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Back to the Source

The Truth About Smith Wigglesworth

by G. Richard Fisher

"When Smith Wigglesworth stayed in our home once, he came down early one morning and told me, 'God spoke to me on your bed.' ... He said, 'Wigglesworth, I am going to burn you all up until there is no more Wigglesworth, only Jesus'" (**Wigglesworth: A Man Who Walked with God** by George Stormont, pg. 9).

The word "legend" often is attributed to the British healer Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947). Some biographers admit there is exaggeration and embellishment in the stories about him. Much of what we hear about him is hagiology.

Roberts Liardon tells one story of how Wigglesworth kicked a deformed baby across the stage; when it landed it was healed. Liardon also says

Wigglesworth raised at least 14 people from the dead and that Wigglesworth himself "died healthy" (**God's Generals — The**



Healing Evangelists, Vol. 5, video-tape).

Regarding the claims of the dead being raised, Wigglesworth's biographers admit that they only have his word and his accounts of these things. Apparently there are neither names nor hard documentation so they are cast back on their assessment of Wigglesworth's integrity. It may not just be an integrity question since Wigglesworth may have believed his own interpretation of what was occurring.

It is said that Wigglesworth often knew God's will for other people and would reveal it to them. Fortune tellers claim the same thing.

He also reportedly told a legless man to buy shoes. Legend says when the man went to the shoe store, he grew legs and feet (**Smith Wigglesworth: The Secret of His Power** by Albert Hibbert, pg. 44).

It is further claimed that large cancers fell off people and dropped to the floor through his prayers. His handkerchiefs produced deliverance

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Editorials

CAN STATUES CAUSE MIRACLES?

MAX GREINER TAKES THE CHURCH INTO THE MIDDLE AGES

Just when we thought it was as bad as it could get, it got worse.

The October 1994 edition of *Charisma* magazine carries an article titled, "The Statue That Speaks" (pp. 55-60). The statue, designed by Texan Max Greiner, is called "The Divine Servant." It pictures a nearly naked Jesus with a towel around His waist, washing Peter's feet.

Many claims are made about the statue. The *Charisma* article says, "People walk by and burst into tears ... 'Divine Servant' is more than a sculpture ... the Holy Spirit is using it in a profound way ... 'It draws people,' Greiner says of his life-changing creation ... " (pp. 55-56).

The January 1994 issue of *Charisma* quoted Greiner as saying that people have been healed because of the statue and that the sculpture "was Holy Spirit-inspired, and He [the Holy Spirit] tends to hang around it" (pg. 89).

Greiner says that in 1986, God said to him audibly, "Max, I want you to do a sculpture of Jesus washing Peter's feet."

Such notions were in vogue during the Middle Ages. Relics that at first stimulated faith but later became distractions inundated the institutional Church in the 14th through 16th centuries. Phillip Schaff details the extremes to which people went:

"In Germany, princes joined with prelates in making collections of sacred bones and other objects in which miraculous virtue was supposed to reside ... the friars were the indefatigable purveyors of this sort of merchandise, from the bones of Balaam's ass to the straw of the manger and feathers from St. Michael's wings. ... Albrecht, archbishop of Mainz, helped to collect no less than 8,133 sacred fragments and 42 entire bodies of saints. ... a statue of the Virgin with a full bottle of milk hanging from her neck, several of the pots which had been used at Cana and a portion of the wine Jesus made, as well as some of the veritable manna which the Hebrews had picked up in the desert ... a piece of the table on which the Last Supper was eaten ... the entire body of one of the Bethlehem innocents, one of the fingers of Saint Anna" (**History of the Christian Church** Vol. 6, pp. 742-743).

Christians must realize that the move toward a relic system comes not in a leap but in increments. No one shift is serious, but when the results are viewed as a whole, it is obvious that a meaningful shift has occurred.

Greiner's first mistake is in his depiction of Jesus. If one purports to picture Bible events, one should be as Scripturally accurate as possible. John 13:4 says literally that Jesus "laid aside His garment." Jewish dress is understood by commentators and historians and we know that the word garment in the Greek text of John 13:4 is *himatia*, meaning literally, mantle, overgarment or outer garment. Jews wore a tunic and a robe-like over garment on top of the tunic. Today's equivalent might be "He took off his suit coat."

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News Updates

SOLAR TEMPLE LATEST CULT OF DEATH

With more questions than answers, Swiss and Canadian investigators tried to sort out the mysteries surrounding the mass murder-suicide of the apocalyptic sect known as The Order of the Solar Temple. In all, 53 bodies, including at least five children, were discovered last Oct. 4 and 5 at two sites in Switzerland and one site in Canada, which had been set on fire.

Just how many of the deaths were murders of unwilling members and how many were suicides may never be determined. According to a forensic expert from the University of Lausanne's Institute for Legal Medicine, "Some of the victims at Cheiry [Switzerland] had as many as eight bullet wounds in the head."

Initially, authorities issued international arrest warrants for the group's spiritual leaders, Luc Jouret and Joseph Di Mambro. However, the manhunt ended when the charred remains of Jouret and Di Mambro were discovered in a burned ski chalet, east of Geneva. Both were identified from dental records.

Allegations that Jouret used the sect as a cover for gun running in Australia and money laundering in Canada and Europe also came to light in the wake of the incident. Canadian officials, however, expressed skepticism at the charge of illegally buying and selling guns. An article in the Oct. 24, 1994, issue of *Time* magazine indicated "that the cult may have amassed as much as \$93 million and that part of the money was used to support a posh lifestyle for Jouret and Di Mambro and to buy houses in Western Europe and Canada."

The sect, also identified as The Cross and the Rose, taught a mixture of ecology, astrology and spiritualism. Jouret had continually warned of an imminent end to the world caused by a convergence of environmental disasters and that the earth would suffer the fate of the Old Testament cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The New York Times reported receiving several documents describing the group's decision for the mass extermination. "It is with unfathomable love, pure joy and no regret that we leave this world. Men do not cry for our fate, but cry for your own," the Oct. 14 edition reported.

—MKG

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ADD TO GOVERNING BODY

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's Governing Body has shrunk steadily over the last few years because of the deaths of its members. Recently the Society began

"building up the personnel of the Governing Body" with the addition of a member.

Gerrit Lösch has joined the other 11 elders on the Society's prestigious body. According to the Nov. 1, 1994, issue of *The Watchtower*, Lösch entered the sect's full-time service in 1961, graduated from the 41st class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in 1966, did circuit and district work in Austria from 1963 to 1976 and later spent 14 years as a member of the Austria Bethel family in Vienna.

Less than a month after Lösch's appointment, Governing Body member George D. Gangas died July 28 at age 98. Gangas had been a member of the Brooklyn headquarters staff since 1928 and had been on the Governing Body since 1971. He had also been identified as having been on the Society's secret New World Translation Committee.

Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that the Governing Body represents the "faithful and discreet slave" referred to in Matthew 24. This group is said to be directed by Jehovah's spirit (or active force) to proclaim "theocratic conclusions on matters of great concern" to Jehovah's Witnesses.

—MKG

HINN SEEKS ASSEMBLIES CREDENTIALS

Healing evangelist Benny Hinn has sought credentials as an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God denomination. Last June, the controversial faith healer took the first step in the process by meeting with the presbyters of the Peninsular Florida District. His application was approved by his home state district and forwarded to the denomination's Executive Presbytery for final approval. The Executive Presbytery is the General Council's Credentialing Committee.

