

## GOD TELLS HINN TO RELOCATE MINISTRY

The ink had not dried on the last issue of *The Quarterly Journal*, which reported Benny Hinn's announcement that he and his family would be moving from Florida to Southern California but that his ministry would stay in Orlando, when it was announced that he would be moving his operation to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Hinn's organization made the announcement June 1. Just a few days later, Hinn told members of his congregation of the impending move during a Sunday morning service. Hinn changed his plans because "God has spoken," he told the members of his World Outreach Church. Evidently, God has also spoken with urgency. Details of the relocation called for the leasing of temporary offices in Dallas beginning Sept. 1 with new headquarters to be built and completed by June 1, 2000. The Orlando-based operations employed 370 persons, but initial remarks by ministry officials would not say how many would move to Texas.

A spokesman for Hinn's ministry initially told the *Orlando Sentinel* that Hinn would continue to preach at the church "as his schedule allows." Yet, apparently the news media no longer accepts with certainty such statements. "Whether Hinn will remain in his Central Florida pulpit, or for how long, is uncertain, he told the packed sanctuary," the newspaper reported. Presumably, Hinn's uncertainty is a result of God's reticence in disclosing plans. "When God talks to me about it, I'll let you know," he revealed to his congregation.

The *Sentinel* also reported on the future of the church founded by Hinn in the 1980s, saying that it "will be reconfigured to accommodate children, youth and adult programs," according to a church official. The Orlando congregation members "were uniformly supportive of their pastor." Obviously, when "God speaks" through Hinn, they're quick to listen and accommodate his revelations.

While Hinn claimed "one reason" for the move, information given to the news media indicates other considerations were instrumental. "We have outgrown our limited space in Orlando and for the ministry to accomplish what God has called us to in international evangelism; this is a move we must make," Hinn said in a prepared announcement. A *Dallas Morning News* article cited ministry spokesman David Brokaw as saying, "many of the church's partners and donors live around Dallas." Still others discern additional reasons.

Ole Anthony, a prominent figure in exposing the abuses and corruption of televangelists, offers another scenario. Anthony contends that "Hinn is moving to Dallas to be close to the ministry's law firm, Brewer, Brewer, Anthony & Middlebrook of Irving." This, according to Anthony, will allow Hinn's ministry to engage one of its lawyers as a business manager and invoke an attorney-client privilege to shield ministry business practices from investigators.

Anthony told the *Dallas Morning News* that, "Every purchase order, paycheck and aspect of the ministry's operation is handled through an attorney's office, so they claim privilege for even the smallest detail of the ministry. That provides another shield which keeps investigators from evaluating whether they're doing what they say they're doing."

"That's patently ludicrous. It discloses a complete lack of understanding of Pastor Benny, his ministry and what attorney-client privilege is," Hinn ministry attorney David Middlebrook said in response to Anthony's charge.

—MKG

## MOSCOW COURT RULES AGAINST JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Watchtower Society suffered a setback from a June decision by a Moscow court, which came just a month after it was officially recognized as a religious denomination by the Russian government.

Late last year, the Moscow city prosecutor's office began trying to end the sect's activity in Russia's capital city. In March, a judge established a panel to review Watchtower literature for illegal content. The group was the third such body studying the organization's material. Two earlier panels reported finding no illegal content. Watchtower leaders had sought to have the current review halted. The petition was rejected by the Moscow court.

As the panel continues its review, the Watchtower Society in Moscow will be unable to rent facilities for worship services or renovate any of its property. If the court ultimately rules that the Watchtower is an illegal religious body, it would mean further restrictions, including the holding of any public services and

(continues on page 21)

with his (or her) new and improved “signs and wonders,” “creative miracles,” “anointing” or “last days revival” from God.

Whom do I view as the Christian “superstars?” Perhaps, if you’re looking for names associated with well-known ministries, I most likely would be able to compete name for name, pitting those whom I view as prominent, yet credible, ministers of the Gospel with those of dubious, yet illustrious, standing. However, this is not a child’s card game of “war” where my ten beats your eight or your ace beats my king. How then did I respond to the caller?

“God’s superstars,” if there were such a designation, would be the local pastor who works long, hard and diligently (as Scripture commands) in an effort to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15). He does so to feed and protect the flock of God that has been entrusted to his care. He desires to see them mature in their faith and to grow in the process of biblical sanctification. He’s never the one who ensnares his people with heretofore unknown revelation or esoteric insights of Scripture — and then labels “immature” those who would question such teaching.

He’s the one who labors overtime to pray for and work with the couple whose marriage has gone sour. Realizing the divine origin and lifetime commitment of marriage, he counsels the couple to biblically confront and solve each problem. And then rejoices as God, through His Word, wonderfully guides the couple, to establish (or reestablish) discipline and patterns which cultivate and nurture love. He’s never the one who offers a quick fix to a marriage in trouble by “binding the spirit of divorce in the name of Jesus” or holds his hands to a television camera as a “point of contact” and offers a glib prayer.

He’s the one who consoles the parents whose son or daughter has just been shot to death by a deranged schoolmate. As they struggle with the pain and grief of such a senseless tragedy, crying to God for answers, he helps the couple face the paralyzing feelings of loss. He, through God’s Word and grace, provides solace to an otherwise crippling circumstance. He’s never the one who uses the tragedy to employ it as a “photo-opportunity” or other media conduit to bring even more prominence to his “ministry.”

Nor is he the one who shipwrecks the faith of the young couple who bring their severely brain damaged child to his jam-packed healing service. After he titillates the multitudes for hours and brazenly promises, “Everyone can be healed tonight!” he retreats back to his excessively plush hotel suite as the couple agonizingly leaves the crusade with their child in the same helpless condition.

Or just maybe “God’s superstar” is that saintly mother or grandmother who has persistently and steadfastly prayed for that lost family member, friend or neighbor and years later watches God answer those prayers as the

lost soul comes to faith in Christ. Perhaps she is the one who has, for decades, served God and His Church faithfully by employing the gifts and talents which He has entrusted to her (Ephesians 2:10, 1 Peter 4:10). She is never the one who flaunts her gifts or exercises them in order to draw attention to herself to establish an aura of spiritual elitism or superiority.

In fact, when you find one of “God’s superstars,” you’ll be hard-pressed to bestow just such a designation on him or her. For another crucial characteristic exhibited by “God’s superstars” will be their imitating the humility of Jesus Christ:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

—MKG

---

## NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

distributing its books and magazines.

The court’s current ruling and any forthcoming decision, affects only Watchtower activity in Moscow. However, observers from other religious groups fear that a final ruling against the Watchtower could affect their missionary efforts as well. It could also prompt other Russian cities to follow the lead of the Moscow court and impose similar restrictions.

—MKG

## O’HAIR MYSTERY THICKENS

Officials are for the first time saying that noted atheist Madilyn Murray O’Hair is dead. O’Hair vanished in August 1995 from her home in Austin, Texas, along with her son Jon Garth Murray, and granddaughter Robin Murray — whom she had adopted. Also missing was \$500,000 in gold coins. There is suspicion that the three were murdered by several men, including David Waters, O’Hair’s former office manager, in an effort to steal more than a half million dollars from an organization headed by O’Hair.

The Internal Revenue Service announced its findings based upon several pieces of circumstantial evidence and from information from confidential sources. Officials believe the bodies of O’Hair and her two family members were placed in barrels and buried on a ranch near San Antonio. However, two searches of the property by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents