



'Winning Ways': Globalisation and the Impact of the Health and Wealth Gospel

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ABSTRACT Few contemporary religious movements lend themselves so readily to an analysis of the dynamics of globalising than that strand of neo-Pentecostalism known as the 'Faith' movement. Originating in the USA, the numerous ministries which comprise the movement have come to sustain a wide global influence in many diverse cultural conditions. The Faith gospel is noteworthy, not only because of the scale of its success, but because of its distinctive teaching related to divinely-blessed 'health and wealth' which has enjoyed considerable acceptance in different parts of the world. This paper explores the global significance of the Faith movement and argues that, while it has roots in North American culture, its dogma and practices are considerably modified within local cultural environments.

Introduction

As Bryan Wilson impressively illustrated in his work *Religious Sects* (1970), it is possible to trace the largely one-way exportation of numerous North American Christian-orientated movements over some 150 years. Whether they stay within the remit of orthodox Christianity or whether they make considerable theological departures from it, such movements have deliberately set upon global missionary endeavours to make converts to their exclusive worldviews. The Holiness Movement, the Church of the Latter-Day Saints, Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventism, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Christadelphians, to name but a few expressions of sectarianism, have all made their way across the Atlantic from 'God's backyard' in the USA to Europe and beyond.

By the end of the twentieth century, new forms of Protestant evangelicalism have come to the fore and substantially increased the global significance of American-style religion. It is now apparent that the peoples of the world, in a more rigorous and systematic way than ever before, are exposed to the beliefs and ways of life espoused by the North American fundamentalist gospel—to doctrines and practices originating in Oklahoma, Texas, and California. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the contemporary global situation, within which the modern evangelising ministries have an impact, is in stark contrast to the situation which previously prevailed. Above all, modern technology and communication have aided the rapid dissemination of fundamentalist dogmas and enhanced their penetration of very different global cultural localities. Thus, satellite television and multi-million dollar sponsored ministries have engendered what has been called the "mass marketing of God" in an attempt to reach the unsaved and the unchurched (Smark, 1978). In this paper, I focus on one of the most successful and high-profile expressions of evangelical fundamentalism,

the so-called 'Faith movement', and consider its relevance with reference to the numerous dynamics of globalisation as embraced in the contrasting sociological theories.

In some respects, the designation of this relatively new religious phenomenon as a 'movement' is a misnomer, since the distinctive Faith gospel is represented by hundreds of independent ministries which might depart, to one degree or another, in both practice and doctrine, from the core teachings. What cannot be doubted, however, is the global significance of these ministries. Across the world, hundreds of thousands of people subscribe to ministers, such as Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland in the USA. In turn, they have served as a source of inspiration and as catalysts for the global dissemination of similar ministries which are identified by their vast scale of organisational structure and financial resources. The evidence of this is that the characteristic tenets of the Faith ministries have been successfully exported to very different global cultural environments, thus making the movement a prime candidate for analysis in terms of suppositions concerning the nature and implications of globalisation. This is briefly explored here in an examination of their contrasting significance in the advanced economies of Western Europe, in the 'emerging' economies of Latin America, the Pacific rim and elsewhere, and in Third World societies. The paper provides a brief comparative analysis of one of the most successful contemporary religious movements in a global setting.

The Cultural Origins of the Faith Movement

The Faith movement may be understood as one of many strands of what Melton refers to as the Pentecostal 'family' (Melton, 1978). It shares with other Pentecostal groups an emphasis on the 'second baptism' (of the spirit), the charismata (glossolalia, prophecy, words of knowledge, etc.), and revivalism. It also tends to be fundamentalist in that it places great stress on preaching the uncompromising word of God and, through prophetic revelation, it claims a greater articulation of the divine 'truth' in the 'End Times' (Bannon, 1987: 44).¹

At the same time, there is much in the teachings and practices of the Faith ministries, which is obviously congruent with USA-style religion—not only in terms of its Protestant fundamentalism, but also in terms of its tendency towards a materialist orientation. When deconstructed, there is a great deal in the doctrines and practices of the movement, which concurs with Wade Clark Roof's view that North American 'supply-side spirituality' has always carried the assumption that the individual is entitled to an endless supply of material satisfactions. Put succinctly, this includes a positive conception of the spiritual self, in particular, where the well-being of spirit and body is more likely to be interpreted in terms of inner happiness and material accomplishment, which are viewed as intimately related and merged in a single religious order of reality (Roof, 1994: 68).

