

## WATCHTOWER MAY SELL BROOKLYN BUILDING

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society may be placing a "For Sale" sign on one of its prime waterfront properties in Brooklyn. The 1 million-square-foot building is a principal shipping point for Watchtower literature. The 12-story warehouse is at 360 Furman St., a few blocks from the organization's world headquarters.

Ongoing complaints by local residents about noise and air pollution from trucks entering and leaving the building have prompted the Watchtower to relocate the shipping facility to its Wallkill, N.Y., factory operations, known as the Watchtower Farms, and to sites outside the United States. Wallkill is about 100 miles northwest of Brooklyn. With the planned move, Watchtower spokesman Daniel Rice said the Furman Street building no longer would be needed.

According to the *New York Daily News*, the building could be sold for as much as \$120 million. Others offer a low-end estimate of \$50 million. Once sold, the structure could be converted to 400-500 condominium apartments. Some units at the top of the building would have a 180-degree view of the Manhattan skyline and might sell for as much as \$5 million each.

The structure was built in 1928. The Watchtower bought it in 1983.

—MKG

## CASHING IN ON MAJOR ASSETS

The Worldwide Church of God has announced a plan to keep the denomination solvent for decades. It involves moving its headquarters from Pasadena, Calif., and selling its 55-acre Ambassador College campus to make way for 1,500 new homes. The college, which once had nearly 1,200 students, was closed in 1990.

The parcel is prime Pasadena real estate and contains elegant mansions, along with the church's Ambassador Auditorium and headquarters. While church officials would not disclose details of the transaction, *Christianity Today* magazine reported, "taking into account current home values, the sale price could exceed \$750 million."

Following the 1986 death of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, the church began a turning into what some

would call an evangelical denomination. Joseph Tkach, Jr. is the leader of the church. He took the reigns of the church from his father, Joseph Tkach, Sr., who died in 1995. Armstrong's death and doctrinal revisions by the elder Tkach cost the WCG both members and money. *CT* has stated the current membership is 67,000, down from 150,000 during the Armstrong era, and its annual income has fallen from \$170 million to \$25 million. The nearly vacant property in Pasadena costs the church about \$2 million annually in maintenance.

Not everyone favors the plan. The West Pasadena Neighborhood Association represents a delegation of 400 neighbors and is opposing the church's campaign. They and others say the project allows for too many homes, which would cause traffic congestion and blemish the neighborhood. Former members also are balking. "They say Tkach and company now stand to profit from the tithes of Armstrong's followers," *CT* reported.

Even if the Worldwide Church of God fails to keep solvent, it is succeeding in its historical revision. Church leaders say their migration toward Orthodoxy was the result of abandoning peculiar, non-essential doctrines. *CT* has helped in this regard, labeling the teachings as "fringe beliefs" and citing as examples the adherence of Old Testament dietary laws and festivals, Sabbath (Saturday) worship, and compulsory tithing (of up to 30% of one's income). However, the nucleus of Armstrong's doctrine went far beyond those "fringe beliefs" and included a denunciation of the Trinity, the denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the teaching that believers are not born again until the resurrection, when they will achieve godhood.

—MKG

## REBECCA IN FANTASYLAND

Self-proclaimed occult expert Dr. Rebecca Brown continues her defamation of Personal Freedom Outreach. For more than a decade, PFO has documented from medical officials, legal authorities, court papers, and other sources Brown's deceptive ministry (see, *Drugs, Demons and Delusions*, available from PFO). Brown has not once legitimately refuted these findings.

Brown got her start with the help of Jack Chick and Chick Publications, publisher of evangelistic tracts and comic books. At that time, Brown was associated with

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we develop our character, not our comfort. Remember, God is more interested in our holiness than our happiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). Happiness and solace can be by-products of our faith, but they should not be the driving force.

Riverbend Church's concept of worship may well play to the masses, but it is merely a repackaging of the unbiblical self-esteem concept. PFO director David Tyler, in his rebuttal of the self-esteem doctrine, expounds on the Beatitudes given by Jesus during His Sermon on the Mount:

"No man can put into practice what the Lord said in these verses unless he becomes dead to self. This means that he is not concerned about personal 'rights of self.' It is the absence of this tendency of constantly 'watching out for self,' of having 'sensitivity about self,' that is so delicate that the slightest disturbance can upset its equilibrium and devastate the individual. The Lord wants to produce in the believer an *indifference to self...*" (*Jesus Christ: Self-Denial or Self-Esteem?*, pp. 23-24, emphasis in original).

Market-driven churches, with their offer of low-impact Christianity, are the antithesis of the scriptural mandate and standard for believers. Weekly installments of a forty-five minute, cotton candy service just won't produce discipline in the life of a Christian. It will not produce sanctification. It will not produce growth.

