}{Tape Praise 1998a.}

"When money refuses to stay in your pocket, tell it: “Money! You will stay in my pocket. I refuse to let you go away. Money! I refuse to be without you.” Many of us, we accept it...: OK, I’ll stay broke. Resist that!”

Another minister said this:\footnote{113}{Tape Praise 1999b.}

"Let me ask you a question: who is your enemy? (Audience: “the devil!”) OK, we know the devil is your enemy. But did you know that poverty is your enemy? I’m saying: Did you know poverty is your enemy? Some of you have been praying: ‘Lord, keep me poor, that I may serve you’. God cannot keep you poor, because He is not poor. Poverty is a burden. Poverty is a disgrace. Proverbs 19:4 says: “Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man’s friend deserts him.” (...) Don’t pray to be poor. Jesus manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. He became poor to make you rich. He became poor to make you rich! He became poor to make you rich!! That is why the Bible says: ‘Let the weak say: I am strong, and let the poor say: I am rich’.

He went on to promise:\footnote{114}{""}
"God is lifting you up. Your businesses are going to be lifted up. If you had a struggling business, your hour has come. Your business is going to flourish. Your business is going to flourish! I decree that in your life: men are going to put money into your hands, people are coming to invest money in your business, because your exaltation has come. Whom the Lord has lifted, no man can put down. If the Lord has lifted you, no man, no power, no demon, can put you down."

Another minister explained that these promises are real but that it needs a lot of hard work:

"Beloved, to become successful is not something that comes on a silver plate, it is something you work for. There is power in the Word. Meditate on the Word, day and night. I will guarantee you today: success is yours. Success is yours! Prosperity is yours. So when you begin to delight in the promises of God, you are on the highway to prosperity. You are on the highway to health. You are on the highway to success. Whatever you desire shall be granted you."

Miraculous protection in dangerous situations is also seen as part of experiencing the power of salvation. This practical example was given:

"If you are in a taxi, and it is driving towards the city at an abnormal speed, approaching the place where there are normally accidents, you tell it: "Taxi! I'm in here, you won't overturn today!" The problem is that you are thinking: this taxi driver is driving very fast, he is going to kill me today. If what you believe is that this taxi will overturn, you wil get what you think."

The minister recounted a personal experience:

"I was driving to Rustenburg on Friday, and the Lord said to me: there is danger before you on the road. I said: "I don't receive it. I refuse it" and then I went to the invisible world: "In the name of Jesus, you accident, I nullify you through the blood of the Lamb" and I went past."

Other practical examples of the power of salvation at work in the lives of believers include the following: those who don't have children, will have children; those children that are struggling at school, will become clever; robbers will not enter your house; you

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114 Tape Praise 1999b.
115 Tape Praise 1999c.
116 Tape Praise 1998a.
117 Tape Praise 1998a.
will be able to marry the right person; you will get promotion at work. On the topic of robbery, one preacher said\textsuperscript{118}:

"These people who break into houses, they are not just walking around aimlessly. No, they are working with demons. That's why if he goes into a house, he feels a knock on his soul, so he retreats. He won't continue. He knows that if he walks in there, he may never come out alive. Are you hearing me, my friends? Your house is protected from heaven."

An important question is: What do these preachers say about the fact that not everybody is healed, that riches do not come to everybody, and that even Bazalwane-people may be robbed and beaten up. One minister verbalized this problem as follows\textsuperscript{119}:

"The Bible says: If you are sick and somebody lays hands on you, you must be healed. Now what happens if hands are laid and nothing happens? No change occurs. You don't seem to receive. Let me put it this way: What if you believe that God will provide you with a job, you want to get work, and you pray. But things don't seem to be coming your way. You are looking for a promotion at work. You want an improvement on your salary. But nothing seems to be coming your way. Do you understand what I'm talking about? You believe in God for all this, but things don't happen your way."

The solution to this problem is not seen in acknowledging that God's will may be different from ours. The solution is rather sought in oneself, in having enough faith, stronger faith, faith that moves mountains. The key for success is inside the believer. If he really believes..., if he really desires..., if he really prays..., miracles will happen. A quote from one of the sermons highlights this\textsuperscript{120}:

"When you have faith in you, you supplement it with the Word, and you will have a miracle. It is not difficult to bring about a miracle. Just believe in what God says. Just mix the Word of God with your faith. The moment your faith and the Word of God are combined, a miracle is produced. You can walk in your miracle today. You can get whatever you are looking for. A miracle is not something that is in heaven. It is something that is right within you. It is right in your heart. You need to believe it, and then to speak it, and then you will have it. Glory to God! Your miracle is within you."

\textsuperscript{118} Tape Praise 1998a.
\textsuperscript{119} Tape Praise 1998a.
Another minister had an even better articulated doctrine of faith and the way in which a Christian should it. He explained that a Christian needs to go to the spiritual world to ask for his miracle, after which the invisible world will instruct the visible world to comply with the request. The only condition is that one’s requests should be based on the Word of God:

"Let me explain to you. There are two worlds: the visible and the invisible. Two worlds. Now the visible world is controlled by the invisible one. It doesn’t matter what it is, it is being controlled from the invisible world. If things are right in the invisible world, they manifest in the visible world. Let me give an example. When you have a need, and you go to God, and you pray, what does that mean? You are making an appeal to the invisible world. Because that is where God is. (...) What makes the invisible world agree to whatever you ask or pray for? It is when you go to the invisible world and say to it: this is my need. And according to your Word, God, this is what your word says: I stand on your Word. When you do that, you are saying to God: I have faith in you. The moment you do that, the visible world receives instructions from the invisible world to create what has been finished in the invisible world. Let me give you an example. What if my child does not pass at school? You go to the invisible world: “Lord, your Word says: you will bless the fruit of my womb; if this child is 'domkop', it is not what you purposed about me and my child. I pray right now, this child will be clever, this child will understand mathematics.”