The Faith movement is undoubtedly in line with such observations. However, Marvin Harris goes further when he argues that the key tenets espoused are an indication of the increasing secularisation of religion, which is directed towards this world and material gain, and are best understood as an attempt to fulfil America's dream of worldly progress by magical and supernatural means (Harris, 1981: 141). In the forefront is the doctrine of the assurance of 'divine'

physical health and prosperity through faith. In short, this means that 'health and wealth' are the automatic divine right of all Bible-believing Christians and may be procreated by faith as part of the package of salvation, since the Atonement of Christ includes not just the removal of sin, but also the removal of sickness and poverty. The Faith ministries express this by fusing fundamentalism with elements of a materialistic culture so that Christian scriptures are given a unique and unorthodox interpretation, for instance, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches of glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Accompanying the teachings are a range of practices which at least border on the metaphysical and in which the 'power' of God is reduced to a spiritual force which can be tapped by various formulas in order to appropriate material benefits (Hunt, 1998).

Going Global

The alleged important processes of globalisation are probably axiomatic when one considers the most constructive framework by which to understand the international influence of forms of evangelical fundamentalism as epitomised by the Faith movement. The problem is that despite previous impressive accounts of globalisation and its consequence for religion, such as that presented by Roland Robertson (1993), much remains unclear about the impact of fundamentalist Christianity.

Since the Faith movement has spread from the USA and 'gone global', it is more than tempting to locate the Faith ministries firmly within the framework of what might be termed the 'hegemonic model', but there are limitations. Frequently, scholarly work within the 'hegemony' paradigm has developed from earlier Marxist frameworks focusing on 'dependency' theory, such as the concept suggested by Immanuel Wallerstein (1980). Here, the nations of the world are subject to the power and influence of the western industrialised nations—culturally, economically, and politically. Thus, the disproportionate global impact of western forms of religion can be understood to be little more than an element of an inherent cultural domination. This view is typically expounded by Brouwer *et al.* in *Exporting the American Gospel* (1996) where it is argued that western, at least nominally Christian, countries have come to take overwhelming control of the world's productive resources, manufacturing, banking, and commercial institutions. It follows that, particularly in the last two centuries, Christianity has proved to be a modernising and westernising religion which has spread over the globe in concert with the mercantile and industrial expansion of capitalism and the establishment of colonial empires. Brouwer *et al.* interpret this as indicative of the new form of Christianity that allows the USA to re-make the world in their own image and thereby advances an embodiment of the American ideal. In the contemporary, post-colonial setting, Christianity—in particular its fundamentalist evangelical expressions—becomes part of the resource of the economic and cultural dominance (Brouwer *et al.*, 1996: 1–3). Such an analysis concludes that there is considerable international receptivity to the fundamentalist Christian message through a sophisticated and powerful communication network that systematically attempts to convert the world, not only to a religious faith, but also to a cultural worldview.

It may be argued that largely through its prosperity gospel, the Faith movement should be interpreted as the justification of the western economic free market (Roberts, 1992). Indeed, the principal doctrines espoused can be understood as the cultural and ideological underpinning of both components of capitalism: the ethic of consumerism and the entrepreneurial spirit. On the 'entrepreneurial' side, the Faith gospel could possibly be accounted for in terms of the expansion of Bourdieu's "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1977). This is exemplified in some of the teachings of the leading exponents of the Faith gospel, which point out that neither Christ nor his disciples were poor. In the view of one leading Faith minister, Fred Price, they exemplified the hard-working artisans, who—through faith in God—attained the proper fruits of their labour and therefore provided the model life-style for all true believers (Price, 1984: 12). It is not surprising that the Faith teachings assume that sacrificial poverty is not a virtue, since it denies all that Christ has won through his death, that is prosperity for born-again believers (Matthew, 1987). At the same time, the consumer element—apparently congruent with advanced western economies—is present in that the Faith teachings insist that it is not so much the corporate Church which benefits from divinely provided wealth in the same way as the nation of Israel in the Old Testament did (although this teaching may be present) (Jackson, 1987: 17).² Rather, the blessing is showered on the individual believer. This brings prosperity doctrines firmly in line with a culture which places the individual as the subject of consumerism (Brouwer *et al.*, 1996: 7). This is perhaps most evident in the consumer 'instantism' of the Faith teaching: health and wealth can be demanded and enjoyed immediately through the 'currency' of faith.³

In many respects, the temptation for placing the activities of the Faith movement within a hegemony model is great—not only in terms of the distinctive teachings of the Faith ministries, but also in terms of a standard package which is commercialised and sold across the world. In fact, as far as the dissemination of the key doctrines of the Faith ministries from the USA is concerned, it is possible to speak of an evangelical–fundamentalist version of Ritzer's notion of "McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 1993). Not only are the core doctrines fairly standard, but the organisational structure of the various ministries tend to be very alike in form, direction and *genre*. They are typically based on well-trained pastors, congregations, Bible schools which turn out hundreds of graduate ministers every year who extol the central tenets of the Faith gospel across the globe, and world-wide systems of communication with believers through publications and audio and visual tapes.