True believers will experience the abundant life only when they give heed to the words of Christ: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'" (Matthew 16:24) and "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:38). Low-impact Christianity may appeal to our fleshly desires and selfishness, but it will never produce the men and women which God desires for Himself.

—MKG

## BENNY HINN IS RIGHT!

Like a broken clock that is right at least twice a day, Benny Hinn occasionally, but rarely, says something that is true.

On the June 26 broadcast of his *This Is Your Day* program, Hinn aired highlights from his recent "Partners Conference" in Anaheim. During the conference, Hinn warned his followers to be careful what teachers they place themselves under since there would be a "transfer of spirits" from the preacher to his disciples. He explained that if a teacher taught falsehood, heresy, or unwitting error, his listeners would have that kind of spirit transferred to them and influence them. On this count, Hinn is right and our experience bears that out.

Hinn, of course, subtly leads his followers to believe that they could listen to him and not be affected in an evil way. Hinn, who has often cursed and castigated his critics, gives his devotees a regular diet of negative evil. For example, he growled at his 1999 Denver crusade: "Yes Lord, I'll do it. I place a curse on every man and every woman that will stretch his hand against this anointing. I curse that man who dares to speak against this ministry."

Hinn's devotees are picking up the "spirit" of their mentor and his harsh, condemning spirit is being transferred left and right. It seems to give some the idea that they can throw around curses and pronounce an awful future for any who do not come into line with Hinn. They are learning well.

The following is a telephone message left on PFO's voice mail by one of Hinn's supporters. It was from a cellular phone caller based in Columbus, Ohio, and was made to PFO "under the cover of darkness" (that is, the call was made at 1:29 A.M.):

"I have something to tell you guys. I was going through your Internet site and saw that you guys criticize Pastor Benny Hinn, man of God. And I just have to say, be careful, you are in danger of hell. You do not want to mess with the man of God. You can — serious things can happen to you. This is not something to play with. You are making fun of God. You are not making fun of a man. Because Pastor Benny Hinn is a servant of God. And be careful by speaking bad about the servant of God, you're speaking bad about the Lord and the Holy Spirit, and danger may await you. Be careful, do not mess with Jesus. Jesus is God, He is Savior, He still heals the sick, whether you believe it or not — you friggin' skeptic. You need to repent, get on your knees and pray. Because the Lord will forgive you, if you repent now."

So it is true: Like teacher, like student. Sadly, Hinn's blind followers do not realize the negative, judgmental attitudes they have acquired by listening to Hinn on a regular basis. We can only pray for those who condemn and curse us.

—GRF

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### NEWS UPDATES

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Elaine Moses, who claimed to be a former high-ranking witch, occultic diplomat to world leaders, and the wife of Satan. In late 1989, Moses disappeared from the scene when Brown married Daniel Yoder, who claims to be "powerfully anointed as a prophet, healer, and evangelist." Together they operate out of Clinton, Ark., under the banner "Harvest Warriors."

Last year, Brown and Yoder called PFO a major adversary of the Christian Church, lumping it with Islam, Freemasonry, and witchcraft. (PFO answered these charges in the January-March 2003 issue of *The Quarterly Journal*.)

Later in 2002, Brown and Yoder wrote in their November issue of the "Harvest Warriors - News":

"There is a group of men, agents of Satan, who call themselves the PFO, which stands for the Personal Freedom Outreach organization. They have a 'form of godliness,' by proclaiming themselves to be Christians with superior knowledge. They claim to have the ability from God to judge others and decide if they are Christians or not. In actual fact, they are slanders [sic], and they deny the power of God by coming against every ministry that is doing something in God's kingdom! They have web sites and send out information with all sorts of slanderous and false accusations against men and women of God. They deny the fact that we serve a God who is both able and willing to work in a miraculous or powerful way these days. They have published the most incredible false and slanderous accusations against us for years now. Other ministries have tried suing them, but have so far been unsuccessful because of the lack of any legislation to control the internet."

Relating a series of meetings they were leading in New York, they wrote:

"Everything was going well, and God was blessing and people's lives were being changed. Then, on the fourth day, an agent of the PFO went to the church building during the morning and accosted the pastor who owned the building. He told him that he was an FBI agent who had been sent to close down the meetings and arrest Daniel and I [sic]. He told the pastor that if he allowed the meetings to continue, that many FBI agents would come to the meeting that night and arrest everyone in attendance!"

According to Brown and Yoder, the "agent of the PFO, sent by Satan" was "loud, belligerent, and demanded that the meetings be shut down immediately!" The couple claims that by tracing the license plate number of the man's automobile, they discovered that he was not an FBI agent, but merely a PFO agent. "After we returned home, this man mailed us some of the documents he had been waving around, with all sorts of foul language against us hand written across them. The documents were supposed to be police reports, but they were blatantly false, and had such inaccurate information on them, that they were laughable to someone who knew anything about us," Brown wrote.

