

# this old house and other tall tales

## Who Really Has “Touched” Benny Hinn?

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There is no doubt that lies sell and are more popular than truth in this day and age.

A popular Hollywood film a few years back featured Jim Carrey playing a congenital liar who is forced to tell only the truth for a time. Carrey's character is subject to all kinds of hysterics and self-flagellation as he tries to resist the urge to prevaricate.

Benny Hinn, who claims to be “one of the great healing evangelists,” is much like Carrey's lawyer character: he just cannot tell all the truth all the time. He claims to have an especially deep relationship with the Holy Spirit. Hinn even explains away his lack of formal Bible training by claiming that during his purported early encounters with the Spirit, “I was receiving an education greater than any university or seminary could offer. My teacher was the Spirit Himself.”<sup>1</sup> It is a wonder then how Hinn can be so mired in heresy.

Hinn is a phenomenon of our times. Sadly, many Christians demand heroes and icons and for many of them, Hinn answers the call. His broadcasts are full of self-serving tributes to his claimed spiritual stature and impact. In spite of his many goofs, gaffes and media troubles, he still manages to enchant people. False prophecy, her-

esy and necromancy do not slow the *Hinn Express*. He continues to sweep thousands off their feet — literally, as his followers succumb to what Thomas Upham called “sympathetic imitation” and are willing to fall on command.<sup>2</sup>

Hinn's critics try to force him “to tell the truth” by comparing his contradictory public statements and outright lies with documented facts. At times, Hinn allows his underlings to apologize or offer alibis for his slip-ups.<sup>3</sup> Hinn, at other times, simply alters his claims in newly released material.

However, even in the revisions and updates, Hinn can't get it right. The careful observer can only wonder if Hinn has been fibbing for so long that he is incapable of telling the whole truth and of functioning within the bounds of reality. He is a serial prevaricator whose followers don't seem to notice or care. No one around him or within his organization holds him accountable.

In the last decade, Hinn has promised to reform as often as a politician in an election year. A video titled *The Many Faces of Benny Hinn*, helps spell out the dilemma. Similarly, the title of

PFO's volume on Hinn captures him as a man in a world of deep confusion. There is no reason to believe what Hinn says about anything. It is a serious venture to claim to speak for God in the manner of prophecies and visions as does Hinn.

### WHO TOUCHED WHOM?

In his latest autobiography, *He Touched Me*, Hinn continues to compound contradictions and falsehoods that have been documented in previous articles in *The Quarterly Journal*. The adage, “You can't tell a book by its cover,” applies to Hinn's latest one. The golden-hued dust jacket is graced with Hinn's subdued face as he would have us believe that he has been touched by God in some unique and special way. The back cover says Hinn's life story “reveals what can happen when one person becomes totally yielded to the Holy Spirit.”

Upon examination of the book, however, one can see that Hinn again has misrepresented his life story. While these lies are certainly creative and artful, they remain lies.

Hinn's stories keep shifting and changing until one wonders if he ever will get it right. Parts of Hinn's new biography get closer to the truth  
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while other parts carry on the deception and give new versions of old stories.

Hinn says that as a young child he underwent a “time of intense religious instruction” by Catholic nuns who “had a great spiritual influence” on him. His learning included being able to pray “the Nicene Creed.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, the influence of the Nicene Creed is not apparent in Hinn’s description of the Trinity: “If I can shock you, and maybe I should. There are nine of them.”<sup>5</sup>

Whatever differences evangelical and fundamentalist Christians have with Roman Catholics, they all share a belief in three persons in the Godhead, not nine. Finis Dake’s annotated reference Bible, not any Catholic nuns or Greek Orthodox teaching, is the source of this particular idea.

