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# News Updates

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## THIS TIME HE DIDN'T COME BACK

Kenneth E. Hagin Sr., described by some as the father of the Word-Faith movement, has died. He was 86. He entered a cardiac intensive care unit after collapsing at home last Sept. 14 and died five days later. Newspaper reports said, "an exact cause of death was not immediately known."

Hagin was reared in a Southern Baptist household. He began preaching at age 17 in a church consisting primarily of Southern Baptists. His emphasis on the miraculous appealed more to Pentecostals, and he soon became an Assemblies of God minister.

In 1974, he founded Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Okla., which now operates in 14 countries and has 23,000 alumni. Rhema churches are located in more than 110 nations.

Hagin said he became a Christian at age 15 when he died and descended into hell. In his booklet, *I Went to Hell*, he wrote that his heart stopped and he "was pulled toward hell just like a magnet pulls metal unto itself." He said he "began to pray, 'O God! I come to You in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all sin.' ... So I was born again ... and I've been saved ever since."

He claimed to have received the spiritual gifts of healing, prophecy, and discerning of spirits. He also claimed to have had personal visions of Jesus.

Hagin said his theology unfolded from a revelation. However, critics have shown that he, in part, developed and plagiarized his teachings from the writings of E.W. Kenyon, a Bible teacher and author with metaphysical leanings who died in 1948.

—MKG

## EUROPEAN REVIVAL PROPHESED

Promises of the "greatest revival ever" long have been used to entice those looking for the next move of God. Toronto, Pensacola, and Smithton are just a few locations that have attracted throngs of devotees during the past decade alone. Now, two American evangelists have proclaimed that "the greatest revival of the Spirit" is coming to Germany.

During Benny Hinn's crusade held last August in Berlin, Germany, the faith healer invited to the platform Gwen Shaw, founder of the End-Time Handmaidens organization. As Hinn asked Shaw to pray for revival to come to Germany, Shaw said to him and his audience, "It will begin here, it will begin here." When Hinn inquired, "Are you prophesying now, that the revival will begin in Berlin?" Shaw responded, "I am speaking it by the Holy Spirit. ... The Lord said that the revival would begin with this crusade. ... Pastor Benny, you got no idea how important it is that you're here."

Shaw went on to declare that Hinn's Berlin meetings would spark many fires "going throughout all of Germany and all of Europe." Hinn's crusade audience cheered with loud enthusiasm at Shaw's alleged divine revelation.

However, "prophetic" words — such as Shaw's — speak only to the moment and to tantalize the naive and undiscerning. When they go unfulfilled, there is nary a cry of "false prophecy" or charge of bearing false witness against the Holy Spirit. The "prophetic word" is merely ignored, forgotten, or spiritualized. For example, in the 1990s, modern-day "prophets" in the United States said that the greatest outpouring of the Holy Ghost anywhere in the nation would occur in St. Louis and a 50-mile surrounding area. That Holy Ghost outpouring never took place and no one even thinks of holding the "prophets" accountable. Regrettably, Hinn and Shaw will meet the same reaction when the "greatest revival" fails to manifest in Europe.

Hinn's endorsement of Shaw, her ministry, and her spurious prophecy of revival continues to demonstrate his lack of spiritual discernment. Hinn has a sustained history of sanctioning questionable — and even unorthodox — women, including Kathryn Kuhlman, Aimee Semple McPherson, Maria Woodworth-Etter, and Unity School of Christianity-trained minister Johnnie Colemon.

—MKG

## JUST A LOT OF SMOKE?

Finding images in the curls of smoke rising from a disaster scene long has been a staple of supermarket tabloids and some newspapers. For example, a number of papers ran photographs of both the fiery destruction of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings in New

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