Limitations of the Hegemony Model

However, the hegemonic model has its limitations. The success of the Faith movement cannot be reduced to a simple matter of USA ministries relentlessly imposing their theological constructs on an unsuspecting world. The evidence does not always support this view and infinite complexities, contradictions, and paradoxes remain. Theories of post-modernity appear to 'fill the gap' in that they promise to provide further insights into the significance of western fundamentalism in varying contexts. As with the hegemonic model, theories of post-modernity emphasise cultural, economic, and political concerns in that the

transformation of local, and even personal, contexts of social experience are increasingly influenced by events and developments in diverse parts of the globe. However, these forces stretch across a fairly level playing field so that even the most remote local culture and life-style habits become universally consequential (Albrow, 1995; Robertson, 1992). As a result of these developments, religion becomes a 'cultural site', since, in any social order, it can be influenced by the ebbs and flows of various expressions of religiosity across the world, which subsequently generate infinite variations and localised expressions of faith (Albrow, 1995: 20). Religion is, therefore, characterised by regional cultural developments, complex diffusion, and international networks with multi-lateral flows from diverse parts of the world. Subsequently, the interchange of cultural *genres* may generate complex currents of 'mix 'n match' religiosity, particularly in the wake of collapsing 'grand narratives' embedded in traditional religious systems (Featherstone, 1990: 10).

This analysis is significant because it argues that although there might be cultural migration of religions from the West, the exportation of religion does not occur in only one direction—far from it. Moreover, even if a system of belief originates within the western context, it cannot be assumed that some cultural package—once adrift of its moorings—will be given the same meaning as originally attributed to it, since people everywhere look at the world through their own cultural 'lenses'. In short, there is 'glocalisation', that is, the ways in which global phenomena are responded to differ considerably in different local cultures (Featherstone, 1990; Hall & Neitz, 1993). In the light of such developments, the hegemonic model appears to be less easy to sustain and, as far as an analysis of the Faith movement is concerned, there have to be, at the very least, some modifications.

Perhaps the most important consideration is that to account for the success of Christian fundamentalism it is certainly evident that there has to be a level of local receptivity. Indeed, it is apparent that indigenous evangelical churches have become partners in propagating and deepening the Faith message as part of a process of generating an enthusiastic, broad-based international religious culture in dozens of countries. At the same time, even if strongly influenced by the USA ministries, there is a different emphasis and a localised cultural predilection, which bring variations in terms of form, substance, and style across the world. In turn, the extent to which the Faith message is endorsed, either in standardised, modified, or syncretic modes, depends upon the pre-existing religious context and the distinct needs of specific socio-economic groups.

This raises the possibility that within the milieu of globalisation, the nature of the religion, above all the appeal of certain theologies, is an independent variable and an unpredictable one at that. Indeed, the theological tenets of the broader Pentecostal movement, in which the Faith movement is located, partly account for its general global attraction. While it is possible to speak of a standardised global charismatic/Pentecostal culture (Poewe, 1994), the accompanying teachings can bring a flexibility which allows numerous transformations as a result of the emphasis on the charismata and spiritual experience, which has not so much played down theology, but opened it to 'prophet' interpretations (Cox, 1994: 213). The empirical evidence for the implications of Pentecostal dogma can be found, for example, in Bernice Martin's account of Pentecostalism in Latin America. Here, Christianity is typically subject to a syncretism of 'mix 'n match'

theology that reflects ethnic cultural idioms and practices (B. Martin, 1995: 102). Such syncretic forms of Pentecostalism have successfully adapted themselves to numerous cultural environments, because they appeal to particular sections of a given society. Echoing Hollenweger's global study of Pentecostalism nearly two decades earlier (Hollenweger, 1971), David Martin maintains that the global success of Pentecostalism is derived from its ability to offer solutions to both individual and collective problems and to deal with the specific needs of distinct socio-economic groups (D. Martin, 1990). Congruent with these observations, it is manifest that the impact of Faith ministries differs in degree and nature in various global contexts.

The Western European Context

The Faith ministries have made some inroads into Western Europe. Their expansion, especially since the 1980s, can be attributed to economic changes and accompanying cultural transformations. Indeed, this is the theme of one of the most impressive studies of the Faith movement, namely that by Simon Coleman. In his work on USA ministries in Sweden, Coleman speculates that they can be understood primarily as a carrier of the North American capitalist ideology on a world-wide scale. The emphasis is on the entrepreneurial aspects in that the alleged virtues of the free market are translated into the gospel of health and wealth. In the case of Sweden, throughout the 1980s, the success of the Faith ministries in a country with a notably strong Reformed theological tradition, is largely due to the spread of the business ethic. According to Coleman, this occurred at a time when the social democratic consensus was collapsing and free enterprise was increasingly encouraged by the State, alongside the growing cultural emphasis on consumerism and individual responsibility (Coleman, 1991; 1993; 1995).

