

Baptists in Poland — Past and Present

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Polish Baptists comprise a tiny minority within a nation which, although until very recently ruled by a socialist government, is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic in its allegiance. The current membership of the Polish Baptist Union is around 3,000,¹ in a nation with a population of 37.5 million, nearly 90 per cent of which would claim to be Catholics in a broad, undefined sense, 81 per cent to be professing Catholics, and 65 per cent to attend church on a weekly basis.²

Among the large number of religious groups in Poland, variously estimated at between 35³ and 50,⁴ Baptists are one of the smallest. The Orthodox Church has about 400,000 members, the Polish National Catholic Church, which is Old Catholic, about 30,000, and the Old Catholic Mariavite Church about 20,000. Among the Protestant churches, the Lutherans have approximately 90,000 members, the former United Evangelical Church (which has recently splintered into a number of separate groups) about 8,000, the Seventh Day Adventists also about 8,000, and the Reformed Church and the Methodist Church each about 4,000. Jehovah's Witnesses number approximately 12,000 and there are perhaps about 6,000 Jews, mainly elderly.⁵

The Beginnings of Baptist Work among Poles

Baptist work among the Polish people began in the mid-19th century as a result of contacts with Baptists from East Prussia, with Russian

¹ Figures quoted for Baptists, as also for similar groups such as the United Evangelical Church, include only baptised adult members. In order to make valid comparisons with other Christian denominations it is probably wise to double the number, to make allowance for children of members and other adherents. See the notes to church statistics in David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopaedia* (London, 1981).

² *Ibid.*, p. 570.

³ A. Tokarczyk, *Trzydziesci Wyzan* (Warsaw, 1987).

⁴ Barrett, *Op. cit.*, p. 570.

⁵ Trevor Beeson, *Discretion and Valour* (London, 1982), pp. 157-60; cf. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 573. A number of variations exist between the figures given in these two sources, indicating the difficulty experienced in obtaining accurate statistics.

'Baptist' groups some of which had arisen within the Orthodox Church, and others from groups influenced by the Mennonites. German Baptists also had some influence in the formation and development of these groups.⁶

During the partition period Polish Baptists grew in numbers, alongside their German, Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian fellows. Accurate figures are hard to obtain, and in view of the shifting borders at different points in the past and present history of the country, it is not always certain that figures quoted refer to the same area. However, the statistics indicate that membership in the Polish churches in the region of Posnania and Polish Pomerania, the two areas comprising Prussian Poland, was over 5,000 in 1914. In Galicia, the Polish territory within the Hapsburg Empire, there was no Baptist work of any kind before 1918, but in Russian Poland a number of Polish Baptist churches were formed, including the Warsaw Baptist Church in 1871, and others near the turn of the century. Following the Edict of Toleration issued by the tsar in 1905, a considerable number came into existence.⁷

Between the Two World Wars

In accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles (1919), Poland once again appeared on the map of Europe. The borders of the new state were amorphous, and incorporated sizeable minorities, especially of Ukrainians, White Russians and Germans.⁸ Jews comprised 7.8 per cent of the population, and their numbers continued to grow. Strong adherence to the Roman Catholic Church still marked the native Poles, while Orthodoxy was strong among the Ukrainians and White Russians (approximately 18 per cent of the population), and Lutheranism prevailed among many of the Germans (approximately three per cent). Nonetheless, Baptist churches continued to grow and in east and south-east Poland, there were revivals in the 1920s, among both the Polish and the Ukrainian Baptists.⁹

⁶ William L. Wagner, *New Move Forward in Europe* (S. Pasadena, 1978), pp. 107-108; Paul D. Steeves *et al.*, 'The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' in *Baptists in Europe* edited by G. Keith Parker (Nashville, 1982), pp. 149-52.

⁷ Wagner, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸ M. Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1977), pp. 74-88.

⁹ Paul Keim, 'Profile of a Polish Pastor' in *Keston News Service*, 24 February 1983, p. 14. Growth among the Ukrainian Baptists across the border in the Soviet Union was also vigorous; from a few thousand members in 1917, they had increased to 100,000 by 1927 according to Lorna and Michael Bourdeaux, *Ten Growing Churches* (Eastbourne and Keston, 1987), p. 117, citing Russian Baptist sources.