Because of an outcry within the denomination, the Executive Presbytery said last August that it had placed Hinn's application on hold indefinitely. The office of Thomas Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, stated, "... at this juncture, we are not able to say when it will be reviewed again."

However, a few weeks later, a news release from the Assemblies of God Headquarters said, "The Credentials Committee of the General Council of the Assemblies of God has approved the recommendation of the Peninsular Florida District that Benny Hinn, well-known evangelist and pastor, be granted ordination with the church."

Hinn's acceptance has caused great consternation within
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The Gospel of Thomas: Gnostic Nonsense?

by G. Richard Fisher

At last year's Jesus Seminar, 74 scholars cast votes about what they thought Jesus did or did not say. Their votes revealed that they considered the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to be myth- and error-laden, and a fifth Gospel, the Gospel of Thomas, just as acceptable. This Coptic Gospel of Thomas is not to be confused with the earlier Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas.

This so-called Gospel has been proven to be nothing but a collection of strange sayings and statements purportedly attributable to Jesus and supposedly written by Thomas the apostle. It belongs to a class of writings called *pseude pigrapha* (soo-duh pig-ruh-fuh), meaning books with false titles. Most were composed a century or two after Jesus' resurrection. Orthodox scholars believe Thomas had nothing to do with the work. The name of its real author is unknown.

D.A. Carson, in the April 25, 1994, issue of *Christianity Today*, said: "Was Jesus a moralizing twit, while the Church proved wonderfully creative? The anemic Jesus of the Jesus Seminar could not possibly have generated the robust, death-defying faith of the believer's in the early Church. The only credible explanation is the miracle of the Resurrection attested by hundreds,

just as Jesus had predicted."

This so-called search for the historical Jesus dates to the 1600s with Roman priest Richard Simon. Its purported goal is to separate the real Jesus, or Jesus apart from Christ. Its actual result is to invent a "Jesus" without miracles and deity. The term comes from Albert Schweitzer's book, **The Quest for the Historical Jesus**. Other similar quests are described in Robert Raymond's book, **Jesus, Divine Messiah**.

Christians who examine the issue in relation to The Gospel of Thomas can start by studying the book's discovery and its doctrines. Once done, the conclusion will be clear: Nothing in this so-called Gospel relates to the Jesus of the Bible or Christian teachings.

THE DISCOVERY

The Gospel of Thomas was found in 1945, about thirty miles north of Luxor, Egypt, at a place called Nag Hammadi. Two farmers discovered an ancient Gnostic library from the third century A.D. It was written in Coptic, an obscure language of Egyptian hieroglyphs using the Greek alphabet. The documents later were kept in a monastery at Chenoboskion. It finally was translated into English and published as

the Nag Hammadi Library in 1977.

At Nag Hammadi, 13 separate codices were discovered, having 50 separate works. The Gospel of Thomas was a small part of the whole. The material purports to record 114 sayings of Christ to His followers. Around 300 A.D., Eusebius was warning his contemporaries that heretics were circulating false Gospels, among them The Gospel of Thomas (see **Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History**, by Kirsopp Lake).

As one writer put it, "They [assorted texts from various schools of Gnosticism] represent a wide range of philosophical speculation in the ancient period, most of it far removed from the teachings of the New Testament" (**1991 Compton's Learning Company**, BBS file).

Christian apologist Doug Groothuis points out the mystical and Buddhist overtones of Gnosticism: "Neo Gnostics of various stripes argue that the genuine Jesus came to stir us to discover and rekindle the divine spark within, not to rescue us from our sins" (**Revealing the New Age Jesus**, pg. 19).

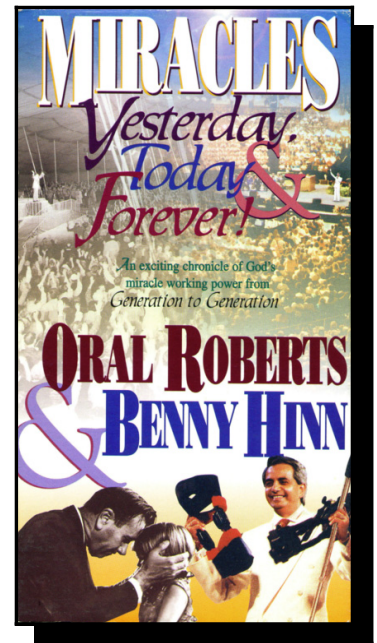
F. F. Bruce says, "To call it a Fifth Gospel is wide of the mark; properly speaking, it is not a Gospel at all. ... For a Gospel must declare God's good news; it must tell of

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Reversing the Reformation?

The Message Behind Benny Hinn's *Miracles: Yesterday, Today & Forever* Video

by G. Richard Fisher
with M. Kurt Goedelman



Televangelist Benny Hinn's latest video doesn't stop at promoting him as the greatest faith healer of all time, it sets him up as a kind of Charismatic priest or pope. The video, *Miracles: Yesterday, Today, Forever*, is a theological step backward into the Middle Ages and the Roman Catholic doctrine that believers needed intermediaries through whom to approach God.

Hinn has displayed and even admitted a Roman Catholic mind set (see *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June, 1994, "Christ's Blood Relic Or Reality, Benny Hinn Revives a Medieval Fetish"). During a September 1991 interview with Randy Frame of *Christianity Today*, Hinn said: "My upbringing, of course, was Catholic in that I attended Catholic school in Jaffa, Israel. And so my mentality basically is a Catholic mentality." His background as a Jaffa-born "Christian" Arab (formally Greek Orthodox), may cause him to manifest a pre-Reformational mind set. Well-taught believers will find the assertions and implications of this new video distressing and distasteful.

What gets lost in Hinn's brazen and self-serving video are crucial biblical doctrines. He is presented as a 20th century "Holy of Holies,"

a "point of contact" for the power and anointing of God, much as Roman Catholic priests were presented during medieval times.

The three-hour video features footage of Hinn's assemblies interwoven with footage from past services conducted by Oral Roberts. Both provide commentary.

In it, Hinn says, "In Oral's case the presence of God would come on his hand ... Oral had to touch them, he felt it on his hand, instead I felt it through my being ... my whole body goes numb ... it's as though I get plugged into an electric plug or something."

Many come to Hinn to be touched for healing or to be "slain in the Spirit" by his touch or to just get a blessing. On his television broadcasts he invites viewers to stretch forth their hands toward his.

Medieval Catholic priests were believed to have power to absolve sins and turn communion bread into Christ's literal flesh through a miracle called transubstantiation. The priests of that day mediated the grace of God. The Reformers challenged that teaching by insisting that all believers can directly contact God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

They cited 1 Timothy 2:5, which says, "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and 1 Peter 2:9, which says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own purpose." (See also 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 13:15-16; Revelation 1:6; 5:10 and 20:6.)

Albert Barnes, commenting on 1 Peter 2:5, notes that the whole body of Christians are priests and that every believer should be engaged in offering acceptable sacrifice to God. He further instructs, "The business is not entrusted to a particular class to be known as priests; there is not a particular portion to whom the name is particularly given; but every Christian is in fact a priest and is engaged in offering acceptable sacrifice to God" (**Albert Barnes Notes On The New Testament**, pg. 1406).

Gerhard Kittel's **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** agrees: "The whole new people of God is a priestly fellowship" (Vol. 3, pg. 250).