While the 'pure' prosperity teachings of the Faith movement are congruent with economic and cultural change in Western Europe, their impact must, however, be seen in relative terms. In this region of the continent, and in North-West Europe in particular, even expanding forms of religiosity are increasingly marginalised in what are highly secularised societies. Moreover, in some Western European countries, there might be, to one degree or another, a resistance against the Faith teachings, not only because of their theological departures from orthodox Christianity, but precisely because of their clear North-American cultural attributes. In the case of Britain, as Jackson points out, the acceptance of the 'pure' Faith gospel is severely limited. While the celebration of personal advancement endures as an historical and cultural legacy in the USA, in Britain, by comparison, money and success remain something of a taboo, especially when flaunted (Jackson, 1987: 22).

In Western Europe, Faith ministries which advocate an unsolicited version of the health and wealth gospel do exist. Sometimes, these might be advanced by home-based ministries rather than by those established by USA missionary endeavours. Nonetheless, they are rarely on the scale of their North-American cousins, although they tend to be undergirded by huge investments in resources and manpower originating in the USA (Riftkin, 1979: 148). Again using Britain as an example, the prosperity teaching appears to be tailored to localised cultural tastes. There may be the 'health' without the 'wealth', or a least a substantial

dilution of the prosperity component. In its more watered-down form, it can be observed as an important teaching of Britain's largest church (in terms of members): Kensington Temple. Indeed, the church's success can at least partly be attributed to advocating the doctrine in a package which is more palatable to the charismatic congregations of its numerous satellite churches.⁴

Despite the limitations to the acceptance of the Faith gospel in Western Europe, many aspects of the ethos and culture that it advances are observable in less obvious ways. The influence of the Faith movement might therefore not necessarily be measured in terms of its distinct teachings or in the number of churches overtly advancing the Faith gospel. There may be a hidden dimension. As Harvey Cox points out, there are aspects of the movement which have been disseminated in a more covert way through the modern evangelical church, particularly its neo-Pentecostal wing. The enterprise culture, typified by the Faith movement, is inherently observable in many charismatic churches. In particular, where church growth, rather like the compulsion for business expansion, is at the heart of the 'designer church' which bears all the hallmarks of success as defined in terms of neo-Pentecostalism: a modern building, a large and ever-growing congregation, charismatic (in the Weberian sense) pastors, and plenty of funds. These are very often the hallmarks by which contemporary churches are judged. In short, health and wealth teaching may not be explicitly taught, but it is implicit in images of success flaunted by the wider charismatic movement (Cox, 1994: 272).

There is another way of approaching the impact of the Faith movement in this part of the continent. The Faith ministries are not mainstream within the broader world of neo-Pentecostalism. The impression is that individual ministries and churches which embrace the Faith gospel have, to some extent at least, filled a gap in what American commentators have increasingly referred to as the "spiritual marketplace" (Finke & Stark, 1988; Stark & Iannaccone, 1993; 1994). They are in good company, since the way in which the broad neo-Pentecostalism movement has developed in the West is indicative of the tendency towards the supply and demand of contemporary religion in general. It is noticeable that since the 1960s, the movement has undergone considerable evolution and transformation (Pousson, 1994; Scotland, 1995). In the late 1990s, neo-Pentecostalism has been characterised by its increasing pluralism, fragmentation, inculturation, and marketability. The Faith ministries epitomise much of this in that they constitute a distinct brand which frequently appeals to working-class sections of Western European populations and to certain ethnic groups which have previously been untouched by neo-Pentecostalism.

In the USA, Faith ministries can, and do, find homes among the ranks of the middle-classes. Although there is a lack of factual evidence, it has been suggested that the Faith movement has proved alluring to a more opulent membership which is attracted by the themes of healing and "positive confession" (Hollinger, 1991), and that the prosperity component of Faith theology is a convenient ideology for the upwardly mobile (McConnell, 1988: xxxi). Arguably, this is why—at least in the USA—the Faith movement has proved to be more popular than traditional fundamentalism and to be one of the most enticing strands of the neo-Pentecostal movement. In fact, in North America, its appeal has been to those already of a charismatic persuasion and manifestly wealthy (Bannon, 1987: 36).

Given the evidence in the USA, it was not unreasonable, at one time, to suggest that the prosperity teachings might be suited to the prosperous European middle-class congregations of the large independent 'New Churches' that have flourished since the 1970s (Walker, 1988: 340; Jackson, 1987: 22). This has not proved to be so. Rather, the cohorts of the middle-classes which largely comprise the charismatic movement have opted for modes of spiritual mysticism rather than the this-worldly materialism favoured by the Faith ministries. As Bernice Martin points out, the middle-classes are more likely to display aesthetic expressions of human potential. This is because material plenty has released the more affluent individual to discover layers of 'expression' and to accomplish the needs of self-discovery and self-fulfilment in emotional terms. In turn, this generates forms of psycho-therapeutic healing that rest on a distinct narcissistic individualism. It is therefore not surprising that the middle-class charismatic churches have evolved a range of emotional healing techniques, rather than techniques aimed at physical healing that preoccupy the Faith ministries.