Another example of using this power to influence things via the invisible world was the following:

"There was a lady working for a hotel group. She is a Christian. The hotel was to be closed, so she came to me and said: “Pastor, this hotel is going to be closed down.” I asked her: “Where do you want to go?” She said: “I want to go and work in this other hotel that I like, but they want to transfer me to another hotel.” I said: “Hold the phone.” I explained: “I am going to pray for you, lady: ‘In the name of Jesus, this lady will not be transferred to that hotel, she will be taken to this one...’” What was I doing? In the invisible world I was disconnecting her from the unwished for hotel, and I was connecting her to the desired one. I unplugged her there, and plugged her in here. After I had plugged her in, she phoned me a month later and said: “Pastor, I have been interviewed, and they have confirmed that I’m going to the hotel I wanted to go to.” Plug and unplug things in the invisible world.

120 Tape Praise 1999c.
121 Tape Praise 1998a.
122 Tape Praise 1998a.
you learning something tonight? How do you unplug them? Through your mouth, based on the word of God.”

One minister warned against the danger of having faith in the power of faith itself. Faith should always be based on the Word of God123:

“Faith is not a magic formula. True faith is faith in God and not faith in faith. Faith must be faith based on the knowledge of the God in whom you have believed. Now, once we believe God, the works of the devil will be destroyed. Sins, sickness, oppression and shackles will be destroyed. All you need is to say: God, I believe. Nothing is impossible for You.”

An important consideration when evaluating these sermons was, how is Jesus Christ portrayed. Is He seen as a king, an intercessor, a supplier of needs, a mediator, or a giver of life? The amazing fact is that although the name of Jesus Christ was often used in formulas (e.g. prayer formulas, “in the name of Jesus”, or when quoting Him, “Jesus said…”), there was never a substantial explanation of His current work. One gains the impression that Jesus and the Father are perceived as one and the same, both involved in the same work, whereby it becomes unnecessary to differentiate between the specific roles of the Father and the Son. Resultantly the identity of the Person of the Father and Son disappears. They are both involved in granting victory, they are both involved in healing, they are both involved in destroying the work of the devil. In many sermons nothing is said about the present day work of Jesus whatsoever, and in some sermons his name is not mentioned at all!

Evaluation
1. Sermons preached in Praise Tabernacle Church indicate that salvation is understood primarily in terms of victory over sickness and evil forces, as well as a means of obtaining success and prosperity in the present-day life. Victory over sin does not figure strongly.
2. This salvation is seen as a power that is available in the supernatural realm. Believers can activate this power by using their faith.

123 Tape Praise 1999e.
3. The sermons do not contain signs of a clear doctrine about the work of Jesus Christ. He is not prominent in them, neither is there any indication of a differentiation between His and the work of God the Father.

This evaluation deals with sermons held in one particular church, namely Praise Tabernacle Church. As such it shows a trend that is visible in a part of the Bazalwane-churches. This does not imply that this type of sermon is typical of the preaching in the broader Bazalwane-movement. My impression is that it is representative of the preaching found especially in the younger independent pentecostal churches, and that things are probably different in the older Pentecostal churches such as Apostolic Faith Mission and (International) Assemblies of God.

During the course of my research I could not get hold of enough sermons from other Pentecostal churches to be able to draw conclusions. On the basis of interviews with church leaders it would seem safe to assume that the power-type of preaching is appealing to the older churches, but that there are differences.

To illustrate this: Several respondents told me that the 'prosperity gospel' is gaining influence in the older Pentecostal churches. One long time member of the local AFM told me that he was very unhappy with "this new teaching about being rich". Himself a poor man, he felt uneasy in the very church of which he has been a member for many years. "They give you a few years", he said, "but if your circumstances do not improve, ba tla go lebelela ka mokgwa o mongwe" (they will look at you differently).

Views on salvation

Although the 'prosperity message' has recently gained influence in the older Pentecostal churches, the message of salvation still seems to be broader than in the younger independent Pentecostal churches. During interviews with members of AFM en IAG the question was asked as to how Bazalwane-Christians view Jesus Christ and His work. Nearly all respondents described Jesus in the first place as their Saviour. When asked to enlarge on the saving work of Jesus, the majority of respondents said that Jesus has delivered us from sins, from sicknesses and other life-threatening dangers.
A pastor of the International Assemblies of God stated that “the sacrificial death of Jesus has brought us victory”. This victory, according to him, is experienced in three areas: sin, sickness, and evil forces.

With regard to the victory over sin, this pastor explained that Bazalwane-Christs know that a Christian is not perfect, and that he still may fall in to sin. However, “the emphasis is not on this, the emphasis is on the victory.” Practically this means that you would not hear a Pentecostal say: “I am a sinner, saved by grace.” Pentecostals would emphasize the victory and say: “I was a sinner, but now I am a born again Christian.” In their testimonies people would recall their former life and explain what sins they were doing then. But then they would emphasize that the Lord had saved them and describe how their life had changed afterwards. Although they would not deny that a Christian may fall into sin, the emphasis would be on the victory over sin.