Hinn also has employed other unorthodox influences. At the same time Dake’s teachings were influencing his theology, Hinn advanced the heretical teachings of the Word Faith movement when he taught “He who is the nature of God became the nature of Satan when He became sin”<sup>6</sup> and “Jesus Christ knew the only way He would stop Satan is by becoming one in nature with him. He [Jesus] did not take my sin, He became my sin.”<sup>7</sup>

### ALTERED STATES OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Hinn now admits that some boyhood tales in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* were not recalled correctly. In the early book, he told of a “dream” his mother had in which she had “six beautiful roses.”<sup>8</sup> In this dream, Jesus appeared and asked for one of the roses. In the version of the dream Hinn told to his Orlando church in 1987, he said, “There were eight roses in her hand and Jesus came and said, ‘One of them belongs to me.’”<sup>9</sup>

In the new telling of the purported vision, Hinn explains that his mother recently “explained it was about lilies,”<sup>10</sup> not roses. Despite the change

in number and flower species, Hinn’s interpretation of the dream remains consistent — and herein lies the question as to its divine source and precise interpretation. Hinn now explains the dream of “six beautiful lilies” in his mother’s hand as:

“When she awakened, Clemence [his mother] asked herself, What does this dream mean? What can it be? Eventually, our family was to have six boys and two girls, yet my mother never forgot her bargain with God. ‘Benny,’ she said, ‘you were the lily I presented to Jesus.’”<sup>11</sup>

Hinn suggests the single flower requested by Jesus in the dream symbolizes his call and life as a minister. The problem with Hinn’s (or his mother’s) interpretation lies in the fact that Benny is not the only member of his family to have become a minister. Four other brothers — Willie, Henry, Sammy and Michael — are pastors and evangelists. Why then did Jesus only ask for one flower when five of Clemence Hinn’s sons would eventually devote themselves to full-time ministry work? Perhaps Hinn’s Jesus is a casualty of open theism or process theology — not knowing what the future would hold. Some may say that the number and type of flowers, and the dream’s interpretation type is a minor issue. Perhaps, but it still does beg the question: How could one misconstrue a vision from God?

Then, too, one can ask: How many other tales and claimed revelations were misremembered, embellished or complete fiction? Hinn’s more bizarre stories often have no witnesses or support whatsoever. And when there are claims of videotape evidence, none actually exists.

### A MAYOR NO MORE

Sometime following the 1982 death of his father, Hinn began to say that during his childhood his father, Costandi, was the “mayor” of Jaffa, Israel.<sup>12</sup> PFO knew that neither before nor after 1952 (the year Benny was born) was there a mayor of Jaffa named Hinn. Israeli historian Dan

Kurzman tells us that at the time of the 1948 War in Israel, “Jaffa was left virtually leaderless.”<sup>13</sup> From that point on, Kurzman states, “Jaffa ... became a Jewish suburb”<sup>14</sup> with Jewish mayors. Costandi Hinn was an Arab, which alone precluded him from such an office.

When Hinn’s untruth was exposed by PFO, he scrambled for excuses and alibis. For a while he retreated to the claim that his father was only the “unofficial mayor” of Jaffa. Then he blamed his book’s publisher and said he tried to correct it prior to publication. Hinn apparently has now even abandoned this latter claim since it too has been disproven. He has never admitted that the claim was an outright lie.

In his new autobiography, Hinn now says his father “can best be described as a liaison between the community and the Israeli government.”<sup>15</sup> Throughout the book, he then ascribes to his father a host of various occupations and responsibilities: postal service employee,<sup>16</sup> Red Cross worker,<sup>17</sup> fruit inspector at the Jaffa port,<sup>18</sup> president of the Greek Orthodox Club,<sup>19</sup> movie projectionist for the club<sup>20</sup> and, following the family’s 1968 move to Canada, insurance salesman,<sup>21</sup> all of which are a far cry from the political position once claimed for him.

Yet, Hinn maintains the pretense that his father held a “unique position in the community” and persists in describing him “as a liaison between the community and Israeli government.”<sup>22</sup> He also maintains he “was deeply touched that my father had earned such respect and trust from the Israeli government,”<sup>23</sup> which is still an undocumented claim.