In 1921 the Slavic Baptist Union was organised, uniting all the non-German Baptist churches. By 1939 the Slavic Baptist Union and the German Baptist Union together numbered about 17,000 members.¹⁰ The German Union had 44 churches with 7,310 members, the Slavic Union around 10,000 members. In Poznan there was a theological seminary with parts for German-speaking and Polish-speaking students; publications were issued in six languages — German, Polish and the languages of four of the minorities; hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly were also started.

The Second World War and its Aftermath

On 1 September 1939 the Germans invaded Poland. Seventeen days later the Russian armies moved in from the east. By 29 September the whole country was occupied, and divided upon the basis of the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement.

In the areas under German occupation all activity in non-German churches was forbidden, and nobody was allowed to pray in Polish in the German churches. Only when the German Baptist Union courageously intervened on behalf of the Polish Baptists was permission given for them, together with other Free Church denominations, to form a federation of non-German Free Evangelical Churches with freedom to worship.¹¹ This group developed an extensive underground activity in concentration camps and areas rigidly controlled by the German army. Many people whose freedom or lives were endangered were helped, including Jews; Bibles and Christian books were distributed; pastoral care was extended to those in need where possible.¹²

In the eastern areas under Soviet control Polish Baptists suffered along with their fellow countrymen. Thousands of Poles were deported to Siberia, especially any who might be the focal point of opposition to Soviet rule in an area which the Russians viewed as their legitimate territory, i.e. Ukraine and Belorussia. Amongst the deportees were Christian leaders.¹³

¹⁰Wagner, *op. cit.*, p. 113; Aleksander Kircun Jr, 'Poland' in *Baptists in Europe* edited by G. Keith Parker, p. 171.

¹¹Wagner, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹²Kircun, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹³The pastor emeritus of the Warsaw Baptist Church, Aleksander Kircun Sr, who died a few months ago, had just graduated from Poznan Seminary in 1939. On moving to Warsaw, he was pleasantly surprised when his wife arrived one day from the Lviv (L'vov) area. She said that he had sent a message telling her to join him, but he had sent no such message! It is certain that, had she not joined him, she would undoubtedly have been arrested and deported.

The Church in the Post-War Years

By the end of the war, less than 1,800 members of the churches in the Federation of Evangelical Churches remained. Only 16 members of the two Baptist churches in Warsaw survived. The German Baptist Union in Poland ceased to exist, as the overwhelming majority of the German-speaking population moved west into Germany. More than four million Germans were forced to leave East Prussia (thence divided between Poland and the Soviet Union) and all the territories east of the line of the Oder and Neisse rivers, i.e. Western Pomerania, Western Posnania and Lower Silesia. These areas were then populated by Poles, displaced from Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia through the cession to the Soviet Union of these areas, together with others from the devastated Polish heartland.

In 1947 the three denominational groups, which, together with the Baptists, had formed the war-time Federation of Evangelical Churches, left the federation in order to form the United Evangelical Church of the Gospel, which was augmented in 1953 by the addition of two more groups. This left the Polish Baptist Union a small but homogenous group comprising between 700 and 800 members. However, this was soon increased by numbers of Baptists from the eastern territories who had not been in the original federation, (which had been constituted in the area of Poland under German control in the first year of the war), and also by returning exiles from Siberia. In addition many German speaking people in the Mazurian area (previously part of East Prussia) did not leave immediately after the war. Among these were a number of Baptists.

All the churches suffered terribly during the war, and were involved in the immediate post-war period in reorganising, repairing damaged buildings or finding temporary accommodation, and adjusting to the new political situation. The Roman Catholic Church, while losing much of its property and many priests in the war, strengthened its hold on the minds and hearts of the great majority of Poles.

The Baptists and the Lutherans suffered in more than one way from the fact that they had both originally spread to Poland from Germany. Great numbers from both groups left the country for Germany after the war. Their general 'foreignness' in the minds of Poles¹⁴ was compounded as a result of the bitterness towards Germany following Nazi atrocities during the war.