There is a certain ambiguity among Pentecostal Christians about the victory over sin. I had a lengthy discussion with a prominent member of the local AFM-congregation about his views on a Christian’s victory over sin. On the one hand this man stressed the victory. “Mozalwane ke motho yo a tlogetšeng sebe” (a Christian is a person who has parted with sins), he said. A Christian can really leave his sins behind, he believed. He illustrated this with his own life. In his childhood days he had watched his family praying to the ancestors and he had taken part in those ceremonies. After becoming a Christian he has never done it again. His own children do not even know what happens during the ‘work of the ancestors’. He compared it to stealing sugar: as a child you steal sugar, but when you grow up, you don’t do that anymore. In this way Christians do not do the things they did before. On the other hand, when asked whether Christians can really conquer sin, he said: “Re ka se re re šetše re fentše, fela, re lwela go fènya” (We cannot say we have already gained the victory, but, we are fighting to win).

I asked the above mentioned pastor whether the interceding work of Jesus Christ is important to Pentecostal Christians. He believed that there is a “doctrinal flaw” here. “That Jesus is interceding for us, is known, but it is spoken about only in passing. People like His delivering power much more that His interceding work.” When I asked what the reason was for this bias, the pastor said: “Maybe people are afraid of becoming lazy about praying when they know that Jesus is praying for us.” I offered him another explanation: If you
emphasize the victory over sin, you do not need an intercessor anymore... This could also be an explanation, the pastor thought.

Regarding victory over sickness, the pastor explained that divine healing is seen as a command. There is no such thing as ‘if God is willing, you may be healed’. “God wants everybody to be in good health”, the pastor said, and he continued: “We believe that God is willing to heal everyone. It may happen that somebody does not get better, but not often. Should somebody not experience healing, it means he is lacking in faith. The minister will know this, but he will not say it in public.”

I asked the pastor’s opinion about a case from my own pastoral experience. You visit a lady in hospital who is very ill. She has cancer and the doctors have told her the illness is terminal. She will probably die within a few days. What do you tell her? Do you encourage her to have faith and be healed? Or do you encourage her to accept the inevitable and prepare to meet the Lord? The pastor answered that he would surely encourage her to pray and have faith that she could be healed. He knew of many cases where people were healed who had been in a similar situation. “A person may even come back to life”, he said. What if the sister does not recover and dies within a few days, I asked? The pastor answered that her faith was probably not strong enough for her to be healed, but that this does not mean that she was not a Christian.

Sickness is seen as a work of Satan, the pastor said. “We do not believe that sickness is a work of God, though God may allow sickness, perhaps with the aim of teaching us something. But the real source of sickness is Satan.” There is a difference of opinion among Pentecostal Christians on the actual involvement of Satan. Some would only say that Satan is the origin of sickness, others would say that sickness is caused by demonic involvement, and they would then cast out demons.

When it came to discussing the victory over evil forces, the pastor explained that many people who seem to have physical sicknesses, in fact are being troubled by evil spirits. “When we pray for them, demons manifest.” Manifestations of demons may be: shaking of the body, screaming, and direct conversation (they ask questions, they curse you, they say they don’t want to leave). Demons are rebuked and cast out. The pastor believes that
Christians should exercise the authority invested in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. The name of Jesus does not have power in itself. It is not a magical formula. A personal relationship with Jesus is necessary. “Only a truly born again Christian can use the name of Jesus with authority.”

Evaluation
In the Pentecostal churches generally salvation is understood in triumphant terms. The victory over sin and evil is stressed. There are high expectations of the believer’s new life. In the younger Pentecostal churches there is a tendency to understand salvation in terms of prosperity, good fortune and protection against evil forces. There is also an inclination to stress the power of faith. Salvation tends to be seen as an impersonal power, available in the supernatural realm, that can be activated by the faith of the believer. In the older Pentecostal churches the views on salvation are more balanced. Redemption is seen as deliverance from and victory over sin and evil forces (including illness, demons).

6.4 Influence of the Faith Movement

There has always been a strong Western influence in the South African Pentecostal churches, especially the younger independent churches. Whereas the older Pentecostal churches have been influenced by their counterparts in the USA, the churches of the so-called “First Wave of the Spirit” (Lederle 1990: 282), the younger independent churches have been influenced more by the so-called “Third Wave”, especially the section called the Faith-movement. Allan Anderson has rightly stated that “perhaps the greatest influence on these churches in South Africa is the Rhema Bible Church of Ray McCauley, as some of the leaders have attended his Rhema Bible Training Centre” (Anderson 1992b: 10-11).
McCauley's Rhema church in South Africa is an offshoot of Kenneth Hagin's Rhema church in Tulsa, Oklahoma (USA). At the Rhema Bible Training Centre in South Africa the list of prescribed books, which I have seen, consists mainly of books by Hagin. In the Rhema bookshop one also finds books, tapes and videos of other representatives of the Faith movement, such as Kenneth Copeland and T.D. Jakes.

A very influential preacher in Africa during the nineties has been Myles Munroe, who started his career under Hagin, and then founded his own organization called Bahamas Faith Ministries. One pastor was adamant: “Myles Munroe is the most quoted person among black pastors, hands down...” Munroe is part of the Faith movement but has some emphases of his own.

HAGIN

When listening to the sermons in a church like Praise Tabernacle Church, it does not take long to become aware of similarities with books and articles written by Kenneth Hagin. An example is the comparison of an article by Kenneth Hagin on ‘Faith and Power’, published in September 1998 (Hagin 1998) and sermons which were held in PTC after that date.