After Israel re-established itself a nation in 1948, the Arabs of Jaffa (as well as Arabs in other parts of the country) were hated, suspected and oppressed security risk to the Israelis. Any history of Palestine in the 1930s will establish that the Arab riots in Jaffa, Hebron and other places, leading to the Arab massacre of Jews, are

remembered to this day. In Jaffa during the time of Hinn's youth Arabs had to get security clearance to perform even the most menial jobs because of continuing Israeli animosity toward them.

Two other major factors, which Hinn has forgotten or is unaware, should be mentioned as they militate against any Israeli acceptance of Arabs being in any way acceptable to Jews during the 1940s and 1950s. First, the Arabs of Israel aggravated Jewish hatred and fear by overtly backing Nazi Germany during World War II.<sup>24</sup> This never has been forgotten.

Second, the Arab-Jewish fighting, bombing and killing, so fierce in the 1930s and 1940s, finally came to a head with Israel's 1948 War of Independence. The hatred continues today. In spite of the repeated attempts by the leadership for peace throughout the past five decades, the hostility amidst these people can and has erupted at any instant — and without warning. No one familiar with Israel's political climate would believe for a moment that Hinn's father would have been treated with "respect and trust" or as an equal by the Israelis.

Hinn actually — perhaps unknowingly — provides for readers insight into the socio-economic status of his father and family when he writes: "My father didn't own an automobile the entire time we lived in Israel — he either walked to work or took public transportation."<sup>25</sup> A mayor or even a "government liaison" would be expected to have a car and driver (as do politicians in Israel today) and not be left to walk or take a bus to work.

Moreover, Hinn says, "We were not a wealthy family."<sup>26</sup> Hinn's family left Israel for Canada virtually penniless and was dependent upon the sponsorship and goodwill of agencies recommended by the Greek Orthodox Church and a neighboring family.<sup>27</sup> There was no status or good life but rather, as described by Hinn himself, just the opposite. This is not to say that poverty is bad but that one

should tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

### BENNY GIBRAN?

Hinn in some ways resembles the late Kahlil Gibran. Gibran was a charmer who used others for material gain. Both Gibran and Hinn are best-selling authors (with good editors) who have gained a large following. Gibran composed a tall tale of being a child of "fortune" growing up in a very well-to-do home of culture and love. Many still hold onto Gibran's myth. However, in fact, Gibran was raised in "a harsh life of poverty, with a cruel overbearing father, a drunkard who bullied his family."<sup>28</sup>

rooms on the ground floor of a building owned by the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>29</sup> This is a far cry from his previous description that, "We lived comfortably. Dad's position in government made it possible for us to have a home in the suburbs. It was a wonderful home."<sup>30</sup> Strangely though, Hinn qualifies his admission by interjecting, "there was ample room."<sup>31</sup> Once again, we are confronted with Hinn's ongoing childhood delusions since the reality of nine people living in three rooms would hardly be "ample room." One can only imagine the conditions with seven children living in one bedroom.



The Greek Orthodox Club in Jaffa, Israel where the Hinn family lived in the basement level.

Gibran, like Hinn, was born in the Middle East in an Arabic culture. Gibran was Lebanese, Hinn is Palestinian. Exaggeration of pedigree is a way of life all over that region. While a Bible believer would say one should not lie about his parentage, the Middle Easterner is conditioned in a tradition (of fabricating) that is looked upon as honorable. Even conversion to Christianity does not change that for some. For believers, words cannot be spoken just to appease others but must correspond to reality.