¹⁴It seems that, in some respects, the Baptists, and all non-Catholic Churches, are viewed as foreign. One modern observer notes: 'According to the national mind-set, Lutherans who claim to be Poles are actually "Germans"'. Baptists and Methodists who claim the same are considered "Americans". The Orthodox — and the Marxists — are branded as "Russian".' Bill Yoder, 'Poland in Mid-1984', *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* Vol. V No. 1 (February 1985), p. 16.

In 1946 the Baptist Union received official recognition from the state authorities, thus ensuring it legal rights in the life of the nation. In 1949 a decree dealing with 'Protection of Freedom of Conscience and Religion' guaranteed this freedom to citizens of the Polish Peoples' Republic. This was further defined in the constitution of 1952.

However, this 'freedom' has been interpreted in a variety of ways in the years that have followed, depending on the political vicissitudes of the nation. Up to 1948, during the early years of Marxist-Leninist rule, a relatively 'peaceful and friendly co-existence' marked relations between the new order and religion. No major systematic attacks on religion and the church were openly launched during the period.¹⁵ The churches were involved in their own programmes of reorganisation and consolidation, as was the state.

In December 1948 the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Workers' Party merged to form the Polish United Workers' Party, a genuine Marxist-Leninist communist party. The years 1949-56 were marked by repressive measures against religion and the churches — the dissolution of religious associations, the stopping of non-liturgical activities, imprisonment of religious leaders and discrimination against church members. The Roman Catholic Church as the most prominent of the churches was one of the main targets of these attacks, but all the churches suffered as a result of these measures. The Baptists did not escape,¹⁶ although being among the smallest of the churches they were probably viewed by the authorities as unlikely to provide any real threat to the power of the state. Their basic philosophy, as well as their numbers, caused them to steer clear of attempts to exercise any influence in the affairs of the nation.¹⁷

The total number of Polish Baptists in 1947-48 was over 2,000. In 1950 there was a total of 2,593 members; in 1955 this had dropped to 2,494 through the emigration to Germany of those of German descent; by 1959 emigration had reduced the total to 2,108. Emigration has continued to take its toll in succeeding years, even when there has been an overall increase in members.¹⁸ The trend of

¹⁵H. H. Borowski, 'Christians and Marxists in Poland' in *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* Vol. V No. 1. (Easton PA, 1985) p. 5.

¹⁶A seminary staffed by American professors was opened in Malbork in the early 1950s, but was closed after two years as a result of state intervention.

¹⁷This does not mean that they held aloof and showed no interest. When I was discussing with the President of the Baptist Union the question of political activity by the church, he said: 'We don't resist the authorities, we pray for them.' Then he added, with a twinkle in his eye: 'We didn't even resist Hitler. We prayed for him — and look what happened to him!'

¹⁸I am indebted to the current President of the Polish Baptist Union, the Rev. Konstanty Wiazowski, for many of the statistics concerning the churches since the Second World War. He and many other Baptist pastors have interpreted the figures and supplied much valuable additional information.

annual losses was reversed in 1960, and for the next few years there was a modest growth. However, the growth rate was below that for the population as a whole, which grew from 29.795 million in 1960 to 34.195 million in 1975. The average annual growth rate for the churches was 0.45 per cent, whereas that for the population in general was 1.15 per cent. The following figures give the total membership of Polish Baptist churches for these years:-

Year	Number of Members
1960	2,266
1970	2,301
1974	2,401
1975	2,425
1976	2,430

In 1976 the Baptists had 52 churches and 96 'preaching stations', where regular worship, Sunday school and other activities were carried on. Camps for children and young people were held, but these were mainly conducted on officially approved premises.¹⁹ The Baptist publishing house produced a monthly magazine, *Slowo prawdy* (*The Word of Truth*), but only 3,500 copies of each issue were permitted, and the contents had to be cleared with the censor. Some books were published but again contents and numbers were restricted. The Baptists supported the British and Foreign Bible Society bookshop in Warsaw, and obtained copies of the Scriptures there when they were available. Here, too, numbers were limited and the sale of Bibles took place only on church premises.

The Polish Ecumenical Council, of which the Baptists were (and still are) members, co-ordinated a number of activities, one of which was the Ecumenical Theological Academy in Warsaw for the training of pastors and priests for all the non-Catholic denominations. Baptists sent some of their ministerial candidates here, but also had their own seminary for those who did not wish to study at the academy.