In his article Hagin compares the power of the Holy Spirit, which is God's power, with electricity, and he continues to say: “The thing that turns the heavenly power on in the spiritual realm can be compared to an electrical switch on a wall that turns on the earthly power – electricity – in the natural realm.” (5) Electricity doesn’t work when one does not plug in. In the same way God’s power doesn’t manifest itself if one does not plug in. Hagin maintains that believers have the right to ‘plug in’:

“You can plug in to God’s power on your own faith!”

Hagin continues:

“Although electricity is present all the time, unless someone turns a switch on, there’s not going to be any manifestation of it. In the same way, you have to turn the switch of faith on to receive a manifestation of the healing power of God!”

Hagin explains that power is always present everywhere. But it has to be put into manifestation by faith:

“Remember, God’s power is present everywhere! But the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man makes that tremendous power available! That’s what we in Pentecostal
circles called “praying the power down.” But another way to say it is “praying the power into manifestation.”

No matter how healing is effected, by simple faith, or by laying on of hands, or by supernatural manifestations of the healing power of God, every method is good:

“We know that each of these methods of healing is scriptural and that they all work mightily on our behalf – when we mix faith with the power!”

Let us now compare these quotes from Hagin’s article with quotes from three sermons delivered in Praise Tabernacle Church in Soshanguve:

Concerning ‘power’ being available124:

“God has released everything. All that there is between you and God, is to receive. Receive them in the invisible realm, then they manifest in the natural.”

The power of faith to ‘switch on’ the power of God125:

“What makes the invisible world agree to whatever you ask or pray for? It is when you go to the invisible world and say to it: this is my need. And according to your word, God, this is what your word says: I stand on your Word. When you do that, you are saying to God: I have faith in you. The moment you do that, the visible world receives instructions from the invisible world to create what has been finished in the invisible world.”

About ‘plugging in’ to power126:

“Plug and unplug things in the invisible world! How do you unplug them? Through your mouth, based on the word of God. (...) Each time you say ‘in the name of Jesus’ you are disconnecting things in the spiritual realm and you are connecting them elsewhere, and they will work. When you do that, it is what we call faith.”

When ‘mixing’ faith and power127:

“When you have faith in you, you supplement it with the Word, and you will have a miracle. To have a miracle is not difficult. Just believe what God says. Just mix the Word of God with your faith. The moment your faith and the Word of God mix together, a miracle is produced. You can walk in your miracle today. You can get whatever you are looking for.”

When it comes to ‘praying the power into manifestation’128:

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124 Tape Praise 1998a.
125 Tape Praise 1998a.
126 Tape Praise 1998a.
127 Tape Praise 1999c.
"I have a vision: It is P-U-S-H: Pray Until Something Happens. Pray Until Something Happens!"

The teaching of Hagin and the Faith Movement has been described, evaluated and criticized by many people (e.g. McConnell 1995, Smail, Walker & Wright 1994, Hanegraaf 1997, Martin 1997:495-516). The criticism has been intense. Even Pentecostals like Smail, Walker and Wright use the word ‘heretic’ when referring to the teachings of the Faith movement. McConnell summarizes four principle heresies of the Faith theology as follows (McConnell 1995:185):

1. its deistic view of God, who must dance to men’s attempts to manipulate the spiritual laws of the universe;
2. its demonic view of Christ, who is filled with “the satanic nature” and must be “born-again” in hell;
3. its gnostic view of revelation, which demands denial of the physical senses and classifies Christians by their willingness to do so;
4. its metaphysical view of salvation, which deifies man and spiritualizes the atonement, locating it in hell rather than on the cross, thereby subverting the crucial biblical belief that it is Christ’s physical death and shed blood which alone atone for sin.

Smail, Walker and Wright have pointed out that the Faith movement has a “low Christology” which leads to “an incoherent doctrine of the Holy Trinity” (1994:69). There is a grave danger that the Holy Spirit is no longer seen as a person but may be “reduced to God’s power force, or reduced yet again to that universal principle, faith force” (69)

It is not to be assumed that all these heresies affect the preaching in independent Pentecostal churches in South Africa in the same way. On the basis of what this research has shown, it seems that the weird doctrine about Christ (that He has died twice, once spiritually, once physically) does not attract attention. The teaching of the power of faith, however, is popular. The ministers in the independent pentecostal churches in Soshanguve are in love with power. Faith is seen as the tool to get this power operating (to use Hagin’s words: the switch to turn the power into manifestation). Furthermore, it

122 Tape Praise 1999d.
certainly does affect the doctrine about God. McConnell’s warning in this regard is to the point (1995:134):

“The Faith theology’s view of spiritual laws and formulas can only be understood in the light of the doctrine of God in the metaphysical cults. The god in which the metaphysical cults believe is not a personal god who sovereignly governs the universe. Their god is an impersonal force: “the Infinite Power”…”

MUNROE

Myles Munroe is the founder of Bahamas Faith Ministries International. He has studied at Oral Roberts University and at the University of Tulsa. He is part of the Faith movement but has repackaged the message in a way that seems to be very attractive to church leaders in the Third World, especially in Africa. He is also the founder of the International Third World Leaders Association.