Despite the less materialistic orientation of the middle-class charismatics, a kind of 'spiritual consumerism' is evident in many of their churches in Western Europe which involved the influence of leading Faith ministries. Much of this was epitomised by the 'Toronto Blessing' in the first half of the 1990s. Spreading rapidly through tens of thousands of churches, the 'Blessing', as it was known by those involved, included various ecstatic phenomena consisting of hysterical laughter, animal noises and the more 'hidden' mystical element of prophecy and visions.⁵ It is noteworthy that although it was associated with the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, which lent its name to the phenomenon, and was largely spread through the Association of Vineyard Churches with which it was initially affiliated, notable leaders within the Faith movement were also involved. Some were instrumental in the origins of the curious phenomena, especially 'holy laughter', such as Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, and Rodney Howard-Brown, as well as some Faith ministries centred in Argentina and Brazil (Hunt, 1995).

Irrespective of the occasional incursions into the middle-class bastions of the charismatic movement, the evidence suggests that in Western Europe, by and large, the Faith churches tend not to be situated in the more prosperous suburban areas. Rather, they are to be found in inner-city areas or in the run-down neighbourhoods of conurbations where they appeal to the more impoverished and marginalised social groups. There are various reasons why this might be so. Most obviously, the appeal is to those who are more firmly wedded to a materialistic, rather than ascetic, culture, that is, those in working-class manual occupations. As Bernice Martin points out, expressive and aesthetic concerns are not of interest to the manual worker who carries the ethos of materialism and a this-worldly instrumentalism (B. Martin, 1981: 75–77). For the latter, the gospel of physical health and material wealth has a far greater appeal than the spiritual narcissism of mainstream, middle-class neo-Pentecostalism. At the same time, the prevailing theology of prosperity is attractive to those at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy. It is thus not surprising that—as the evidence suggests—in the USA, Faith churches can also attract black populations—those in greatest need and those subject to lower life expectancy, poverty, poor diet, inadequate medical care, and lack of health insurance (Allen, 1993/4: 14).

As already noted, the practices of the Faith ministries border on the metaphysical. Notions such as 'positive confession' appear to embrace laws of metaphysical causation: what is spoken by the believer in faith operates a spiritual force and brings what is 'confessed' by the spoken word into reality (Hunt, 1998). The appeal of such practices to the less affluent members of society is perhaps understandable. In times of uncertainty, especially where material success is a central cultural value, there may be a cognitive need to attempt to create wealth and health by metaphysical means and to predict with some measure of assurance outcomes that are uncertain of realisation. The point is well made by Roy Wallis who suggests that in a society where the allocation of rewards depends largely on achievement, success in terms of status and income and upward social mobility will invariably be highly sought after. However, the opportunity for such success inevitably falls short of aspiration for many, who may therefore be in the market for assistance in their endeavour, including techniques which have some metaphysical or supernatural overtones (Wallis, 1984: 54–55). The magnetism of the metaphysical practices of the Faith ministries, which focus on the acquisition of health and wealth, come into clear relief and arguably give them an advantage in the spiritual marketplace.

The Faith Movement in the Nations of 'Emerging' Economies

Where the Faith teachings have appeared to carry cultural capital more effectively is in many of those nations which constitute the world's 'emerging' economies. This includes Central and Eastern Europe, the Pacific Rim and Latin America. These global regions do, however, display a cultural and religious diversity, which means that the impact of the Faith movement and its message has been different in many ways. Events in Eastern Europe are evidence of this. For the last decade, the Faith ministries have enjoyed a prolific growth in the wake of the collapse of Soviet domination, when the free market has largely replaced the state economic monopolies (Hunt, 1995). Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Hungary, in particular, have been receptive to the new gospel. For the relatively deprived peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, the attraction might seem obvious. Religious and free-market ideals are merged into one package of spiritual and economic liberty. Cultural capital is discernible in the theology and activities of numerous Faith ministries active in the region. Typical is the Reachout for Christ International Ministry.⁶ The evangelical tract of this ministry frequently refers to the divine prosperity bestowed upon the Christian countries of the West and the curse of poverty inflicted upon the Satanic dominions of the 'false' religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, and African paganism, as well as the 'godless system' of Communism. However, such ministries often find fierce competition to win converts, since numerous New Religious Movements have arisen to fill the spiritual void and the re-invigorated faiths of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity also offer stiff rivalry. Nonetheless, the Faith ministries have an advantage in the poorer countries of the region. Albania is typical: the opening of a religious marketplace has brought a contest between Christian and Islamic evangelising fundamentalism. The symbols of the worldly prosperity of the Faith ministries, the promise of physical healing, together with the food parcels which are freely distributed, have won many over to the Christian evangelical cause.