In 1969 the Baptists began preparing radio broadcast material, sending the tapes to Monte Carlo to be broadcast by Trans-World Radio.

Official permission for the construction of new church buildings, which was often difficult to obtain in the early post-war years, was

¹⁹These children's camps, which are still held each year in great numbers, have been very fruitful over the years. A number of the present day pastors came to faith at such camps which they attended as children. In 1965 there was a significant spiritual awakening at the young people's camps which resulted in many eventually offering themselves for full-time Christian ministry. Rev. Zygmunt Karel, currently a pastor in Cracow, but soon to head the new Baptist Seminary in Wroclaw (see below), was one such young person.

granted more readily after the political upheavals of 1970. At that time, the government gave greater security of tenure to churches in the 'recovered territories' which occupied buildings left vacant by the German congregations who emigrated when the national borders were redrawn after the war. The state had charged 'rent' on these properties from 1945 till 1970, but cancelled this arrangement after 1970 as a sign of 'good will' towards the churches.

Growth years

The next ten years, from 1977 to 1986, were interesting and encouraging ones for the Baptists, as reflected in the membership figures.²⁰ The figures for total membership and numbers of baptisms during the first part of this period are as follows:

Year	Number of Members	Number of Baptisms
1977	2,451	96
1978	2,472	88
1979	2,539	70
1980	2,543	86
1981	2,529	106

During the years 1977-81 the Baptists continued their normal life and witness within the limits of the law. The visit of Billy Graham in 1978, just before the election of the first Polish Pope, gave Baptists a higher profile in the consciousness of the nation than they had previously enjoyed, although no significant increase in the membership figures, nor in the number of baptisms, appears to have followed his visit. In the same period a number of new buildings were constructed in villages and towns, including Bialystok, where a new chapel and a home for the elderly were built. In Gdansk permission was received to construct a new chapel and work began in 1980.

The years 1982-86, among the more difficult of the post-war period for the nation, were most encouraging for the Baptists. The average annual growth rate increased significantly from 1.35 per cent to 3.35 per cent, and the number of baptisms more than doubled, with a total of 995 for the period.

²⁰ This is particularly true for the years 1982 to 1986, following the imposition of martial law. However, even in the previous five year period, 1977-81, there was a slight change in the trends. Whereas, in the years up to 1976 when the overall population was growing at an annual rate of 1.15 per cent, the Baptist churches were increasing at an average annual rate of only 0.9 per cent; since 1976 the population has increased at an annual rate of only 0.9 per cent, but the Baptist churches showed an average annual increase of 1.35 per cent for the period 1977-81. From 1982 to 1986 the churches' annual growth rate was 3.35 per cent, significantly above the growth rate for the population as a whole.

Eight new churches have been established in recent years, mainly between 1977 to 1986, but a number of small village churches have been closed, and the number of 'preaching points' has fallen to 82.²¹

The shock of martial law and the period of repression, imprisonment of dissidents and economic hardship which followed, seemed to produce an environment in which Baptists and other Protestants had an opportunity to gain an acceptance for their message which formerly had not been possible.

As in previous times of crisis, multitudes of Poles responded by identifying strongly with the Roman Catholic Church, but others seemed more open to consider new possibilities. This may have been due in part to the attitude of the Catholic Church itself, which sensed a oneness with other churches in the attempt to minister to the nation in its need, but may also have been helped by the way in which Polish Baptists shared with other Poles what they received from the West. Baptist churches in the West were at the fore in the efforts to send food, clothing and medical supplies to Poland. Large quantities of supplies were sent to the Baptist churches, who distributed them with strict fairness among their own members, but help was also given by the Baptists to Catholic parishes, families, hospitals and children's homes.

The physical hunger experienced by the people seemed to have been accompanied by a widespread spiritual hunger. The sale of Bibles rocketed; the Bible Society bookshop and many Baptist and other Protestant churches were constantly importuned by requests for more and more Bibles. The Bible Society in Warsaw was given permission by the government to print as many copies of the Scriptures as it wished, as long as the paper (in desperately short supply) could be imported from abroad.