Commenting on the priesthood of all believers, B.K. Kuiper asserts: "Closely related to this aspect of reform was the stress on the priest-

hood of all believers. This meant that men went directly to God; they did not gain salvation through the Church, but became members of the Church when they became believers. The Roman Church used the name priest for clergyman, which meant that they stood, as in the Old Testament times, between man and God. The Reformers spoke of all men as priests personally speaking to God" (**The Church In History**, pg. 167).

This vital doctrine is laid out in **The Dictionary of Christianity in America**, in the following way: "Priesthood of Believers. A Protestant principle whereby each believer has immediate access to God through one mediator, Jesus Christ. One of the great principles of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, as expounded by Martin Luther, was the priesthood of all believers. Joined with justification by faith alone and the authority of Scripture alone, it cut through the tangles of medieval Catholicism that tended to place barriers between the individual Christian and God. The implications of the principle were that no priest was necessary."

The Dictionary further comments: "The general effects of this Protestant principle were at least three-fold. First, it meant that lay-people prayed directly to God through Jesus Christ, thus increasing lay involvement in private and public worship. Second, it meant that God communicated directly to the individual Christian through His Word, the Bible, thus encouraging the production of vernacular versions of Scripture and the pursuit of lay Bible study. Third, it meant a new sense of Christian liberty for the ordinary Christian, who felt no longer bound by the authority of extrabiblical traditions or by ecclesiastical hierarchies" (pg. 939).

This principle was insisted on by the Reformers and went hand in hand with the understanding that there are not two levels of Chris-

tians, those that are "spiritual" and those that are just ordinary. The Reformers knew that ordinary versus "spiritual" would only establish another pseudo priesthood with the "spiritual" ones being sought for mediation (see **Erdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity**, pg. 373).

A doctrine closely related to the priesthood of believers is the doctrine of access, which says believers have access to the presence of God. Prayer is possible because of access. Ephesians 2:18 says, "For through Him we both have access through one Spirit to the Father." Ephesians 3:12 says, "In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him."

H.E. Vine says:

"This access involves the acceptance which we have in Christ with God, and the privilege of His favor toward us. ... associated with the thought of freedom to enter" (**An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, pg. 21).

This doctrine of access is beautifully described by Henry Gariepy as he comments on Hebrews 6 and 7 and notes it's connection to the believer's priesthood: "Christ went in as the High Priest and opened a direct access to God for us. No longer is there required a human intermediary. The veil was rent in two. The middle wall of partition was broken down. Christ conferred the sacred privilege of the priesthood on all believers" (**100 Portraits of Christ**, pg. 183).

It appears that Hinn's message is obscuring these biblical truths. As one Word-Faith adherent was quoted as saying, "Benny Hinn is the closest man to God on the earth today." One of Hinn's recent trophies, former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield, also unwittingly acknowledged that the presence and words of the faith healer are tantamount to hearing from God. During a recent broadcast of

Trinity Broadcasting Network's *Praise the Lord Show*, Holyfield said:

"So this young lady would come over every day and share the Word with me. And this young lady would tell me, 'Well, God said this, God said that.' And I was kind of curious and kind of wondering what she said. It only just made me want to be able to get in the presence of the Lord to hear for myself. And I asked her, 'What can I do, where the Lord can speak to me instead of just speaking to you all the time?' And with that she spoke about coming to the Benny Hinn service" (June 16, 1994).

The idea that Hinn is a kind of Charismatic pope contradicts all the Reformers strove to teach.

Hinn doesn't derive his authority from anything in the Bible, so he must go to others, such as Oral Roberts. The Hinn video has Oral Roberts passing his "mantle" to Hinn.

As stated earlier, Hinn claims a whole-body anointing, although he previously had said that he only felt it in his hand. Roberts' son, Richard, claimed the same kind of anointing in 1982 when he tried to launch his own "healing" career. The younger Roberts later settled for a daily broadcast with a safer "word of knowledge" ministry. (See further, **The Quarterly Journal**, Vol. 14, No. 1, "Words of Knowledge, Mystical Or Statistical, The Truth Behind the Sham," pg. 4.) He now also is riding the "laughing in the spirit" bandwagon of South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne.

ROBERTS' ENDORSEMENT

Students of Oral Roberts' life know his tendency to endorse "healers" and religious figures to enhance himself and enter political alliances when he deemed them advantageous (see David E. Harrell, Jr.'s book, **Oral Roberts — An American Life**). In the video, Roberts says, "The Lord has chosen to

manifest the Word of Knowledge more in him [Hinn] than he did in me ... I saw Kathryn Kuhlman as unparalleled," implying that Hinn is greater than Kuhlman. Roberts then reaffirms that God's power was in his right hand, however Hinn's anointing "fills the building ... a greater level has come."

David E. Harrell, Jr. is considered Oral Roberts' authorized biographer. In writing his 622-page tome, Harrell had complete access to Roberts, as well as his family and friends. Apart from financial records Harrell was given cartè blanc to the Roberts organization to be able to write his book, **Oral Roberts — An American Life**.

Tracing Roberts' life in this very informative book (remember written by a friend, a confidant and an admirer) we find that early on (c. 1940s) the faith healer learned the nuances and struggles of "political" alliances. Harrell gives us this insight:

"Oral admitted with some remorse that he had been completely caught up in the 'politics' of the 'Kingdom of God.' It was a thinly veiled and tough political world in which dexterous revivalists and tenacious organizers struggled for position within their tiny universe. Shut off from positions in mainstream Christianity, those in power doggedly defended their status against young interlopers. The ministerial rank was freely given, but denominational standing was won in battle. Pentecostal superintendents and bishops were Christian warlords jealously protecting their small and ever-vulnerable financial and spiritual fiefdoms. In short, in the midst of the ecstasy and free flow of the spirit there was an undercurrent of peasant cunning and political common sense" (pg. 51).

In 1949 Roberts found it necessary to make friends with and endorse arch-heretic William Branham. Branham opposed the Doctrine of

the Trinity and believed himself to be the "angel" of the Church of Laodicea (see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, "A Prophet Sent From God, Examining The Life And Claims Of William M. Branham"). Roberts was Branham's nearest rival on the healing circuit and Harrell details the "working agreement" they had together. They especially gave one another joint endorsements that Harrell calls "patly religious politics" (pg. 150). They, as well, published one another's schedules of meetings. It can be established that Branham was influenced by Franklin Hall and the heretical Latter Rain Movement which we will mention later. Roberts was certainly affected by Latter Rain teaching at least in a few areas, as is Benny Hinn.

Roberts' biggest and most helpful alliance was with Billy Graham in the 1960s. Harrell notes that it "was a giant step toward mainstream Christianity, calling the attention of the outside world to the new image of Roberts" (pg. 230).

In the 1970s Harrell points out that Kathryn Kuhlman "signed on as the head cheerleader" for Roberts and his university. She was granted an honorary doctorate from Oral Roberts University in 1972 (pg. 291).

In the 1980s Roberts gave all kinds of support and promotion to Word-Faith teacher Kenneth Hagin. Hagin was part of the dedication of the City of Faith. It seems that Roberts is not much interested in theology or proper belief. Both Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland have been featured speakers for Roberts (pg. 424). Harrell makes the telling statement that Roberts' "friendships were functional and superficial" (pg. 353). He also notes that Roberts' ties with Hagin gave him a "whole new constituency" (pg. 427).

Roberts' association to Ken Copeland rubbed off on son Richard. Harrell indicates that, "Kenneth

Copeland presented him a four-engine viscount airplane as a gift" (pg. 427).