The Faith teachings have found fertile soil in some of the nations of the Pacific Rim, which have emerging 'tiger' economies. It is interesting to note that the growing Faith churches constitute one expression of the numerous indigenous new religious movements which have developed in this part of the world. Many appear to give expressions to the new capitalist culture, particularly in the growing urban areas and crowded inner cities of countries such as Korea. It follows that the churches which embrace the distinctive teachings of the Faith movement tend to be home-grown rather than church 'plants' established by the ministries expanding from the USA. In Korea, the growth of Pentecostalism generally has been prolific (Bon & Nelson, 1983). Many churches within the movement present a variation of the Faith gospel. Much of this is exemplified by the church established by Paul Yonggi Cho, which boasts a membership of almost one million people. A form of prosperity gospel is central to the teachings of this church. However, when examined in detail, the key doctrines show some important theological departures from the American variant and are obviously open to syncretic localised transformations (Cho, 1990). While the teachings take their tone from the USA ministries, they are taught alongside demonology, shamanism and animism, which have more in common with traditional indigenous Korean forms of religion than North American fundamentalism (Cox, 1994: 213–215).

While such localised expressions of Faith teachings question the credibility of the hegemony model, it is also seriously challenged by the possibility that the spread of the wider Pentecostal movement in the nations along the Pacific Rim has generated Faith teachings irrespective of any influence from North America. At a global level, Pentecostalism in the Third World has proved to be culturally revolutionary in as much as it has encouraged an ascetic life-style involving hard work and self-advancement. This raises the possibility that in countries outside the Western context, the link between religion, values, and life-styles may follow a Weberian, rather than a Marxist ideological model of hegemony. In Latin America, mirroring the developments in Korea, home-produced ministries, such as Orvil Swindol, Ed Silusso, Claudio Freidson, and Hector Jiminez in Argentina, are spreading rapidly. However, they are only partly inspired by the exported USA Faith model. More importantly, they appear to have arisen to give articulation to internal cultural aspirations. This point is made, in regard to developments in Latin America, by Oscar Amat's impressive description of the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in Peru. Amat puts great emphasis on the key teachings, which include the conviction that conversion has brought a puritan life-style in which economic prosperity and social mobility are *unintended* consequences of the newly-found faith, rather than the stringent adoption of Western capitalist ideology (Amat, 1996). A similar account of Latin America is presented by Bernice Martin who argues that Pentecostalism in the region can be regarded as part of a new Protestant Reformation and the counterpart to Methodism in England, where it stemmed the chaos of first-stage industrialism. Largely within a post-modern framework, she identifies unique economic conditions in Latin America in which there are First-World enclaves of living standards alongside some of the poorest in the world (B. Martin, 1995: 106).

That the Faith movement could be an expression of a work ethic is also evident from the history of Christianity in the U.S. As Anthony and Robbins

have pointed out, the Americanised Protestant ethic, which is practically synonymous with the American success ethic of competitive individualism, has long been expressed in religious terms, especially through a variant of traditional dualist moral absolutism (Anthony & Robbins, 1982). Sporadically throughout American Christianity, over the last 150 years, there have been numerous writings referring to the duty of believers to be prosperous, since it was a natural outcome of a life-style lived by 'born-again' Christians who glorified the gospel (Cole, 1966: 169–170; Bjork, 1978). In the second half of the twentieth century, in the form of the Faith movement, these ideas merged with the cultic science of the mind developed by Norman Vincent Peale and his "possibility theology" for "successful living ... prosperity, achievement, success" (Peale, 1952: 172–176), which Yinger interprets as a crude form of psychotherapy, a call for people to "pull themselves up by their boot straps" (Yinger, 1967: 99–100).

In many respects, Pentecostalism in the USA has always carried this work ethic. As Dearman points out, while Pentecostalism could provide religious compensation for the poor, its outward, aggressive evangelism at times played down sacrifice, humility, and poverty in favour of 'overcoming' and 'victory' and a disciplined life directed to surmounting adverse circumstances. Prosperity across the generations was, therefore, a necessary outcome of striving to conquer poverty through an ascetic life-style (Dearman, 1974: 443). Johnson maintains that an ascetic self-help ethic was particularly successful in the USA, since Pentecostalism had the tendency to endorse those cultural values that were perceived as congruent with its own theology (Johnson, 1961). These cultural attributes are then read back into the gospels. Faith teachings are thus in good tradition, since rather like ascetic Protestantism, they see the role of faith and the reward of material abundance resulting from living a life of faithful obedience to the Word of God.