### THIS OLD HOUSE

Hinn now also admits that his nine-member family lived in three

Moreover, the location was less than "wonderful" in a minority Arab area of a run-down and neglected section of the city. PFO visited the building that housed the Hinn basement home in Jaffa. The visit confirmed the idea that conditions were crowded. Jaffa neighbors interviewed by PFO talked of poverty there. The only attractive thing about the neighborhood is that at the end of the street one has a magnificent view of the Mediterranean Sea. And even though the house is within view of the Mediterranean, the harsh realities of life in Jaffa in that era cannot be wished away. The oppression of the Arab minority is well documented

and easily proven.

When Hinn's claims went unchecked, he was able to refer to the house on Ibn Rashad street as "a home in the suburbs. It was a wonderful home." The truth that Hinn has been forced to confess is that his family only occupied the ground floor of the building which housed the Greek Orthodox Club. He further admits, "By the time I was a teen, our bedroom in Jaffa began to resemble a hospital ward."<sup>32</sup>

### TRUTH IS BETTER THAN FICTION

In the past, PFO has been threatened by Hinn's attorneys over its exposés of his exaggerated and false statements. Yet now Hinn is conforming at least parts of his story to that which in the past his lawyers said had been misrepresented.

Rather than try to keep the pretense going, Hinn perhaps could have gotten far more traction with the truth: "Poor Arab boy and high school dropout makes good." Somehow he just seems driven to fabricate his pedigree and spiritual experiences. Perhaps all his lies and exaggerations are his way of responding to a childhood of humiliation.<sup>33</sup> In reality, his new autobiography is really just a revision and rewrite of his testimony tapes and a previous best-seller, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*.

Hinn continues to assert what he labels "a horrible stuttering problem"<sup>34</sup> as a young child up until the time he was called into ministry. This, too, has been a claim that PFO has challenged. Hinn's response has been to misrepresent PFO's assertions. Hinn says PFO claims he never stuttered. PFO never denied that Hinn stuttered; it only questioned the severity of his stuttering.

While still trying to claim he was a reclusive, shy, backward stutterer as a child, Hinn now says that as a boy he put on shows, productions and song-and-dance routines.<sup>35</sup> He tells how he loved to strut among his mother's family and rattle off memorized parts

from TV shows. He writes:

"At their house I became an extrovert. 'When are you going to put on the show?' my little cousins begged. They were talking about a skit, or a 'production' I organized every year during our visit. During those years there was a popular television comedy program in the region titled, *Doctor, Doctor, Follow Me!* We did our own version of the show — complete with song-and-dance routines. You should have seen us — me, Willie, Chris and our cousins entertaining a room full of cheering, exuberant relatives."<sup>36</sup>

At his relative's home, gone is the fear and reclusive behavior that he claimed dominated his youth. This, too, is the way teenage friends remember him in Canada. A showman — sometimes rattling off memorized material — not the fearful, tongue-tied, shy, inhibited, reclusive, backward child Hinn repeatedly claims to have been.

Hinn goes on to say, "When I was seventeen or eighteen, I believed that some day I would go into politics, or perhaps find employment in the travel industry."<sup>37</sup> Both occupations are quite ill-suited for a young man allegedly crippled with a shattered self-image and humiliation.

Later in the book, he appears to rationalize by claiming a temporary nature to his affliction: "There had always been times when I could speak without a noticeable problem for a short period before something set the stuttering off again."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, his admissions in the book reveal a new Hinn — a Hinn which PFO previously discovered in personal interviews with Hinn's boyhood acquaintances. It is the same Hinn that as a young man told a Toronto newspaper, "I'm an artist. I've always been an artist."<sup>39</sup>

### HABITUAL INCONSISTENCIES

As Hinn assembles his narratives, he has a propensity to misstate or

confuse facts stated in previous accounts of the same events. His problem arises from his inability to recall his earlier versions of a story. *He Touched Me* offers more examples.