Roberts' "passing the baton" to Hinn may be good theater and boost careers, but it is hardly impressive as it perpetuates the bondage of a Charismatic Priesthood and flies in the face of the biblical doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers. Roberts has a penchant for endorsing questionable people.

Besides Hinn's apparent attempt to establish a Charismatic priesthood headed by himself, his video promoted a heresy spawned by the Latter Rain Movement of the 1940s. Latter Rain taught that the power and gifts of God could be transferred through human mediators. This established a priesthood of Latter Rain shepherds and spawned many abuses of the Shepherding Movement. Latter Rain also taught the possibility of sinless perfection and the possibility of immortality in the flesh.

The Assemblies of God has denounced the prophets and practices of the Latter Rain Movement (J. Gordon Melton, **The Encyclopedia of American Religions**, Vol. 1, pg. 46-47). In particular, the Assemblies of God denounced Impartation, a practice clearly visible at Hinn meetings. Dr. W. E. Nunnally, Associate Professor of Early Judaism and Christian Origins at Central Bible College in Springfield Mo., explains Impartation and its ramifications. He cites Hinn's impartation and says:

"A case in point is his belief in and practice of the heretical 'Latter Rain' doctrine known popularly as 'Impartation' (i.e., the belief that certain 'special' people have a 'special' ability to 'impart' the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues as well as other gifts, and special endowments of power to others; cf. **Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements**, pp. 532-534). 'Impartation' services, testimonies, and advertisements have been

regularly featured in recent months on his broadcasts. It should be remembered that this and other 'Latter Rain' doctrines were officially condemned by the General Council of 1949 (cf. *Minutes*, 1949, p. 26)" (comments in a letter on file with PFO).

Hinn's efforts to lend credibility to his miracle powers only give him further opportunity to show his lack of discernment. Last July, the television program *Inside Edition* featured a follow-up report on the lack of change in his life and ministry since its last report. Then, on Aug. 9, Hinn appeared on TBN's *Praise the Lord Show* to try performing some damage control. His rebuttal answered nothing and consisted largely of a tape of his July Miracle Crusade in Indianapolis, where he says he healed Broadway and movie star Ben Vereen from a series of injuries and ailments related to two traffic accidents. At one point, the actor had been given only a 1-2 percent chance of survival, but he did survive.

Hinn said *Inside Edition* had edited the miraculous when it alluded to the Vereen healing during its segment on the evangelist. Throughout the *PTL* broadcast, viewers were told: "Ben Vereen was literally healed," "You're going to literally see, this dear man, Ben Vereen, receive his healing. You're gonna see it before your very eyes tonight" and "God willing we will be showing tonight the Ben Vereen healing."

Hinn also said: "By the way, I must say, we almost had a surprise for you tonight because he [Ben Vereen] was to be here with me tonight. But he has a little cold and just because he really couldn't ... He just called and said, 'Look, I've got a cold, I don't feel right.'"

Even more toxic to Hinn's miraculous claim was when Vereen appeared on the Sept. 29 installment of *The Suzanne Somers Show* and attributed his "healing" to his doc-

tors and therapists and to a pastor who gave him the spiritual persistence to pull through. He did not mention Hinn.

The pastor, the Rev. Johnnie Coleman, instructed Vereen to look to the supernatural for his healing. Coleman told Vereen: "People can be healed by a greater power — by God power. ... Your voice is not your voice, that's God's voice and nothing can ever happen to God's voice. ... those are not your legs. God will dance, God will sing, God will do anything through you that He wants to do."

Vereen said of her spiritual guidance, "At some point you realize that you can't do it. You get into a higher power consciousness." These statements sound more New Age than Christian.

Perhaps this is because Vereen's true spiritual mentor is no Christian. She is a former Unity School of Christianity minister and credited with being one of the first Afro-American New Thought ministers. She leads a church in Chicago that, while not presently affiliated with Unity, has beliefs that are largely harmonious. Followers of Unity believe that Jesus is only the "way-shower," not the way as the Bible declares. Unity also espouses the unbiblical teaching of reincarnation. (See further, PFO Newsletter, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 4-6.)

According to **The Encyclopedia of American Religions**: "In 1953 she [Coleman] learned that she had an incurable disease. She moved to Kansas City and enrolled in the Unity School of Christianity. In a few months she was healed and she stayed at Unity to become the first black person ordained as a Unity minister (1956). Moving to Chicago, she founded the Christ Unity Temple, which first met in the Y.M.C.A. building on South Cottage. She became a prominent Unity minister and was the first black to be elected president of the Association of Unity Churches.

However, in 1974 she withdrew from the association and renamed her congregation Christ Universal Temple." The encyclopedia further states: "The beliefs of the foundation are largely in harmony with that of Unity School of Christianity, the break being largely a matter of social policy, not doctrine" (Vol. 2, pg. 259).

During the Indianapolis crusade segment featured on the *PTL Show*, Hinn called attention to Coleman's presence and asked the audience to "Give her a big 'God bless you'" as they applauded. "Pastor Coleman, bless you sweetheart," he said on the tape.

Hinn's blessing of Coleman is wholly foreign to the divine instruction recorded by the Apostle John: "Any one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

FOREIGN ATTENTION

Hinn's methods have also received condemnation outside the United States. In Switzerland, *Ud-fordringen*, a Christian newspaper reported:

"The American Evangelist Benny Hinn has received strong criticism from the Evangelical Alliance; following a healing service in Zurich. Thus it is reported by the newsletter 'Idea' which is published by the German Evangelical Alliance. The organizers of the healing service are being criticized for not having informed much about the evangelist's approach. The criticism has made alive a debate regarding Hinn amongst the Christians in Switzerland. Further, a similar meeting that was held in Basel last year is being brought to light where Hinn proph-

esied over a man who had cancer and said that this person had yet many years to live. But the man died just two days after the meeting. Hinn's meetings are called 'well-organized shows' and Hinn is accused for his sole interest in money. Three hundred thousand Swiss-francs were collected in Basel. Though people were encouraged to write their prayer requests on the rear of the money envelopes the empty envelopes were instead thrown away" (translated from Danish by Suresh Jeyasingham for PFO).

Quentin Schultze, in his book **Televangelism and the American Culture**, discusses the problem of personality cults, which Hinn appears to be promoting. He says:

"Televangelism is primarily the televangelists themselves. ... charismatic personalities often attract uncritical believers who submit to the authority of their leader ... Televangelists share some of the same charismatic qualities of other celebrities, including show business personalities. ... Protestantism still yearns sometimes for its own pope-like celebrities. ... Televangelism is an important seedbed for the growth of American personality cults. ... Today, people with money are god-like. ... Mass media enabled evangelical leaders to become major celebrities with national followings. ... These men became modern-day saints whose own lives seemingly displayed the special work of God. ... The tube gives authority to the voices and images of certain individuals, making them celebrities. ... He is not only a preacher, but the source of truth and knowledge. He is not only a person, but the special person that represents God to his people. The televangelist becomes the mediator of not only the message, but the relationship with God. ... Personality cults are always evidence of the human need to have someone to follow" (pp. 69-95).

Once we create the myth of healing powers in one man, we set ourselves up for the acceptance of a

"superman" and are vulnerable to exploitation.