A number of the churches used the new openness to engage in more active and aggressive evangelism. Some conducted open-air evangelistic meetings and distributed tracts. A number sold Bibles in public markets. Others held baptismal services in public parks. Halls in universities and other buildings were hired for films, evangelistic meetings or Gospel concerts. In some of these efforts, Baptists initiated the enterprise — as in the visit of Nicky Cruz in 1986; in other cases they joined with other Christians, as with the visits of Cliff Richard and Joni Earicksen. In recent years an ice stadium in Warsaw has been hired for a half-week of evangelism; in 1984 an average of 1,000 attended each evening; in 1985 the figure was 3,000.

²¹ Churches exist in more than half of the 50 voivodships, or administrative regions, into which the country is divided. Over two-thirds of the churches have full-time pastors, the remainder mostly have ordained men with part-time jobs. There are also 238 lay preachers who serve the churches.

In 1981, when Solidarity successfully negotiated a major concession from the government, namely a weekly broadcast of a Catholic Mass on state radio, a similar right was given to the denominations who were part of the Polish Ecumenical Council. A Baptist service is broadcast around four times a year on state radio.

The Present Situation

The years 1987 and 1988 have seen a slowing down in the growth rate of the denomination, evidenced by the total membership figures and the total number of baptisms. These are as follows:

Year	Number of Members	Number of Baptisms
1987	3,053	153
1988	3,011	132

Even when the loss of 35 members, who left the denomination with their pastor (see below), is taken into consideration, the figure for 1988 shows an overall loss for the first time since 1959.

The leaders of the denomination are concerned about this situation, and the President of the Baptist Union has issued a challenge to the churches to aim and plan for definite growth in the next ten years. Rev. Dr Roy Pointer of the Bible Society gave a workshop on the subject of church growth at the annual Pastors' Conference in November 1989, and the hope is that this will provide stimulus for definite action.

As has been noted above, many Baptists are of ethnically German or Ukrainian origin, and the question is sometimes asked, 'Where are the Poles in our churches?' Because of the rapid urbanisation of the post-war years, it is sometimes forgotten that many Poles are of rural origin with strong traditional Catholic links. It remains to be seen whether the younger generation will be more willing to change their religious allegiance.

Baptists, with their strong tradition of independence and autonomy for the local congregation, often rely on local initiative for new ways forward. This has its disadvantages, but there are a number of interesting projects currently being undertaken by individual churches. The members of the Baptist church in Wroclaw (former Breslau), in the south-west of the country, have spent much of their spare time over the last few years in constructing a very elaborate suite of buildings to replace the building which they inherited from the German Baptist congregation at the end of the Second World War. This is now virtually complete, and in September 1989 the 'Wroclaw

Christian Language School' was opened, with the purpose of providing classes in English, and possibly German, in a way similar to that given by the Methodist English School in Warsaw. In addition to providing high quality language study in a Christian context, it is hoped that this will be a point of contact with Polish students, great numbers of whom are anxious to learn these foreign languages.

It is also hoped that the Wroclaw church will be the location of the new Baptist seminary when it opens in 1990. The intention of the new principal is that this seminary will provide training for Christian workers at a number of levels — lay workers, deaconesses and pastors — and will eventually provide training at university level, with Polish lecturers providing the bulk of the instruction. At present, the Baptists, together with most of the other free churches, do not have any real biblical or theological scholars in their ranks. The hope of the new seminary principal is that scholars from the West will be willing to reside in Poland for a number of years and be involved in training a generation of indigenous Polish scholars.

Contacts with other Baptist Churches

The Polish Baptists have good contacts with the registered Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR, and are encouraged by news of growth in many places including Moscow, Leningrad, Siberia, Belorussia and Ukraine. They are also members of the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance, and have received a great deal of help, often of a practical nature, from these bodies.

While Polish Baptists are very appreciative of all the help they have received from Christians in the West, especially financially and practically, some leaders feel that there is a lack of a sense of responsibility among many ordinary members in the matter of giving. The dependence on the state for the necessities of life, even when these have not been forthcoming, together with the generosity of western Christians in providing money for building projects, has fostered an attitude of passivity. Many Baptist pastors have secular jobs in order to support themselves and their families, which means that they have less time to give to church work. Theoretically, the laity could, therefore, be more involved in church life, but often this is not so.

Relations with other Denominations in Poland

The Baptists' membership of the Polish Ecumenical Council brings them into official contact with other member churches. In addition

there are a number of more informal links which they enjoy with Christians in these groups.