For example, Hinn has repeatedly flip-flopped on the issue of his secondary (high) school education. He had claimed to have been a senior in 1972 at Georges Vanier Secondary School in Toronto.<sup>40</sup> When it was revealed that school records showed him to be an undergraduate in 1972 and a dropout before graduation, Hinn replied: "I never said I was a senior, period. Anywhere. It's not in my book. All I mention in my book is that I got saved in high school in February of 1972."<sup>41</sup> Now Hinn has returned himself to his original standing. In *He Touched Me*, he writes: "During my senior year at Georges Vanier... "<sup>42</sup>

The current offering of Hinn's conversion experience likewise disagrees with earlier versions. While Hinn's description of the event in *He Touched Me* parallels his former account in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, it still contains conspicuous differences from an early account. Hinn writes in his *He Touched Me*:

"The next morning I awoke early and rushed off to school before class began. I needed to study in the library. I was seated at a large table, concentrating on my work, when a small group of students approached me. Immediately, I knew they were the same ones who had been giving me all this 'Jesus talk.' 'Would you like to join us in our morning prayer meeting?' one of them asked. They pointed to a room that was just off the library. I thought, *Well, perhaps I'll get them off my back if I agree. After all, one little prayer meeting isn't going to hurt me.*"<sup>43</sup>

Previously Hinn reported the event this way:

"I go into school, open my locker, get my books, a girl shows up called, Michelle. ... She

looked a little strange, a little like, you know, flying, spacey. Michelle said, with this big smile, she said, 'Would you come to a prayer meeting?' I said, 'Well, Michelle, I—I, you know it's only ten minutes.' It was like quarter to eight, and class begins at eight. And you know, here I'm stuttering back trying to tell her I can't. She said, you know, she said, 'It would really be nice if you'll come.' Took me by the hand and pulled me to the prayer meeting."<sup>44</sup>

Hinn's former narrative was a single-student encounter at a school locker. More recently the story has evolved to a multi-student confrontation in the school library. Regardless of which report Hinn says is true, the more serious concern is lack of a clear Gospel presentation at Hinn's "prayer meeting" conversion. Each version is grossly inadequate when it comes to this vital issue. Hinn currently describes the episode:

"Suddenly, every member of the group raised their hands toward heaven and began to pray in languages I'd never heard before. My eyes became the size of saucers. These were students I had known in my classes — now talking to God with sounds I did not understand. ... My mind flashed back to Bob in the kiosk, saying, 'You've got to meet Jesus. You've got to meet Him!' Meet Him? I thought I already knew Him. ... In the middle of the room, I closed my eyes and spoke four words that changed my life forever. Out loud I said, 'Lord Jesus, come back.' I had no idea why those were the only words that came out of my mouth. Again, I said, 'Lord Jesus, come back.' ... Then I said to the Lord, 'Come into my heart.' And what a glorious moment that was! His power was cleansing me from the inside out. I felt absolutely clean and pure. Suddenly, in a moment of time, I saw Jesus. There He was. Jesus, the Son of God."<sup>45</sup>

As his classmates babbled in tongues, Hinn suggests a genuine conversion experience. Absent, however, from the event is any distinct presentation and understanding of man's sinfulness and God's offer of forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our need for repentance and faith, and the cost of our faith and obedience. Hinn's chronicle is nothing but a mystical, easy-believe conversion. But, perhaps, this like other facets of his life profile may well change and evolve in the coming years and in its retelling.

### DIVORCING KATHRYN

In his latest book, Hinn appears to be distancing himself from Kathryn Kuhlman, the woman whom he has said meant so much to his life and ministry. Hinn writes:

"Many times, I've been asked, 'Benny, tell me about Miss Kuhlman. What was she like?' They are surprised when I say, 'Oh, I never had the opportunity to meet Kathryn personally.' Looking back on my journey to Pittsburgh, I believe what happened that day was in God's providence. As I told members of my staff recently, had I met Kathryn it is possible that I would have forever believed she gave the anointing to me, or that God may have used her in some way to transfer it to me."<sup>46</sup>