Munroe’s central message revolves on the importance of having purpose. This message is preached time and again, in his books and in his lectures. Some quotes:

“Everything in life has a purpose” (1992:10)
“God created you with a definite purpose in mind” (1992:10)
“If you don’t know your purpose, someone will give you theirs” (1991 video)
“You are equipped with everything you need to fulfill your purpose” (1992:56)
“Purpose creates a vision. Vision produces goals. Goals determine the necessary steps toward the desired end.” (1992:94)
“God is the source of purpose. God is a predestinator before He is a creator. God chose us long before the earth began, to fulfill His plans according to His purposes.” (1992:124)

Specifically Third World people have been the target group for Munroe’s message of purpose. He has tried to make them feel proud, to believe that they have great potential,
to instil in them a belief that they can succeed, if only they have purpose. In an address to
the Third World Munroe wrote the following (1992:148):

“If you believe that others hold the key to your success and fulfillment, then you
will live to please them and to fulfill their expectations. You will also rely on their
affirmation, approval and acceptance to measure the value of your life. (...) This
standard of measuring success is the source of much Third World frustration as
nations find it difficult to break the sophisticated patterns of colonization and
oppression, and millions of individuals live in a cycle of aimlessness, depression
and poverty.”

Munroe tells the Third World that its time has come129:

“There is a new season upon the world now. God has turned his face on the Third
World people everywhere, including the Third World in America, and He’s
raising them up with no man’s permission. So you’d better adjust to the season no
matter what your opinion is.”

In one of his latest books, Munroe states that God is changing the guards (1998:56):

“The changing of the guards is upon us. We must submit and enthusiastically
embrace what the God of all creation is doing. Where is this awakening taking
place? This great and mighty move of God is taking place all over the world,
especially in Third World nations. Africa and the Caribbean nations are set ablaze
with revival and evangelistic fires. Out of these nations God is raising up mighty
men and women of God whose tongues are set afire with the truth of God’s Word.”

The Third World is encouraged to shrug off it’s status as a mission field, and become a
missionary itself. It should understand the purpose for which God has called it and
develop its potential. Munroe tells the Third World:

“Your time has come. You will be able to take charge. Let change transform your
fear into faith. March to the drumbeat of your season. Future generations depend
on you. It’s your turn.”

There is not much theology in Munroe’s books and messages. He uses Biblical examples
to illustrate his message, but the approach is more psychological then theological, and all

129 Video Munroe 1991.
in all it reminds one of the ‘power of positive thinking’ movement. Munroe’s message provides African preachers with the motivation to believe that Africa possesses the potential to be independent and strong and to become a world leader (in christianity). The three catchwords of Munroe’s approach are: Purpose, Potential and Power.

There is no christology in Munroe’s books, let alone a meaningful exposition about the Lordship of Christ or the authority of Jesus to govern the lives of believers. It is to be feared that this is not relevant to Munroe’s approach.

Munroe has influence in especially the younger independent pentecostal churches. The pastor of Forward in Faith Ministries – a church originating from Zimbabwe - in Soshanguve refers to Munroe during his sermons, and members of this church even mention his name as a leader.

Evaluation

1. All Pentecostal churches have been touched by the Faith movement, and the younger Pentecostal churches have been influenced strongly by it.

2. The elements of Faith theology that have been adopted are especially the belief in the power of faith as such (“faith in faith”) and the emphasis on healing and prosperity. Peculiar tenets of the ‘low christology’ of Faith theology (e.g. the two deaths of Jesus) have not been taken over by African Pentecostal preachers.

3. There is not much christology to be found in the younger independent Pentecostal churches. The result: The person of Jesus becomes increasingly obscure, forming part of a Trinity that more and more resembles an impersonal power. In the older Pentecostal churches the theology is more balanced.

6.5 The Spirit, the Word and the church leaders

Consideration of whether Jesus is seen as having authority to control believers lives, revealed that some AFM and IAG members deemed it an integral part of their faith. One lady said: “Jesus influences my decisions, because ‘ke a rapela’ (I pray)”. She also said that the title ‘Morena’ (Lord) is important to her, because: “Ke yena a bušang bophelo bja ka” (He is the one that governs my life). When asked how Jesus rules us, she said: “O
“O re buša ka Lentsšu la Modimo le ka Moya o mokgethwa” (He rules us through the Word of God and through the Holy Spirit).

Another described herself as “being born again, Spirit-filled, loving the Lord, being controlled by Jesus”. She was saved during evangelist Bonnke’s tentcampaign in 1982. On her third visit she said: “I accepted Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour, I was cleansed by His blood, since then He is my Lord.” Asked what it meant that Jesus controls her life, she explained: “He is in control of my life, because my own desires have been changed and channelled. I no longer desire to do those things, and it is not hard for me to desist from them.”

Generally I found that most Bazalwane-Christians affirmed the Lordship of Jesus Christ (in the sense of having authority over the lives of believers) when specifically asked about it.

Two areas which lean towards endangering the Biblical functioning of the Lordship of Christ, are: (1) a tendency to separate the Spirit from the Word, (2) a tendency to elevate charismatic church leaders to a very high status.

**Word and Spirit**

Pentecostal churches attach great significance to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible, as the Word of God, is highly valued. Many members of Pentecostal churches have a thorough knowledge of the Bible. They believe that the Holy Spirit has inspired the Bible writers and therefore see the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. They also believe that Jesus, as the Head of the church, still guides us through the Bible. Though this is true, peculiarities in the way the Bible is used (and sometimes not used) are at variance with this high view on the Bible.

First, it struck me that during the course of my research I heard only one sermon of which one could say the text was worked out meaningfully. Expository preaching is a rarity. In many sermons the text is used only as a starting-point and the Bible as a reference book. The emphasis is on powerful preaching. Even when this shifts to teaching, the minister will select and expound on a topic and merely draw proof and illustrations from the
Bible. In cases where an evangelist seems to dwell on his text, it still cannot be termed expository preaching.\textsuperscript{130} Another example is a sermon on 1 Kings 2:30 entitled ‘Ke tla hwela mona’ (I will die here).\textsuperscript{131} This is the story of Joab who, fearing for his life, fled to the tent of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar, probably in the hope of escaping death. When Benaiah ordered him to come out, Joab answered ‘No, I will die here’.