Lewis Sperry Chafer reminds us: "As the Old Testament high priest is a type of Christ, so the Old Testament priest is a type of the believer. The priest of both Testaments is (1) born to his office, (2) properly inducted into service by a full bath, (3) serving under divine appointment. Israel had a priesthood in one family only; all the Church is a

the body of Christ. They do not pretend to function as priests in any sense. They are to be humble examples. Peter advises pastors: "Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Once we create the myth of healing powers in one man, we set ourselves up for the acceptance of a "superman" and are vulnerable to exploitation.

priesthood. The New Testament priest offers no efficacious sacrifices, but is increasingly responsible in matters of worship, sacrifice and intercession (Rom. 12:1-2). A distinction must be observed between the priestly office of the believer which all share alike and equally, on the one hand, and gifts for service which differ among Christians, though to each believer some gift is given, on the other" (**Systematic Theology**, Vol. 7, pg. 257).

The apostle Paul warned of personality cults when he said "each one of you is saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas." Today we could easily paraphrase since some are saying: "I am of Benny, or I of Jimmy, or I of Morris, and I of Rodney." Yet Paul answers, "Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13). Because Jesus is there for all of us all the time, we can see the error of factions and the emptiness of personality cults.

True pastors are not mediators, or "points of contact," or manipulators of physical states. They are teachers, coaches, friends, examples, instructors, shepherds and encouragers to

Benny Hinn is going backward. He is trying to push the Church away from Scripture and back to the ignorance and darkness of 500 years ago. Christians must not abandon their priesthood for Hinn's. When they do, they revert to mysticism, humanism and personality cults. Trying to reverse the Reformation is a dangerous practice that must be resisted.

The words of Loraine Boettner are so true and so needed today: "Since the merely human priesthood was but a shadow of that which was to come it was but temporary. Just as we put out our artificial lights when the sun rises, and as the blossom falls away when the fruit appears, so the entire ceremonial and sacrificial system of the Old Testament has fulfilled its function and ceased to be when Christ's work was completed. This being the nature of the Christian priesthood, it is clearly evident that all those today who, in the Roman Catholic or any other Church, pretend to function as priests mediating between God and man are simply usurpers of divine authority" (**Studies in Theology**, pg. 246).

Christ's redemptive death. And even those sayings of Christ which refer to His death are significantly absent from the Gospel of Thomas" (**The Book and the Parchments**, pp. 262-263).

THE DOCTRINES

The word Gnostic comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge." Gnostics considered themselves "in the know." They emphasized their own system for salvation. They believed in dualism — that good and evil were equally powerful. Gnostics denied the reality of the physical world, the reality of the body of Christ and His sufferings and the reality of personal sin. The early Church was bitterly opposed to the heresies of the Gnostics. The early Church Fathers, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian were known as the anti-Gnostic Fathers (see **The History of Christian Doctrines**, by Louis Berkhof, pp. 62-69, and **Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity**, pp. 98-100).

Their heresies lived on in a group known as the Manichaeans but were extinguished in the Middle Ages. Gnosticism is in many ways alive and well today in what are called "mind sciences."

Gnostics saw the spirit world as the prime reality and considered God unknowable. Many Gnostic systems and offshoots developed even wilder heresies (see **New 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, pp. 358-359, "Gnosticism"). The Epistle to the Colossians was Paul's warning against early strains of Gnosticism.

The sayings in The Gospel of Thomas consist of obscure statements, parables, predictions, mystical nonsense and rules for the community. Some sayings have small parallels in the Gospels of the New Testament but they present no

biography of Christ and no death, burial or resurrection and are clearly anti-Old Testament (see **The Biblical World**, by Charles F. Pfeiffer, pp. 402-410).

Some of the sayings are weird. Consider the following:

"When you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter [the kingdom]."

"For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man."

"He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he..."

The Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology calls the quotations "patently absurd" (pg. 49). Such bizarre statements are a stark contrast to the plain talk of the four New Testament Gospels.

There's more:

"That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have within you [will] kill you if you do not have it within you."

Again:

"If the flesh came into being because of spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty."

"Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over

the all. ... If those who lead you say to you, 'See the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known. ... If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned. ... For there are five trees for you in Paradise which remain undisturbed summer and winter and whose leaves do not fall. Whoever becomes acquainted with them will not experience death. ... Where there are three gods, they are gods. Where there are two or one, I am with him. ... You too, look for a place for yourselves within repose, lest you become a corpse and be eaten. ... Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there" (The complete text is available in James Robinson's, **The Nag Hammadi Library**, pp. 126-138).

A look at the rest of the Gnostic library will reveal much of its belief system. In Apocryphon (Codex 1 from Nag Hammadi, Thomas being Codex 2), Jesus is identified as male and female, father and mother. Gnostics sought to blur the distinction between the sexes and exalt the female principle to an almost god-like status.

Philip Schaff called Gnosticism "the grandest and most comprehensive form of speculative religious syncretism known to history. It consists of Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, Philonic and Cabalistic Judaism, and Christian ideas of salvation ... an artistic work of creative fancy, a Christian mythological epic" (**History of the Christian Church**, Vol. 2, pg. 448).

Doug Groothuis says of the Nag Hammadi texts: "The body of Gnostic literature, which is wider than the Nag Hammadi texts, presents various views of this Redeemer

figure. There are in fact differing schools of Gnosticism with differing Christologies ... By inspecting a few of the Nag Hammadi texts, we encounter Gnosticism in Christian guise: Jesus dispenses Gnosis in order to awaken those trapped in ignorance; the body is the prison, the spirit alone is good and salvation comes by discovering the Kingdom of God within the self. ... Here we find ourselves agreeing with the writings of the early Christian defenders of the faith, who maintained

that Gnosticism in the Church was a corruption of original truth and not an independently legitimate source of information on Jesus or the rest of reality" (**Revealing**, op. cit., pp. 80-81, 113).

Jesus warned about false Christs in Matthew 24:24. Certainly the repackaged Christ of the Gnostics and The Gospel of Thomas fits the picture of Matthew 24:24, but so many are not listening to the warning. Paul also warns about those

proclaiming another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4) and marveled that this would be tolerated.

The above proves the enemy is crafty and powerful. Christians must reject the pseudo-Gospel of Thomas and the Gnostic nonsense that is being repackaged for current consumption. As well, we should be dispensing information warning people of this neo-Gnosticism and help inoculate them against these errors.



WIGGLESWORTH

(continued from page 1)

from addictions and reunited and reconciled estranged family members. His reported exploits were considered by some to be a post-script to the book of Acts.

Many modern healers and televangelists consider Wigglesworth the forerunner of today's miracle ministries. Albert Hibbert noted: "Oral Roberts has said that he and his fellow evangelists owe Wigglesworth a debt beyond calculation. ... It would be interesting to know how many ministers of the Gospel have been inspired by Smith Wigglesworth. A great number in the United States, especially seem to have been blessed and inspired by his ministry" (ibid., pp. 9, 53).

Harold Womersley wrote, "Smith Wigglesworth was a household name in Pentecostal circles for more than a generation. Today, he is still one of the most referred-to names in Pentecostal preaching and writing" (**Smith Wigglesworth Remembered** by William Hacking, Forward).

Hacking added, "There is no doubt that many in the full time ministry, and out of it, were inspired by Brother Wigglesworth's faith and example. There were some who copied him in method, in manner, and even in voice" (ibid., pg. 39).

Since so many esteem Wigglesworth and justify his questionable practices and teachings, Christians ought to know who he was and what he taught.

Anyone who studies Wigglesworth's teachings will find him orthodox on some basics, but bogged down with unorthodox teachings. A chapter title in C. Nirvig's book, **Christian Truth and Religious Delusions**, aptly describes Wigglesworth: "Some Truth, Much Error."