This, now, is from the man who in the past has visited the burial site of Kuhlman where he claims her anointing still lingers — even to the place where people are actually healed from visiting the grave.<sup>47</sup> Hinn also says Kuhlman appears to him in dreams and visions. In one report, she supposedly revealed to him a revelation of a heightened level of the miraculous — "greater things for the glory of God" — coming to his ministry.<sup>48</sup>

If Hinn is truly beginning to downplay the significance of Kuhlman in his ministry, one can only wonder if Oral Roberts will be next. A three-hour video, *Miracles: Yesterday, Today*

& *Forever*, produced in 1994 by Hinn's organization, emphasizes the influence of Roberts' life and healing ministry on Hinn and suggests that Roberts has passed his mantle to Hinn.

### OTHER WHITEWASH

Hinn also uses his new biography to neutralize damaging reports and episodes during recent years. An illustration of this is in his description of the death of longtime aide David Delgado. Hinn says "Dave was converted from a life of drug addiction and became a personal assistant to me."<sup>49</sup> He then writes:

"Later in his life, after becoming deathly ill with hepatitis, he died prematurely. His death was a mystery to his family, our staff, and myself. Although reports of a drug relapse came to our attention following his death, knowing David as I did — and how deeply he loved God — I can only leave the circumstance of his passing in the hands of the Lord."<sup>50</sup>

For over a year, knowledge of Delgado's death and another heroin-related death of a ministry staff member were concealed by law-enforcement and Hinn's church officials. While Hinn asserts Delgado's death "a mystery," Delgado's widow, Mary, revealed that her husband knew he was dying from cirrhosis of the liver, which can be a side effect of heroin abuse.

More alarming is the fact that according to the Orange County (Fla.) sheriff's records, at the time of his death, Delgado was under suspicion for the heroin-related death of ministry staff member Sydney Williams. Williams died in November 1997 at his Florida home after injecting himself with a large dose of heroin. Before his own death, Delgado was being investigated in Williams' death because Williams appeared to have been drugged following a visit to Delgado's home.

Hinn's shaded narration of Delgado's death is also inconsistent

with a lofty claim of deliverance from drug addiction. During a miracle crusade, Hinn drew attention to Delgado and told followers that Delgado was one of his “right-hand men” and announced:

“This guy at one time was on drugs. ... He was a — he used to sell drugs. His father is a preacher. He rebelled against God. He used to attend Kathryn Kuhlman services in New York City. She used to come and minister to Teen Challenge when he was there with Dave Wilkerson. And Kathryn one day said there’s somebody that God wants to set free from drugs. And David said, ‘Huh uh, I’m not going.’ But a few years ago, standing in our church he said, ‘Lord, I love drugs. Unless you take that thing out of me, I’m going to die.’ And God took the desire right out of him.”<sup>51</sup>

Another whitewash is his description of his October 1998 service at “The Pond” in Anaheim, Calif. Hinn described this event at the service:

“That night I felt led to ask my children to come to the platform — I was going to introduce them to the audience. However, God had something else in mind. The moment they approached me in the center of the stage, the anointing became so strong that when I turned toward them, all four of my children fell to the floor. There were Jessica, Natasha, Joshua, and Eleasha, slain in the Spirit by the power of God. It was a beautiful sight, and I began to weep before the Lord.”<sup>52</sup>

Here, Hinn demonstrates just how far from reality he can take his readers. A videotape of that evening’s service shows Hinn to be a man out of control. His stage mannerisms and voice inflections would strike mortal fear into most individuals. It was not a simple matter of wanting to bring his children on stage for an introduction. “Get my children up here! ... Get my wife up here!” he wildly commanded in a deep voice. As his family

was ushered onto the stage, bodies were already strewn across the platform. Once onstage, his wife, Suzanne, and daughters and son were also subjected to the same intense and forceful handling. “Fire, I said! Fire, I said! Fire, I said!” he screamed as he brought his family under the subjection of his “Fire” anointing.<sup>53</sup>

It is quite suspicious to see Hinn’s wife Suzanne, falling in a controlled manner on cue and adjusting her jacket as she lays on the stage.