The Catholic Church in Poland contains at least two 'renewal movements'. One is 'Oasis' or 'The Light and Life' movement, begun by Father Blachnicki, which attracts 50,000 or more young Catholics to its annual retreats.²² A number of Baptists, including some pastors, have contacts with these Catholics, some of whom have been influenced by the charismatic movement, yet many Baptist pastors and leaders are extremely cautious about such links.

In spite of the more open attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Protestants since the Second Vatican Council, it remains true that the Catholic Church in Poland considers itself *the* Church of Poland and so views as proselytism any evangelism and proclamation which results in Poles becoming Baptist Christians. While Baptists would probably not encourage devout church-attending Catholics to change their allegiance, they would feel free to present their understanding of Christianity to anyone who will listen, and would welcome into their church anyone who professed conversion and desired baptism and church membership. Many Protestants in Poland feel very uneasy about the prospect of the increasing influence of the Catholic Church in the life of the nation following the recent elections in which Solidarity candidates enjoyed such conspicuous success. Ten years ago, when Solidarity was first formed, many Protestants were troubled about their own membership in the movement; union meetings often began with a celebration of Mass and in many places Catholic priests were close advisors of the union leaders (as in the case of Lech Walesa).

A number of Lutheran laymen in the south of the country are engaged in evangelistic activity of different kinds, and some Baptists have joined them. In a similar way Baptist students are active in work among university students with their fellow Christians from other denominations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has divided into two groups, one of which is still very strongly attached to the teachings of Ellen White; the other, the 'Seventh Day Christians', is far closer to mainline Christianity, apart from its adherence to Saturday as the day for Christian worship, and with this group the Baptists co-operate.²³

²² Yoder, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²³ The United Evangelical Church of the Gospel, formed from those churches which withdrew from the wartime federation, has grown at a faster rate than the Baptist Church, but has also experienced a number of traumatic divisions which have marred its life and witness. In 1980 the Free Christians (Christian Brethren) numbering about 2,000, mainly in the south of Poland, withdrew from the United Church to form their own independent grouping. In 1987 the Pentecostals within the remaining United Church opted for secession, and the whole federation has now disintegrated. The Pentecostals have continued to disagree among themselves, and there are currently five different groups with, sadly, the possibility of even more splits in the future.

The influence of the charismatic movement has been felt by the Baptists in common with all the denominations, Catholic and Protestant, sometimes in a moderate way, at other times with extreme and even bizarre results.²⁴ Many of the older Baptist pastors are suspicious and uneasy about 'charismatic influences' in the denomination. This has been made worse by the fact that in 1988 one church, together with its pastor, seceded from the denomination as the result of a Swedish evangelist teaching 'Prosperity Theology'.²⁵ This probably increases the unwillingness to experiment with anything new.

Conclusion

Polish Baptists stand on the threshold of the last decade of the 20th century, in a political situation which is constantly changing, with a small but assured place in the religious life of the country. As noted before, they do not see their own task to be one of changing the political face of the nation, but rather that of maintaining their own distinctive witness. They hope for growth, but they believe that faithfulness is that which is required of them, rather than success. We may judge them to be 'pietistic' and lacking in vision for a holistic witness to the life of the whole nation, but we should admire their faithfulness under much difficulty and discouragement.

²⁴I have been informed of a number of groups in Poland which combine elements of Catholic ritual, a Jehovah's Witness Christology, and exercise of charismatic gifts!

²⁵'Prosperity Theology' or 'Theology of Success' has appeared in the last ten years and is particularly strong in the USA and Scandinavia. It is associated with the name of Kenneth Hagin, whose writings have been translated into many languages, including Russian, Polish and Bulgarian. According to Dr A. B. da Silva, a Professor of Religion in the University of Uppsala, it is 'a theology according to which a real Christian (a) has to be rich and healthy, to enjoy himself and to prosper in all spheres of his life, (b) possesses God's nature, and (c) should be baptised in the Holy Spirit, the unmistakable signs of this kind of baptism being the possession of the gift of speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) and of the gifts of healing and miracle working. 'The "theology of success" movement: a comment', in *Themelios: an international journal for theological students* Vol. 11 No. 3, p. 91.