The Impact in the Third World

The impact of the Faith ministries in the Third World differs considerably. It can be said that together with other brands of Pentecostalism, the Faith movement has, in the milieu of post-modernity, opened an aperture in the traditional religious/cultural monopolies in different parts of the world (D. Martin, 1990). It is also clear that in some regions of the globe, such as the Hindu Indian sub-continent and the Islamic Middle-East, brands of Protestant fundamentalism have made very little headway. It might be argued that these cultures do not provide fertile ground for any form of Christian Protestantism which advances the alleged virtues of the individual work ethic (Bellah, 1963; Singer, 1965). On the other hand, these societies have seen the rise of fundamentalist movements in their own religions, which Kedel, among others, has interpreted within the context of post-modernity. Here, fundamentalist movements arising, for example, from the Islamic world, are 'revivalistic' in the sense that they are primarily a reaction to the relativising impulses which result from the awareness of other 'truths' and the worldviews of cultural systems beyond the boundaries of traditional societies (Kedel, 1994). Against such a background, Pentecostal Christianity, whatever its guise, makes little progress.

In some parts of Africa, however, the American Faith ministries have achieved some advance, particularly in countries where contours of Christianity had already been formed by nineteenth-century missionary endeavours. In countries like Kenya, they have overtaken the neo-Pentecostal renewal movement and have mutated and supplemented the Pentecostal teachings that had swept through local communities. As Gifford (1990) and Hackett (1995) have shown, the North-American teachings of prosperity through faith are revolutionary in Africa in that there are many aspects of it which are alien to indigenous African culture and pre-existing expressions of Christianity. Conversely, the Faith movement in Africa may arise through indigenous churches and give expression to emerging sentiments. In Kenya and Nigeria, the Faith message is rarely the ideology of the socially mobile or necessarily a reflection of the Protestant work ethic (although this may be present). Rather, the Faith teachings act as a form of motivation for rising out of the dire conditions experienced by some of the poorest people on earth. In Nigeria, such churches as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG, now with a global membership of some three million) preaches its own variety of the Faith gospel with an emphasis on purity and hard work. However, as Ruth Marshall has pointed out, in Africa, Pentecostal ministries generally have an obsession with the alleged worldly benefits of channelling divine 'power' (Marshall, 1991). Home-grown churches like the RCCG stress the 'empowering' of the faithful with teachings and metaphysical practices that attempt to channel divine power in order to fulfil material needs. It is thus not surprising that indigenous African Faith churches can export their own variation of the Faith ministries in a form of 'reversed globalisation' whereby their central teachings find acceptance with black populations in Europe. Much is typified by Matthew Ashimolowo's Kingsway Church which is possibly the fastest growing church in Britain. Independent of the USA variety of Faith ministry, it attracts a predominantly Nigerian congregation and conceivably adds to the complexities of the spiritual marketplace by providing for the needs of a distinct ethnic *clientèle*. It advances its gospel through such slogans as 'Raising Champions, Fulfilling Dreams' and through a ministry magazine entitled *Winning Ways*.

As far as such African churches are concerned, there is another consideration. Faith teachings African-style put far less emphasis on the prosperity of the individual believer. Recent research on Pentecostalism in Africa by Marshall (1991; 1993) and Rosalind Hackett (1995), as well as research among first-generation Afro-Caribbean migrants in Britain, including a study by Nicole Toulis (1995), have shown that Pentecostal churches can offer a sense of community and a sense of order—on the psychological level for the individual and socially on the grass-roots level of the congregation. As their appeal is highly personalised, yet collectively powerful, their growth cannot be reduced merely to economic development. A similar point is made by Brusco (1993) with reference to Latin America where the acceptance of Pentecostalism does not mean an unrestricted individualism, but an ethos of shared responsibility within the primary group of the family and the voluntary group of the church that reflects the needs of the community. Therefore, Faith teachings in the African churches and elsewhere are more likely to advance doctrines related to the community and congregation, including prosperity and hard work, rather than to *individual* success.

Conclusion

This paper has offered a brief account of the global impact of the North-American Faith ministries. However, it is the complexity of the issues, rather than restriction of space, that leads to the somewhat trite statement that it is difficult to make conclusions regarding the merits of contrasting theories of globalisation. It is clear that national societies can and are subject to the influence of religious cultures and traditions originating in western nations. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this is a corresponding and indeed integrated part of the development of economic dominance and political power structures. In short, there is much to confirm the hegemonic model, since the globalisation of the Faith ministries is undoubtedly of significance.

The American Faith ministries are the most shrewd and effective forms of entrepreneurship of their style of neo-Pentecostalism: they have adapted their wares to a new global market and have, therefore, a strong international appeal. A key point is that the core doctrines of health and wealth are discernible in one form or another, whatever the cultural context in which they are adopted. However, the testimony indicates that there has been such a willing acceptance of Faith teachings in different parts of the globe to suggest a much more complex picture than a simple diffusion of Faith teachings from the West as part of an ideological domination. As Paul Freston has shown in his work on Latin America (Freston, 1997) and as Hexham and Poewe (1994) have shown in their analysis of churches in South Africa, Pentecostal-style religion should not necessarily be portrayed as spreading from the USA as part of an agenda to make the Third-World people more subservient to American interest. This is a far too simplistic analysis, as the movement has different sources and has a varying impact on a great variety of cultural contexts.