In *He Touched Me*, he evaluates the event by claiming, “God did an amazing work that night. When they returned to Orlando their Christian witness took on a boldness we had never seen — and the effects of that meeting are still evident.”<sup>54</sup> The last part of Hinn’s comment may well be one of the more honest statements he has ever made. The harsh and abusive conduct by Hinn toward his family — which is a clear reality on the crusade’s video highlights — could very well have left “effects of the meeting [which] are still evident.”

Over the years, and as his ministry has grown to a multi-million dollar enterprise and thus come under closer scrutiny, Hinn has nuanced and shaded his legacy of false doctrine, false prophecies, lies and exaggerations. *He Touched Me* is really just another volume to sell and help subsidize his grand empire. In reality, Hinn’s professed calling as a minister continues to be contrary to the Word of God:


“Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:7-9).

## Endnotes:

1. Benny Hinn, *He Touched Me*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, pg. 80.
2. Thomas Upham, *Elements of Mental Philosophy*, cited by Ann Taves in *Fits, Trances & Visions*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999, pg. 122.
3. A classic example of this is an investigative report by WDFW - Fox 4 Television in Dallas-Fort Worth. Hinn’s spokesperson and executive producer of his television programs, Jeff Pitman, was left to grope for responses to Hinn’s erroneous claims of raising the dead and a “miracle invasion” at a Canadian hospital. This three-part report aired November 18, 1999 and is featured on the video, *The Many Faces of Benny Hinn*.
4. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 26.
5. Benny Hinn sermon, Orlando Christian Center broadcast on Trinity Broadcasting Network, Oct. 13, 1990. Tape on file.
6. Benny Hinn sermon, Orlando Christian Center broadcast on Trinity Broadcasting Network, Dec. 9, 1990.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Benny Hinn, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pg. 17.
9. Benny Hinn Testimony, Orlando Christian Center, Orlando, Fla., July 19, 1987. Tape on file.
10. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 11.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Hinn twice makes this claim on his 1987 testimony tape and then again on another testimonial recording from Orlando Christian Center with no date, but with tape number 315 and a copyright of 1990 on the cassette sleeve. It is also found in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (pg. 18) and in his second book published by Thomas Nelson, *The Anointing* (pg. 21).
13. Dan Kurzman, *Genesis 1948*. New York: DaCapo Press, 1992, pg. 182.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 188.
15. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 4.
16. *Ibid.*, pg. 8.
17. *Ibid.*, pg. 9.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, pg. 14.
20. *Ibid.*, pg. 18.
21. *Ibid.*, pg. 45.
22. *Ibid.*, pg. 4; see also pg. 15.
23. *Ibid.*, pg. 40.
24. See Said Aburish, *Children of Bethany* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, pp. 85 and 93, and Phillip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, pp. 99-107.
25. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 18.
26. *Ibid.*, pg. 42.
27. *Ibid.*
28. See further, Fouad Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998, pp. 74-75.
29. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 13.

30. *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, op. cit., pg. 20.  
 31. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 13.  
 32. *Ibid.*, pg. 14.  
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.  
 34. *Ibid.*, pg. 19.  
 35. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.  
 36. *Ibid.*  
 37. *Ibid.*, pg. 87.  
 38. *Ibid.*, pg. 105.  
 39. *Toronto Globe and Mail's Fanfare* magazine, Feb. 15, 1978, pg. 11.  
 40. See *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, op. cit.,

pg. 28 and *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Dec. 25, 1976.  
 41. *Christianity Today*, Oct. 5, 1992, pg. 54.  
 42. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 48.  
 43. *Ibid.*, pg. 49, italics in original.  
 44. Benny Hinn Testimony, July 19, 1987, op. cit.  
 45. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pp. 50-51.  
 46. *Ibid.*, pg. 120.  
 47. Benny Hinn sermon, *Double Portion Anointing*, Part #3, Orlando Christian Center, Orlando, Fla., April 7, 1991. From the series, *Holy Ghost Invasion*. TV#309, tape

