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Jesus himself set the example of sacrifice for the disciple of Jesus by forsaking the riches of heaven ([Philp. 2:5-8](#)) 'for us men and for our salvation,' as the Nicene Creed confesses.

'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich' ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

Prosperity theology also misses the heart of the New Testament's teaching about giving. Those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ give because they are responding to God's unconditional love. God has lavished his love upon us ([Rom. 5:8](#); [Eph. 1:7-8](#); [1 Jn. 3:1](#)). We give in response to his great love for us ([2 Cor. 5:14](#); [Eph. 2:4](#); [5:1-2](#); [1 Thess. 1:3](#)). His gift is without any strings attached ([Eph. 2:5-10](#) etc). His gift of grace causes us to desire to exercise the gift of grace by giving to others who are in need ([Rom. 12:6-8](#); [2 Cor. 8:1, 6, 9](#); [9:7-8](#); [1 Jn. 3:14, 17](#)).

We should fight against the poverty that imprisons so many of the world's peoples, as we should fight against sin, disease, and political tyranny. But there are much better and more effective ways to fight against these evils than to support teaching that is unbiblical, impractical, and, indeed, ultimately disillusioning. In short, the so-called 'word of faith' or *rhema* theology is not the 'full gospel' at all. Rather, it is at best a very partial gospel, or, at worst, what Paul calls 'a different gospel' ([Gal. 1:6](#); [2 Cor. 11:4](#)).

Dr. W. Ward Gasque is Vice President and Academic Dean of Ontario Theological Seminary, Toronto, Canada. p. 47

A Response

C. Kee Hwang

It is great privilege for me to respond to Dr. Gasque's 'Prosperity Theology and the New Testament'. I thank the World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission and Korean Evangelical Theological Society for this opportunity.

Dr. Gasque has presented a timely subject. In Korea the theology of prosperity is, I suppose, not known widely as a theological discipline *per se*, but as a theological teaching that puts great emphasis on prosperity in the present life of this Age rather than the life of the Age to Come. It could be characterized as a Pentecostal Neo-Pentecostal tendency, impacting no less powerfully the contemporary Christian community in Korea than any other influence.

Dr. Gasque's presentation demonstrates a firm biblical foundation and his assertion maintains a remarkably sound theology. He describes the teaching of prosperity theology as 'the idea that God loves you and has a marvellous financial plan for your life'.

Dr. Gasque closes his paper with this final comment. 'In short, the so called "word of faith" or *rhema* theology is not the "full gospel" at all. Rather, it is at best a very partial gospel, or at worst, what Paul calls "a different gospel" ' ([Gal. 1:6](#); [2 Cor. 11:4](#)).

Although I may generally agree with Dr. Gasque's assertion on prosperity theology, let me point out some reservations.

First of all, it seems that his definition of prosperity theology is too narrow or one sided, because Dr. Gasque understands 'prosperity' mainly in terms of financial success. I

assume that his understanding derives from an American point of view, which is different from a Korean point of view. According to the Korean value system, the term 'prosperity' implies not only financial success and physical health but also achievement of social status including even their children's well-being including fame, promotion, and academic success. Hence, his understanding of 'prosperity theology' cannot, I suppose, be properly applied to Korean churches.

Second, while he presents many biblical references, there are few references to the claims of the proponents of prosperity theology so that I may properly evaluate Dr. [p. 48](#) Gasque's argument against prosperity theology. There must be, for an example, an emphasis on prayer life on the basis of the key proof texts with regard to the prayer request passages. I believe that even a wrong prayer-life is, in a way, better than a prayerless-life. (cf. [Rom. 8:26](#)).

Third, I have reservations about his perception of what the original author intended in [3 John 2](#). He seems to understand [3 John 2](#) as a formal greeting to an individual only; hence it has nothing to do with us i.e. contemporary Christians. In most Pauline epistles, however, we find that the letter opens with a formal greeting 'Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' That means that there are more than a dozen greetings in the Pauline epistles. Are those passages merely a formal greeting to the readers of that time? Can we insist that those greetings do not hold any significance for contemporary readers? As a matter of fact the Bible testifies that many things that Jesus did were not written down in the Canon of the New Testament ([In. 20:30-31](#); [21:25](#)). In view of those many omissions in the Bible, why is there such a great repetition of greeting in the biblical texts? Do not the repetitions, as a whole, imply that they have great significance for contemporary Christians?

In this regard, let me ask this, not in order to criticize Dr. Gasque, but to criticize our own spiritual state. How much do we listen to the scriptural truth that we are the ones who overcome the world ([1 In. 5:4](#) ff.), and are given eternal life in Jesus Christ. ([1 In. 5:11](#)) We also possess his power of resurrection from the dead ([Eph. 1:19](#) ff.), and we are seated with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ([Eph. 2:6](#))? Do we really believe these truths and practise them in our lives, or regard them merely as teachings to the readers of that time?

Let us try to test ourselves to see if we truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we as Bible students, not regard our Lord Jesus as merely an historical figure who walked on the Galilean seashore in the first century? In the meantime, do we not totally forget the fact that he is an historic Jesus as well, and the greatest truth is that, when he died on the cross we also died with him; when he was raised again from the dead, we were raised with him? ([Rom. 6:9](#)).

Finally, he seems to be reluctant to see any merits in the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement. I think we must learn from them evangelistic enthusiasm and a zeal for an unceasing prayer life. Our early Korean Church which has introduced the idea of the dawn prayer meeting from the midnight prayer of Shamanism, has enjoyed an unusual growth in church history. [p. 49](#)