In this sermon the minister interprets Joab’s actions very positively as a wish ‘to die in the Lord’. It thus becomes an example for us to follow. “Joab said to Benaiah: Benaiah, I don’t want to die on the street, I don’t want to die in the disco, I don’t want to die in the beerhall, I don’t want to die on my own ‘stoep’. I want to die in Christ!” The application is obvious: Just as Joab wanted to die in the Lord’s temple, so we should die in Christ.

This was an evangelistic sermon. It’s content was clearly defined: calling people to make a commitment to Christ.

Sermons directed at a group of believers might be expected to be more instructive and to have more Biblical content. However, this is often not the case. The Biblical content is often poor. Other researchers have also noticed this weakness. Watt has suggested that the main reason is to be found in the lack of formal theological training (1992:105). I believe that another reason is the love for enthusiastic and powerful preaching which is seen as signifying the Spirit of God at work.

In some of the younger Pentecostal churches a more serious danger looms: A text is worked out superficially and then used in a direction that is opposed to the original meaning.

An example here\textsuperscript{132} is a Faith movement sermon preached in Praise Tabernacle Church on Romans 1:16-17 “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”. First, the message was narrowed down to “There is power in the gospel for everyone who believes”. Then its meaning changed by: “You can have whatsoever you desire, and according to your faith so shall it be.” In the end it was no longer the power of the gospel, but the power of faith: “The power of your faith plus the Word will produce a miracle.”

\textsuperscript{130} An example has been given in par. 6.3
\textsuperscript{131} Tape Ralekgolela 1991b.
\textsuperscript{132} Tape Praise 1999c.
A second tendency, related to the first one, is the precedence given to the work of the Spirit over and above the Word, which is pushed into the background. In par. 6.2 I have related what happened in the AFM-service in Soshanguve which I attended: after a sermon of 5 minutes the preacher ‘worked with the Spirit’ (a berekiša Moya o mokgethwa) for 45 minutes. This may have been an exception in AFM, but the fact that it was allowed to happen, is significant.

It can be further demonstrated by the importance attached to visions and dreams. There is sometimes a naïve willingness to believe what church leaders say has been revealed to them. An example is the value attached by Forward-in-Faith members to the fact that the founder of this church, Ezekiel Guti, has had visions and that “God spoke to him directly”.

In the church magazine ‘This is That’ Guti tells his readers that “the God who showed me many stars in the sky in 1946 said to me it was a sign of many people I was going to lead.” He also tells the readers that in 1963 he went to a mountain to pray. There the Lord told him: “Learn to read the English Bible and also learn to preach in English because you shall go to many countries with my word.” Guti continues: “I went up to the mountain and in a cave I learned to read the English Bible. Through prayer and fasting the Holy Spirit helped me to learn English.” Guti then refers to Isaiah 50:4 where it says: “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue.” The article then proceeds to show how God has fulfilled these visions: “Forward in Faith has a church in England and Scotland. Dr Guti has also addressed congregations in America, Israel and The Netherlands. Remember this was prophesied 34 years ago. God has honoured his promises to Ezekiel Guti.”

In discussions with Forward-in-Faith members it struck me how important it is that their church leader claims to have had these visions. There is no hesitation in their minds as to the reliability of it all. In their eyes it proves that Guti is a true prophet of God.

We conclude that due to lack of theological training, a love for ‘powerful’ rather than expository preaching, and sometimes because of wrong doctrine, the Word of God is pushed into the background. This is aggravated by a propensity to give precedence to the

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133 This is That, A ZAOGA Forward in Faith Ministries International Magazine (Harare, Zimbabwe), Vol 6, August 1994, p. 5.
more direct and visible work of the Spirit over and against careful study and exposition of
the Bible.
This is detrimental to the functioning of the Lordship of Christ. In some cases the damage
is limited, in others it is serious (Forward in Faith).

Charismatic leadership
All Pentecostal churches are inclined to look for and identify the Spirit-gifted ‘men of
God’, the charismatic leaders made profitable by the Holy Spirit. In some (not all)
Pentecostal churches these men are put on a pedestal.
Ezekiel Guti, the leader of Forward in Faith, to whom we have referred already, is a good
example. It is striking how many (honorary) titles he is given. In one issue of the church
magazine\textsuperscript{134}, I came across the following: man of God, apostle, archbishop, God’s
messenger, God’s distinguished vessel, servant of God. In official announcements he is
referred to as ‘Apostle & Servant of God Dr E.H. Guti’.\textsuperscript{135} His followers speak of him
with deep respect. He has been called by God and God has done mighty deeds through
the service of Ezekiel Guti.
In other churches the position of the church leader is described in more moderate terms.
The position of John Bond within the Assemblies of God of South Africa comes to mind.
He has been ‘chairman’ of the movement as a whole as well as ‘apostolic overseer’ of a
section of this church. Watt (1992:141-142) describes him as a man whose leadership
was accepted by ministers and churches because of his gifts of leadership and his
seniority. Among AOG members, however, I have not come across the type of veneration
for the church leader that I encountered among Forward in Faith-members.
In the case of Forward in Faith the position of the church leader has been elevated to
higher and higher levels and it has clearly gone too far.