We need to ask not how much truth a person has but does the error totally obscure the truth.

A favorable biography of Wigglesworth is found in the **Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements** (pp. 883-884). However, an examination of Wigglesworth's sermons reveals confusion and serious departures from the truth.

Wayne E. Warner is an avid fan of Wigglesworth who compiled some of his sermons and wrote the book, **The Anointing of His Spirit**. These sermons had to be doctored, since all who knew Wigglesworth would admit that his sermons were abstract, ungrammatical and disjointed. The "revised versions" of his sermons can only re-create a mythical Wigglesworth.

Wigglesworth was a plumber from Bradford, England. He was born

into a poor family and began working at age six. He had no formal or theological training and could not read until his wife taught him.

It is unlikely he ever read any creedal statements from Church History and probably was unaware that there is a nonnegotiable core of Christian doctrine. This authoritative and unmovable center is called "the Apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42).

As a "prophet," Wigglesworth did not fare so well. He predicted Christ's return before 1900 and told others he would not die, but live to see the rapture. Warner admits that Wigglesworth appears to contradict himself and admits he changed his views and teachings over time (**The Anointing**, pg. 16). Yet, his undaunted followers keep calling him "Apostle" and "Prophet." Some have dubbed him "The Apostle of Faith."

He had one commercial venture. He sold what he called "the Wigglesworth Leak-Proof Anointing Bottle" at \$1 apiece. A 1920 advertisement said that the Glad Tidings Bookroom in San Francisco was the "sole agent in this country" for the purchase of the anointing bottles.

Wigglesworth moved through several affiliations. At one time or another, he was associated with the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church, the Plymouth Brethren, the

Salvation Army, and the Elim Pentecostals. His Salvation Army association explains why he sometimes expressed perfectionist views. In contradictory fashion, he taught that even one baptized in the Spirit could be possessed by demons.

Wigglesworth was linked with George and Stephen Jeffreys and the Elim Pentecostal Church, which was given to belief in strange phenomenon, such as the purported appearance of Jesus' face on the mission's wall (**Dictionary**, op. cit., pg. 479). Wigglesworth appeared to mirror whatever religious environment he attached himself to.

As a healer, Wigglesworth expressed anti-doctor and anti-medical views. The anomaly is that he struggled with painful gallstones for three years, which he eventually passed and saved in a bottle. He never could heal his deaf daughter, Alice, and blamed the deafness on her lack of faith, (**The Life of Smith Wigglesworth** by Jack Hywel-Davies, pg. 93).

Wigglesworth also used reading glasses. He said he did so because he once had criticized a man wearing glasses and now had to suffer the same fate (*ibid.*, pg. 95).

Wigglesworth punched people in the area of their injury or disease, citing "anger at the devil" to justify it. One undocumented story tells of Wigglesworth punching a man so hard in his cancerous stomach that the man died. Later in the meeting the man reportedly came back to life. He also struck people in an attempt to knock out or cast out demons, a practice that cost him the support of some Church leaders. People reportedly sometimes fought back.

As problematic as these practices were, Wigglesworth's greatest problems arose in his departure from orthodox Bible doctrines. Wigglesworth had a view of faith more mystical than Scriptural. In his ser-

mon, "What is Faith?," he defined faith as a mystical power that flows through us. Faith, he says, "Is the personal inward flow of divine favor, which moves in every fiber of our being." Later he states it is "...the divine Trinity flowing through humanity." Again, "...there is within you a divine force, the power of limitless possibilities," (**The Anointing**, op. cit., pp. 27, 29, 35). One gets the idea from Wigglesworth that an inner inclination to see something good happen is all that is necessary.

Andrew Walker, Nigel Wright and Tom Smail address this defective view of faith by writing, "The view that faith is a principle or force rather than a gracious unmerited gift of God is one of the most worrying features of Faith teaching. Manipulating this 'faith force' smacks more of the occult than of Christian faithfulness. We are back in the realm of technique and gnosis" (**The Love of Power or the Power of Love**, pg. 80).

A Greek dictionary shows that the root word for faith is *pistis*, which means "trust." This conviction and persuasion of trust demands a solid object. Strong faith in a weak bridge may put a person in the river; weak faith in a strong bridge probably will result in a successful crossing. The object of the Christian's trust, according to the New Testament, is Jesus Christ and God's Word. It is not "faith in faith," or faith in some power flowing in us. (See further, **Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, *pistis*.)

Wigglesworth punctuates his sermons with several undocumented healing stories, everything from dismissing death, to having a boy vomit up a 16-inch worm, to curing all kinds of cancers. He claims to have restored the sense of smell to one and to another re-create their "swallower," which had been surgically removed. By contrast, in John 18:20, Jesus said that He did nothing in secret. All His healings could

be documented and examined. A testimonial without proof is the antithesis of Jesus' method.

Wigglesworth also taught that if one really received the complete fullness of the Spirit, one would never be sick. He states: "There is an infilling of the Spirit which quickens our mortal bodies. Give God your life and you will see that sickness has to go when God comes in fully. ... Jesus came to set us free from sin, to free us from sickness. ... The divine power that sweeps through the organism, cleansing the blood, makes that man or woman fresh every day" (**The Anointing**, op. cit., pp. 102, 103, 124). Wigglesworth's strange doctrines on health show him to be a pioneer for the Word Faith movement.

Wigglesworth compounds the confusion with his view of the "Word of God." He calls the "Word of God" a "substance" and a "personality" (*ibid.*, pg. 62). Part of the confusion is a lack of distinction between the Living Word, Jesus, and the written Word.

Wigglesworth did not believe in the finality of the Bible and insists that "God wants us to have visions, revelations and manifestations" (*ibid.*, pg. 64). Mormon founder Joseph Smith, Jr. believed and taught the same thing.

Probably the most serious error Wigglesworth advocated was the extreme idea of the "Union Life." He suggested that a Christian can attain a level of spirituality that would make him as spiritual and powerful as Jesus.

This idea can be called fusion. Norman Grubb was a more prominent teacher of the "union life" in the 1950s and 1960s. He taught that Christ so took over a believer that his personality was negated. Human nature was absorbed into Christ's nature and the believer's body became just a container. (See further, "Case In Point — Union Life," JPUSA, Chicago, 1980.) Confusing

Christ and the believer to any degree is a serious error.

Wigglesworth phrased it this way: "I see that all revelation, all illumination, everything that God had in Christ was to be brought forth in perfect light that we might be able to live the same, produce the same and be in every activity sons of God with power. We must not limit the Holy One. And we must see that God brought us forth to make us supernatural" (**The Anointing**, op. cit., pg. 166).

Christians do not have everything that Jesus had by way of revelation and illumination. They neither are the same nor produce the same as Jesus. Paul reminded us that we have the treasure of salvation in earthen vessels. Christians are weak and frail awaiting glorification (Romans 8) and will only be fully like Christ in Resurrection (1 John 3:1-3).

Any subtle move toward the deification of man, or the doctrine of absorption into God was labeled by Theologian B.B. Warfield as "mysticism," "confusion," and "crude fancies" (**Selected Shorter Writings**, Vol. II, pp. 670-671).

Galatians 2:20 does not confuse the believer with Jesus. Wigglesworth's teaching that Jesus changes human weaknesses into the divine image and that believers can have the "same type of ministry Jesus had" (**The Anointing**, op. cit., pp. 186-187) is wrong.