on file.  
 48. Benny Hinn, *This Is Your Day*, June 11, 1997, tape on file.  
 49. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 169.  
 50. *Ibid.*  
 51. Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade highlights, Trinity Broadcasting Network, date unknown, tape on file, emphasis added.  
 52. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 196.  
 53. Benny Hinn, *This Is Your Day*, Nov. 12, 1998, tape on file.  
 54. *He Touched Me*, op. cit., pg. 196. 

## GETTING OUT

(continued from page 1)

"Grief may be called a *life-shaking sorrow over loss*. Grief tears life to shreds; it shakes one from top to bottom. It pulls him loose; he comes apart at the seams. Grief is truly nothing less than a life-shattering loss."<sup>1</sup>

That life-shattering sorrow called grief, we must not forget, has the power to enslave if not handled properly.

How about that person who gives his life to a cult? That individual gives himself or herself to an illusion, a delusion, perhaps for years. They stake their eternity on the group and its teachings. However, when they attempt to break free, there can be a painful and even excruciating awareness of major losses. Major grief may set in and that person has to begin the long hard process of dealing with that grief. The old spiritual says: "It's not an easy road." At times we may feel that is an understatement.

The first thing that needs to be established is:

### THE FACT OF GRIEF IN EXITING

What a strange phenomenon in Numbers 11 that when the going got rough (in the wilderness) the people of God cried out to go back into the bondage of Egypt. It was a case of selective memory and having to feel good. Sometimes the comfort of the known feels better than the fear of the unknown, even if that known has many downsides. It takes courage and

grace to traverse a wilderness. Risks of faith are difficult and scary. Trust and obedience often have to work in the absence of feelings or even against feelings.

Think about what has been lost in the years of cult involvement and investment. In some cases:

- The loss of years of time.
- The loss of family and friends.
- The loss of large amounts of money.

Loss, loss, loss. In other cases:

- The loss of morality.
- The loss of children.
- The loss of a spouse.

More loss. And in other cases:

- An entire family lost with the agony of "we helped mislead them" and feeling totally ashamed for being so stupid or so ignorant.

And finally, in extreme cases:

- The loss of an identity surrendered to the organization.
- The loss of an entire lifetime.
- The loss of a social life and social skills.
- The loss of an education and now no job skills.
- The loss of a desire to ever trust again.
- The loss of all hope.

Written in large letters over the exiting cult member is the word LOSS. A good book title would be: *The Scarlet L*.

So it is not only doctrinal issues that we *must* deal with but heart, soul and

emotions that are delicate and maybe even broken. Thank God we have a Savior who "heals the broken-hearted" (Luke 4:18). The doctrinal issues must be woven into the practical issues of life and living. Position in Christ for instance gives great encouragement and morale to a floundering ex-cultist.

If the exiting cult member is genuinely saved, he or she has God's grace, God's Spirit and God's promises. On a human level he needs skillful, caring, biblical, grief helpers. He needs real support to learn to apply the means of grace.

If he is saved, it is not that he does not have joy and gratitude for salvation and for the Savior but that he is a complex being who experiences conflicts, emotions and a range of ups and downs from the grief process triggered by the losses. We can see in the Psalms the wide range of emotions and emotional turmoil triggered by the stresses of life. We must be keenly aware and sensitive to the *fact of grief in exiting*.

Second, we must think about:

### THE FACES OF GRIEF

What does grief look like? What are we dealing with? What do we experience when loss triggers grief? What kind of terrain does grief offer us? If we know the many faces of grief, it will aid us in processing our own grief and in helping others process theirs.

The book of Lamentations is only five chapters. Yet, it is a book that deals with acute, devastating and