During the time of my research in Soshanguve, a photograph of Guti was put up in the
church building of the local Forward in Faith-branch. At the same time ministers started

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{This is That}, Vol 6, August 1994.
\textsuperscript{135} The apostle-title is probably from an Assemblies of God-background. Guti’s church is also called
ZAOGA, which stands for Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa. In some Assemblies of God-circles
there is a view that the apostolic ministry did not cease to exist after the first generation of Christians
passed into history, but that Ephesians 4:11 tells us the apostolic ministry will be relevant until the second
coming of Christ (Watt 1992:85)
using a new phrase in their prayers: they started praying to "Modimo wa Ezekiel Guti" (the God of Ezekiel Guti). This led to serious differences of opinion in the church. Some members of the church felt that Forward in Faith was now becoming "a church like the ZCC". The local pastor defended the practice by referring to the Old Testament phrase ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’. In the end some of the dissenting members left Forward in Faith and joined other Pentecostal movements.

It appears that there is a general tendency in Pentecostal circles to look for a charismatic leader around whom the believers can group themselves. In some cases there seems to be nothing unhealthy about it, but in other cases the leaders position acquires such eminence that he becomes a semi-Messianic figure. This obviously detracts from the Lordship of Christ.

**Evaluation**

1. Due to a lack of theological training, a love for ‘powerful’ rather than expository preaching, and sometimes because of wrong doctrine, the Word of God is pushed into the background. This is aggravated by a tendency to give precedence to the more direct and visible work of the Spirit over and against careful study and exposition of the Bible. In some cases the damage is limited, in others it is serious (Forward in Faith).

2. It appears that there is an inclination to look for a charismatic leader around whom the believers can group themselves. In some cases there seems to be nothing unhealthy about it, but in other cases the position of the leader of the church is elevated to such a level that he becomes a semi-Messianic figure.

If it is accepted that the Lord Jesus rules us through his Word and Spirit, it is clear that the two tendencies mentioned have a detrimental effect on the functioning of the Lordship of Christ. The attention is drawn away from the Word of God and directed to ‘Spirit-filled’ works and/or the ‘Spirit-filled’ leader.
6.6 Victory over evil forces

In order to give a more complete picture of beliefs of Bazalwane-Christians in Soshanguve, it is worthwhile to look into prevailing beliefs about evil forces. It is here that a typically ‘African flavour’ exists.

In a community where spirit possession is a well known phenomenon (especially among traditional healers), there is a strong need to overcome these forces. There is no greater comfort than to be able to rebuke demons. According to the findings of the present research there is no difference in this respect between the older and the younger Pentecostal churches.

There is, however, a difference between white and black Pentecostal Christians. Where white Pentecostals would diagnose an illness, black Pentecostal Christians would be inclined to assume that demonic powers are at work.

I remember attending a prayer meeting of a group of Apostolic Faith Mission-members on a weekday evening. One of the members was not feeling well: she explained that there was “water in the ear or something”. It did not seem to be a serious problem but she nevertheless asked to be prayed for. She was made to sit down on a chair in the centre while all the believers prayed for her, in loud voices. After five minutes they stopped and the leader asked whether she felt any better. She said: “It’s still the same.” I remember the one brother saying to the other: “Rapela gape, ntate, Sathane o sa le teng.” (Pray again, brother, Satan is still there...) In instances like these one gets the feeling that discernment is lacking. People blindly hack around them as it were, to drive away evil spirits.

A pastor of the local IAG-branch said that white Pentecostals usually stress speaking in tongues and that black Pentecostals prefer the casting out of demons. According to him when, during the same service, both white and black pastors take part in the laying on of hands, the white pastor would afterwards talk of how many people had been healed, while the black pastor would speak about how many demons had been cast out.

An evangelist in the same church was of the opinion that in a church service eight out of ten people may be controlled by the Holy Spirit, but that two out of ten may be controlled by demons. These two may be guests attending the service and have probably been sent by the devil. “Sometimes these people go outside when we worship God and after a while they come inside again. When we interview these people, some of them
acknowledge that they are sent by the devil.” The evangelist interpreted this as follows:
“There is a spiritual fight going on. The devil sends his followers to Bazalwane-churches.” I asked him why Paul did not mention the gift of casting out demons in his letters, not even in his letter to the Corinthians where he mentions so many spiritual gifts. The evangelist had no explanation for this. He guessed that in Paul’s time the devil had temporarily withdrawn his demons from the fight.

In churches like the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) there is definite demonic activity, according to these Pentecostal pastors. Some even say that the leadership of the ZCC is nothing else than a bunch of satanists. One sign of demonic involvement (according to Pentecostal Christians) is that some ZCC-members utter strange noises (grunting, etc.) during church services. Whereas the ZCC itself would claim that these people have the Holy Spirit, an IAG-pastor told me that these people in fact are possessed by demons. “You would not tell the person straight, but we as ‘bazalwane’ understand what’s going on.” He told me that he has helped some of them: “I have prayed for some of these people, the demons have left them and they did not do those strange things again.” The same applies to the so-called ‘prophets’ within the ZCC. According to Pentecostal Christians these prophets are in fact possessed by demons. The same pastor said: “They start by singing and making strange sounds, then they prophesy, but it’s different. The say things like “your neighbours are sending tikoloshe” or “there is a black cat on the roof” or “you should go and let the bones speak”. The Holy Spirit would never say things like that. The Holy Spirit will rather show you the problem of a person.”