Brown contends that PFO is "anointed by Satan" and argues that, "If they are allowed to continue, the charismatic movement will be in such division that God's miracles will cease to flow."

Brown's alliance with Charismatics demonstrates just how erratic she is in trying to denounce PFO. Charismatics openly embrace Roman Catholicism, overlooking its false and debilitating gospel. However, Brown calls Roman Catholicism witchcraft and charges that anyone who does not stand against "the evil of the idolatrous system of Roman Catholicism ... [is] practicing witchcraft" (*Prepare for War*, pg. 166).

But Brown's inconsistency extends beyond her outbursts against PFO. In her May 2003 "Harvest Warriors - Newsletter," she details events surrounding her mother's death in 1982. Her current narration offers a diverse retelling of the description she related in her 1987 book, *Prepare for War*. While still listing an incorrect age of her mother at death, Brown now describes a divine encounter her mother allegedly had with Jesus after she suffered a heart attack. Brown summarizes:

"When my father and I came to her bedside, she spoke to us and said, 'A short while ago Jesus appeared here at my bed. He spoke to me and told me that He was giving me a choice. Either He would heal me, or I could go home to be in heaven with Him. I asked Him if I could talk with you two before I made my choice.'"

After discussing the matter, receiving the encouragement of her husband and daughter, Brown's mother made her decision "to go with Jesus." "Later that night, Jesus came and took my mother home quietly," Brown writes.

Sixteen years earlier, Brown described the events with:

"In His perfect will, the Lord allowed the satanists to be the instrument of my mother's death. ... She died suddenly one Christmas" (*Prepare for War*, pg. 224).

However, what should be most alarming for Christians is not the conflicting details of her mother's passing, but what Brown relates next in her May narration. She describes for her readers an event that took place at the funeral home as she and her sister-in-law went to prepare her mother's hair prior to the wake:

"Interestingly, I was to have another experience that would forever stay in my mind and heart. ... As we were walking out of the room, suddenly the veil between the spirit realm and the physical realm was opened up for me. I stopped and looked up in astonishment because suddenly I heard my mother's voice clearly and audibly. I would recognize that voice anywhere! She said, 'Oh honey, thank you so much for going to all that trouble over my old body. But just look at the wonderful new body I have now!' I looked up and saw her standing there, hand in hand with Jesus. She was so excited that she was dancing on tip toe, and it was as if Jesus was holding her down for a moment so she could speak to me. She was young and beautiful. Dressed all in white. I recognized her instantly, even though she

did not look anything like she had looked in her earthly physical body. As soon as she said that to me, she went dancing and whirling away. The whole thing lasted only a few seconds. But I KNEW that what I [had] seen and heard was REAL. God, in His great mercy, had given me a brief glimpse of my mother in her glorified body. ... Interestingly, my sister-in-law did not hear or see anything."

First, Brown shows the fallacy of her tale by saying that her mother possessed a "wonderful new body ... her glorified body." The receiving of a glorified body is the final act in a believer's redemption. It does not occur at death, but will transpire at the return of Jesus Christ when those who have died in Him (and those alive on earth at His coming) will receive a perfect resurrection body like His. Scripture couldn't be more clear on this matter (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; Romans 8:17, 23). Brown exhibits her ignorance of Scripture.

Secondly, Brown's purported episode with her mother is nothing short of outright necromancy. At the very heart of spiritism is the notion that the dead are able to communicate with the living here on earth. This is firmly condemned in Scripture (Leviticus 19:26,31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Isaiah 8:19). Yet Brown, who claims the mantle of being a foremost expert on spiritual warfare, tantalizes her followers with the very practices which Scripture denounces.

Brown and Yoder continue to operate in a world of fantasy and occultism. They are unable to refute the

evidence against them, and therefore respond with defamation. They continue to condemn themselves with their own words. While their susceptible followers may swallow these hollow tales, those willing to examine the facts will find plenty of proof of the couple's sordid doctrines and practices.

—MKG

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## BOOKS IN REVIEW

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oneself for injury or wrong that is done to us" (pg. 24), speaks to the very heart of the issue. His conclusions that "self-love was responsible for the fall" and "Self-esteem is always in defiance of God" (pg. 25) should make any grounded Christian vigorously oppose the self-esteem teaching.

Moreover, Tyler notes that self-denial doesn't come at the expense of an abundant life — rather just the opposite. "The believer's satisfaction, joy, and peace come as by-products of faithful and fruitful Christian living," he writes (pg. 106).

This volume is a quick read and to the point. It is loaded with biblical wisdom and solid exegesis. It is a great work to encourage believers to understand and imitate the self-denial of Jesus Christ.

—MKG

## PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLINING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.