It appears that the hegemony model has its limitations, not least of all that it may be too general and unsophisticated. There may well be western economic and political dominance, and religious ideas can and do reflect this fact. However, it is clear that there has to be some receptivity and something which may be generated by what might be termed localised 'religious markets'. In local environments, there may be significant changes in teachings that give expressions to indigenous needs. In a discussion of the general cultural influence of the West, Anthony Smith, in his article "Towards a Global Culture?" (1990), argues that new traditions must hew to vernacular motives:

It is one thing ... to package imagery and diffuse it... it is quite another to ensure the power to move and inspire... Meanings of even the most universal of imagery for a particular population derive as much from the historical experiences and social status of that group as from the intentions of purveyors. (Smith, 1990: 178–179)

It is also clear that the direct intervention of the USA ministries is not the only means by which Faith teachings take off. Frequently, the Faith gospel has been adopted by some established churches which were already of a charismatic disposition. As I have noted in the European context, some churches might graft prosperity doctrines on to their charismatic package, if they deem it advantageous to do so (Jackson, 1987: 16). In this respect, it might be argued that such contextual modifications are as much an indicator of a weakness in the standard package of the Faith message as of its global strength.

The alternative is that the import of the core dogma only serves to give a greater articulation to value orientations and aspirations which are emerging or have firmly taken root. The consequences for capitalism may be as unintended as was the entrepreneurial foundation laid by Weber's pioneers of Calvinists. It is also possible that the Faith ministries may, at one and the same time, transmit cultural capital from the West and give articulation to an emerging work ethic. Such are the complexity and repercussions of the global market. As Bernice Martin has shown, from the 1960s, Latin America has become integrated into the global capitalist economy and the global culture of communications (B. Martin, 1995: 110–111). In other words, Pentecostalism serves to develop attributes, motivations and personalities adapted to the exigencies of the de-regulated global market. Above all, it has integrated the urban masses into a developing economy through the Protestant work ethic and active citizenship, and in doing so, it has destroyed revolutionary class politics (B. Martin, 1995: 128–129). At the same time, the mobile new professionals and the educated in the mega-cities carry a work ethic that *results* from a strict Pentecostal upbringing (B. Martin, 1995: 139). The explanation for the success of the Faith movement is that it can adapt itself to such complexities. This makes it a global 'winner'.

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NOTES

1. To a large extent, the roots of the American Faith ministries can be found in the esotericism of the Latter Day Rain Movement which broke away from the main Pentecostal bodies in the 1940s. The theology which it embraced centred on an eschatology that emphasised the perfecting of God's *élite* (including physical healing) before the Second Coming. In turn, the Latter Day Rain movement generated the healing revivalists and itinerant ministries in the immediate years after the Second World War. As they spread across the USA, they developed much of the theology that such leading Faith exponents as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and others were to inherit. However, in the last two decades at least, the fundamentalist theology which such ministries now espouse have become increasingly wedded to a materialistic culture.
2. There is a strand of Faith teaching which deals with the notion of sacralised and blessed nationhood. Gifford speaks of the construction of particular ideas associated with Israel—its periods of prosperity when faithful to God—and points out that this spiritual law is applicable to nations today (Gifford, 1998). Similarly, Coleman (1993) discusses the way in which host nations (such as Sweden) become defined as 'New Israel's' which are associated with a civic religious/nationalist view of the nation that itself can be globalised.
3. Spiritual 'instantism' can also be illustrated in the attitude of Faith ministries towards glossolalia. Most strands of classical Pentecostalism have insisted that all Christians should be 'Baptised in the Spirit' subsequent to salvation and that each person at that time should receive the gift of 'tongues'. In the Faith teachings, there is the rejection of the traditional view that it

- is often necessary to go through the emotional prayer time that can last for several hours. Rather, the believer prays in faith, but her/his request is *already* granted. To receive the Holy Spirit, s/he must simply ask, since it is immediately available through 'faith'.
4. Kensington Temple is part of the Elim Pentecostal denomination in Britain. Its theological departures from mainstream Pentecostal doctrine, particularly in respect of Faith teachings, has caused rifts within Elim, since the growth of the Kensington Temple can partly be attributed to accepting Faith teachings.
 5. Philip Richter has interpreted the phenomena associated with the Toronto Blessing as a kind of commodity in the charismatic marketplace, which was to be instantly experienced and enjoyed in never ending degrees; believers were encouraged to come back for 'more and more' of God's 'blessing' as if it were some endless resource which provided happiness, emotional healing and personal fulfilment. Richter also sees the phenomenon as a fairly standardised model that was transmitted through globalised means of communication and packaged for (charismatic) consumer tastes (Richter, 1995).
 6. The head of the Reachout for Christ Ministries is an Australian pastor, trained by the Hagin ministry, who was given to praying for the downfall of the Labour government in Australia which he saw as immoral in its social policies and too interventionist in economic matters (Picardie & Wade, 1986).

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