Wigglesworth was clear on the extent to which he thought Jesus took over the believer's life: "You may have within you the incarnation of the personality of Christ's presence, until you know you are God's children. You will have son-likeness, son-desires, son-expressions, son-activities. Beloved, this remarkable position awaits every soul in this place: to be so inhabited by Jesus that you become a living personality of God's ideal Son ... Sons of God may speak and it is

done. They may bind things that are loose, and loose things that are bound" (ibid., pp. 218, 220).

Christians are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) and share the life of Christ and have the Holy Spirit. Through grace and the Holy Spirit Christians can develop Christ-like character and qualities. Christ is the Christian's companion, partner and guide as the word partaker (*koinonia*) suggests, but this should not be construed to mean that the believer's personality will be subsumed into Christ.

Wigglesworth imagined an upper echelon of Christians with terms such as "a higher order of redemptive work" or "higher ground" or an unveiling of the "fulness of the life of Christ in us" (ibid., pg. 208). Wigglesworth envisioned an elite superspiritual class, an idea common in Holiness circles in his day.

Wigglesworth comes dangerously close to really saying that it is not Calvary's Cross, but acceptance of his tenets, that redeems a person. The extent to which he takes this is seen in the words of a testimony in his sermon, "Lord What Will You Have Me To Do?":

"And I realized that God took me—tongue, thoughts, and everything—so that it was not myself, but it was Christ working through me" (ibid., pg. 233).

Christ empowers Christians, blesses them and may choose to bless others through them but it is clearly dangerous and unscriptural to say, "it was not myself." Creature and creator must never be merged or confused. Christians will always be "themselves" and Christ will be Christ.

The union of Christ and the believer has been called the mystical union. Since Wigglesworth did not learn to read till he was an adult and then said he only read the Bible, he probably never looked into this idea.

Christianity teaches a federal (or legal) union of Christ as the last Adam. Christ is related to us by virtue of His humanity and ours. He represents us as the perfect man.

There is also the "objective union" in the covenant of redemption as Jesus secures salvation for mankind in His death and resurrection. The Church is vitally and eternally linked to Jesus through the merits of His sacrifice and resurrection. "Objective Union" speaks of Christ's cross work for us. Sonship and imputed righteousness are part of that union.

Then there is the "subjective union" realized through the work of God's Spirit in the believer. He is the vine, believers are the branches (John 15:5). The vine does not become the branches or vice versa, even though there is a shared life. Subjective union with Christ is a relationship, not a loss of identity. It is a union like a marriage (Romans 7), not a fusion. There is no merging or confusion of personalities. Christians can be more like Christ but not become Christ in any sense. Just as an unborn child shares the life of its mother while remaining distinct from the mother, so we share the life of Jesus.

The relationship is called mystical because it is not only eternal but is spiritual and beyond human comprehension. The Bible stresses that Christians share a measure of the Lord's fullness in a subjective sense but have all His merits in a legal and objective sense. Christians are "complete in Him" positionally but not always like Him practically. Legal and objective union has to do with salvation and position, while subjective union has to do with a believer's internal regeneration and sanctification.

People have seesawed back and forth between various errors on this matter. From pantheism (God in everything), to moral union (one in sympathy only), to mystical error

that teaches believers are one in essence with Christ.

Some have pointed to the Eastern Orthodox Church for justification for the doctrine of *Theosis* (merging of God with a human). *Theosis* is understood and explained by the Eastern Orthodox Church has so many disclaimers and qualifications it cannot be construed to endorse Wigglesworth or Word-Faith teaching (**The Love of Power**, op. cit., pp. 88-90). Eastern Orthodoxy sees the saved as partakers of Christ, but not equal to God. They also see a more thorough partaking in heaven. They are careful to strongly qualify all they say.

Louis Berkhof quotes an extreme mystic as saying, "I am Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God" (**Systematic Theology**, pg. 451). One follower of Grubb has even said, "When I speak, Jesus speaks; when I laugh, Jesus laughs; when I get angry, Jesus gets angry." It speaks for itself.

While not directly taught by Grubb or Wigglesworth, another false teaching on union is that of sacramental union, which claims that Jesus is mediated through Sacraments. The more traditional and liturgical Churches fall into this error.

Wigglesworth's disdain for medicine might have been as much a reflection of medical ignorance as bad theology, but it is troubling nonetheless. A book of his sermons titled **Ever Increasing Faith** records his teaching that the "Gospel that brings perfect health to the body, this Gospel of entire salvation" (pg. 15).

Wigglesworth then speaks of having a demon of appendicitis for six months and casting the demon out of himself. He believed he had cast the demon of appendicitis from others (ibid., pp. 21-22). He was the unwitting perpetrator of what has been called "the paranoid uni-

verse," a perspective that ignores common sense, lapses into dualism and sees demons in everything.

Probably his most cruel and misleading teaching was that sickness resulted from personal sin. "There is a close relationship between sin and sickness," he taught. "How many know that sickness is the direct result of sin? I hope that no one will ask to be prayed for who is living in sin. But if you will obey God and repent of your sin and quit it, God will meet you, and neither your sickness nor your sin will remain" (ibid., pg. 46). A reading of John 9 says the very opposite.

Further medical and theological confusion is seen in this statement: "Luke tells us that Jesus rebuked the fever. The fever could hear. The moment it could hear it went. Jesus had a new method. Today there are a lot of folks who try to sweat out a fever. You can't sweat the devil out. He can stand all the heat you can apply to him" (ibid., pg. 65).

Confusion reigns here. A fever is seen as a devil who can hear. The word "rebuke" means to tell, to charge or to command something to happen. Rebuke (Greek: *epitimao*) does not imply that something has to be heard. It is an intensive word that suggests the power of the one delivering the charge and the ability of that one to cause results.

There are other troubling things as Wigglesworth reports things that sound almost like occultic and poltergeist activities. In one account he says his face was shining and in another that beds vibrated and shook when he prayed (ibid., pp. 47, 72, 99).

Poltergeist activity (moving and shaking of inanimate objects) is reported by Kurt Koch. He suggests that the phenomenon can be the result of hallucinations, psychic powers or demons (see **Occult ABC**, pp. 160-168).

As far as Moses' shining face, 2

Corinthians 3:7-8 indicates that this was a one-time event typifying the passing away of the law and the Old Testament economy being fulfilled in Christ. It was not the shining but the passing away of the shining that was significant as a type of the law. There is only one giving of the law, one passing of the law and only one fulfillment in Jesus.

Wigglesworth's mysticism and fusion again show up in his view that the life of Jesus Himself is imparted to "every tissue and every drop of blood and our bones and joints and marrow" of our body (**Ever Increasing Faith**, pg. 80).

Ephesians 5:30 is no justification for tissues and blood taking on the life of Jesus. Paul's allusion is to Adam and Eve — "one flesh" — means they were in many senses united but still separate individuals. Neither one became the other.

We readily see Wigglesworth's theological and ecclesiastical confusion in the following passage from Stanley Frodsham's book, **Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith**:

"Smith Wigglesworth preferred throughout his whole life to be unattached to any religious body. His heart of love went out for all the saints. We have been with him in different towns where he would search out the Salvation Army to be with them at their prayer meeting at seven a.m. and then he would frequently go to the Episcopal Church to their Holy Communion service at eight a.m. On three different occasions he held meetings for Episcopal ministers. If they wanted it, he would put on the surplice and cassock, which they considered a necessity for ministry" (pg. 78).