During the interviews I found an overriding fear of demons among Pentecostal Christians (as opposed to members of other churches where it was a fear of witchcraft). Accordingly, there is no greater victory than to gain mastery over demons. This mastery is, of course, through the name of Jesus, but it is still seen as a personal power specific to the pastor. Some evangelists, I was told, attempt to communicate with demons. They try to get demons to answer questions to show that Jesus (and the pastor) is in command. I was told about a pastor who commanded a Zulu-speaking demon to change his language and speak Tswana, “which the demon did”. People are fascinated by these things.
A peculiar feature of the Pentecostal beliefs about demons, is that people do not feel guilty about associating with them. There is in Africa no stigma attached to having a demon. It is not a shame. Rather an excuse. A person cannot be held responsible for possessing a demon. Perhaps it was “in the family” or the person was possibly given sejeso (traditional medicine, poison).

As there is no sense of guilt or shame attached to actions involving demons, there is no need to humble oneself either. All that is needed, is that a stronger power should be put to war against the evil forces. It is here that the pastors and evangelists who have this power, come into play. According to my experience, however, there is a tendency among Pentecostal evangelists to take a shortcut towards casting out demons and bypassing some important steps in the process.

Let me make this point clear by quoting from the book ‘A Manual of Demonology and the Occult’ by Kent Philpott (1973). This book is known among Pentecostal groups in Soshanguve. Philpott identifies the following steps in order to be freed from demonic possession (1973:122-123):

1. Repentance: “It is first necessary that a person desiring deliverance turn away from sin (...). It is essential that all occult and sin involvement be confessed and repented of. It is not a matter to rush over or take lightly.”

2. Faith: “Secondly, it is important for the demonically troubled person to place his faith in Jesus Christ.”

3. Resisting the devil: “Thirdly, the person must actively resist the demonic.”

4. Casting out of the demon by other believers. Philpott adds: “It is important for Christians to lead a person in a prayer of renunciation and confession.”

My experience of Pentecostal evangelists and pastors casting out demons, is that they tend to bypass step 1 and step 3. They do indeed call on people to have faith in Jesus and abstain from pagan activities, but then proceed very quickly to step 4, the actual casting out of the demon.

The explanation for this is twofold. In the first place there is not enough awareness of the fact that living in sin may be the root of the problem of demonic possession, and that not only should the demon be chased out of the house, but the Holy Spirit needs to come and stay inside (Luke 11:24-26). Secondly, a reluctance to actively involve the afflicted
person in learning to resist the devil, as this process may take time; instead evangelists prefer the more spectacular way, the ‘power encounter’ method.

It may be that once again the teachings of the Faith movement have influenced Pentecostal beliefs in this regard. In the booklet ‘Demons and How to Deal With Them’ that I encountered in a few Bazalwane-homes, Kenneth Hagin states that a person can be a born again Christian and still have a demon in his body or soul. A quote from Hagin (1979:11-12):

“I’ll never believe that a born again Christian walking in fellowship with God has a demon in his spirit. You can’t find any Scripture to convince me of it. But I do know that sometimes in the case of physical sickness there is a spirit in there that has to be dealt with. (...) By the same token, demons and evil spirits can get into the soul part of man. They can get into his mind and his emotions and never touch his spirit. These spirits that we cast out of people are primarily in this emotional realm. That explains how people can be born again and still have a spirit. They can have a demon in the soul realm.”

According to this teaching, a born again Christian can have a demon without realizing it and without being responsible for it, let alone being guilty or needing to ask forgiveness. Once again, Philpott’s steps 1 and 3 may be bypassed because they are irrelevant if Hagin’s teaching is true. The only avenue that remains is indeed the ‘power encounter’: using the power of faith, victoriously casting out the demon in the name of Jesus.

In these views about demonic possession and how to deal with it, a love of power or even an obsession with power is reflected. A plausible explanation lies in the consideration of two backgrounds: Pentecostal theology and traditional African religion (see par. 7.4.2).

**Evaluation**

Findings regarding views on the victory over demonic forces, serve to confirm what has been stated earlier: salvation is primarily understood in terms of power and victory over evil forces. Power tends to become a commodity for church leaders, managed in cooperation with the Spirit. There is probably a link between traditional African concepts of power and the Pentecostal concept of ‘the power of the Spirit’ in this respect.
The consequences for Christology are serious. Christ is seen as a Victor who has conquered sin and evil. In doing so he has released a tremendous power subservient to church members (the ‘power of faith’) and the church leaders in cooperation with the Spirit. Christ Himself, however, may easily become a Christus otiosus.

6.7 Conclusions

1. Among Pentecostal Christians in Soshanguve Jesus Christ is primarily seen as a Christus Victor, a powerful and victorious Saviour who is able to give his followers the victory over dangers in the natural realm (e.g. accidents, sickness) as well as the supernatural realm (e.g. witchcraft, demons). There is less emphasis on spiritual dangers (e.g. falling into sin).

2. There is a much weaker notion of Jesus as the Christus Kyrios, Christ as the present Master the Authority to rule the lives of believers through His Word and Spirit. This should be seen in conjunction with optimistic beliefs about the possibilities of reborn Christians. There is a tendency to suggest that victory over sin is not just a ‘victory in Christ’ but a victory already experienced in real life.

3. The concept of ‘power’ is very important, especially in the younger Pentecostal churches. This is probably best understood against the background of both Pentecostal theology and traditional African religion. ‘Power’ is seen as something that has been made available by the victory of Jesus Christ. It is managed by believers (the ‘power of faith’) and by the church leaders in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. As a result the person of the Lord Jesus Christ stands in danger of becoming unimportant. He has done his job and may easily become a Christus otiosus.