One should never drink from a stream if the source for that stream is contaminated. All the above should make us very wary of Smith Wigglesworth and those who use him as a source. His spring is polluted.



the denomination. According to the release: "The applicant must meet the high standards of personal life and doctrine specified in the constitution and by-laws of the church." Critics within the denomination expressed grave concern over the church's acceptance of Hinn and noted that his life, ministry and doctrine do not meet church standards.

Hinn met personally with the General Council Credentials Committee and assured them "he had repudiated his earlier identification with the so-called health and wealth gospel, and that he had received correction offered him when he was wrong." Yet at nearly the same time Hinn was "repudiating" the "health and wealth gospel" to the Assemblies council, he was appearing on a Trinity Broadcasting Network fund-raiser preaching a "give-to-get" theology.

Also disturbing to critics is the council's statement that "members of the General Council Credentials Committee noted the evident blessing and anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the life and ministry of Benny Hinn and found him to be a sincere brother in Christ; earnest, humble, teachable and graced with the fruit of the Spirit."

Of further concern was that in 1989 Hinn's wife, Suzanne, severely chastised the Assemblies denomination for the defrocking of her father, Roy Harthern, who resigned his pastorate in 1982 after confessing to his congregation that he had committed adultery with a member of his church. Harthern was pastor of Calvary Assembly of God near Orlando. During the diatribe, Suzanne dismissed her father's sin as a "problem" and Benny suggested that her twin sister's backsliding, brother's drug dependency and another sister's alcoholism were all a result of the Assemblies attitude and policy toward defrocked ministers. She also was highly critical of the denomination's handling of the Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart cases. Their comments were delivered during a service at Swaggart's Family Worship Center in Baton Rouge.

—MKG

SATAN GOES TO JAIL

A judge ruled last October that a federal prison rule excluding Satan worship was unconstitutional. U.S. District Judge Edward Nottingham determined that under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Robert James Howard may practice satanic rituals in his prison cell. Howard, a convicted kidnapper, is serving a 10-year sentence in a federal prison in Colorado.

Prison authorities expressed apprehension in the permitting of the rituals, arguing that the materials Howard wants, such as candles, candle holders, incense, a gong, a black robe, a chalice and a short wooden staff, could be used as weapons.

According to an Associated Press report, Howard alleges

the satanic rituals will "help him cope with such things as his father's death last year."

—MKG

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

Greiner and his statue twice have been invited to Dispensational, Cessationist Dallas Theological Seminary and a statue resides on the campus. A spokesman said he was unaware of all that the *Charisma* article had reported.

If someone said that God had told them there were spiritual power and influence in VCRs or Elvis dolls or Jesus dolls, we probably would question his sanity. But take a hunk of bronze and shape it like a Jesus figure with a skimpy towel and make some claims about it and people are willing to accept it.

Christians do not need statues to receive truth. Scripture can be used by the Holy Spirit to be the "power of God unto salvation." The subtle message of the "statue" is that the Church's means of grace (the Spirit, the Word, the ordinances, prayer, preaching and fellowship) are not enough and we need more to stir faith and see things happen.

Greiner says all the attention showered on the statue is permissible as long as Christians don't worship it. However, anything that draws Christians from Christ and the Scripture is impermissible.

Greiner shows his ignorance when he says he wants the sculpture to "introduce Christians and non-Christians alike to the divine servant — the God who stripped Himself of His own deity" (*Charisma*, pg. 60). First, people will not meet Christ through a statue and, second, Jesus did not strip Himself of His deity. A human Christ without deity is heresy.

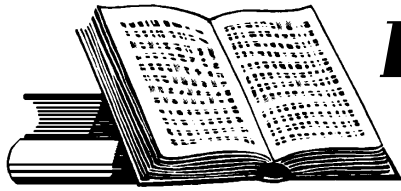
Jesus was always fully God. He was not just a human stripped of deity but Emmanuel, God with us. The human Jesus without deity is the false Jesus of the liberals and the cults. (For a history of claims that Jesus was stripped of deity, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pg. 16.)

Dave Breese reminds us that a mark of a cult is defective Christology. He states: "Satan knows that an improper understanding of the person and work of Christ makes salvation impossible" (**Know the Marks of Cults**, pg. 76).

Paul prophesied this in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he cometh that preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another Gospel, ye might well bear with it."

There is nothing wrong with art or religious depictions for teaching purposes. However, claims of statues with supernatural properties take us from art to magic, from helpful tools to relics.

—GRF



Books in Review

BATTLING OVER THE CHILDREN

Jehovah's Witnesses & Child Custody Cases

Witness, Inc. and MacGregor Ministries
52-minute Video, \$19.95

While intended for legal professionals or others involved in child-custody disputes with a Jehovah's Witness spouse, "Battling Over the Children" will shock and enlighten just about any viewer.

Jeff Atkinson, former chairman of the American Bar Association's Child Custody Case Committee, says, "Jehovah's Witnesses are probably responsible for half the contested custody cases."

The video reveals the extent to which the Society spiritually, emotionally and physically controls its members. The program discloses that mental duress, perjury, premature death, and suicide are commonplace among Jehovah's Witnesses. The tragic result is that, in such custody disputes, the real victims often are children.

Testimony by former Jehovah's Witnesses is the video's foundation. Lawyers and judges offer observations and the program closes with a solid presentation of the Christian Gospel message.

The information in this video transcends mere legal advice. It will move Christians to a deeper level of compassion for those doorstep visitors who have been isolated from the love and mercy of God.

—MKG

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR MORMON FRIEND

by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson

Bethany House Publishers, 192 pages, \$7.99

Christians seeking to witness to Mormons without the discussion degenerating into a quarrel ought to get this book. Researchers Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson have produced a valuable resource for those who want to question key aspects of the Latter-day Saints'

faith.

The book's introduction provides guidelines to use with the questions that follow. It contains 16 questions, an analysis of each, footnotes and reproductions of LDS documents.

Topics include: the "First Vision" accounts of Joseph Smith, determination of doctrinal truth, the Bible's reliability, baptism for the dead, exaltation to godhood and other subjects. The book also contains a glossary of Mormon theology and terminology.

This book is an excellent tool for Christians who want to take the offensive in their conversation with Latter-day Saints in an inoffensive way. The challenges it presents should cause any truth-seeking Mormon to reevaluate his beliefs.

—MKG

OUT OF THE CULTS AND INTO THE CHURCH

Understanding & Encouraging Ex-Cultists

by Janis Hutchinson

Kregel Resources, 222 pages, \$10.99

Janis Hutchinson, a former Mormon, has lived through the spiritual and psychological difficulties of leaving a cult for the Christian faith. In this book, she offers practical advice on understanding and encouraging ex-cultists who are new to Christianity.

The book is easily read and primarily written in a conversational format. Each chapter begins with a discussion of how cults control their followers and ends with a section called "How Can Christians Help?"

The book is practical without being deeply theological. Hutchinson draws an analogy between the stages of a person who leaves a cult with stages of grief put forth in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' *On Death and Dying*. This reviewer does not subscribe to the spiritualistic and New Age teachings promoted in that work. Perhaps the author could have found a better analogy, or, at least, issued a disclaimer.

Nonetheless, *Out of the Cults* helps the reader realize how difficult it is for an ex-member to be free of a cult's influence. This book is appropriate for anyone still struggling with leaving a cult and for Christians wanting to help them.

—AMG

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