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Benny Hinn and the Bible

Are His Interpretations God's Intentions?

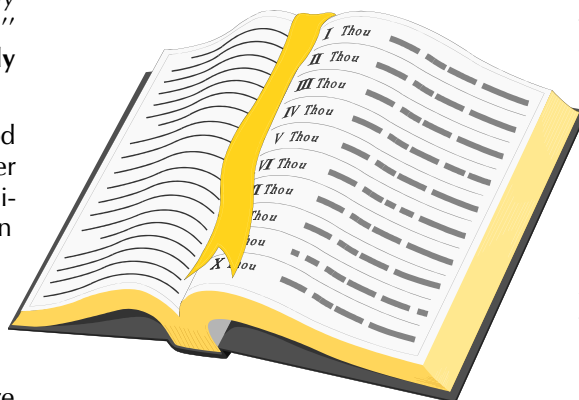
by W.E. Nunnally

"From that moment on the Bible took on a whole new dimension. ... The Bible became alive. ... It was just by asking the Holy Spirit to open the Word to me. And He did. ... He was my comforter, my teacher, my guide."
Benny Hinn, **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pp. 14-15.

How one handles the Word of God reveals much about how the interpreter views the Bible, himself, and his audience. Therefore, we can expect to gain valuable insights into the phenomenon of Benny Hinn from such an investigation.

The foundations of modern biblical interpretation ("hermeneutics") were laid during the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. Prior to this time, biblical interpretation was dominated by spiritualization and allegorization of the text in question. Authoritative figures whose interpretations were often considered infallible ruled over

the hermeneutical landscape. The controlling principles of hermeneutics were: 1) personal authority, 2) mystical



interpretations, 3) tradition, and 4) dogmatics (producing contrived biblical support for official church doctrines).

With the Renaissance and the Reformation, these controls were laid aside. The concept of the Priesthood of Every

Believer was maintained, in which all have the right to approach Scripture directly, without the mediation of official "authorities." Mysticism, allegorization, and spiritualization gave way to the "grammatico-historical" method, in which the goal of the interpreter is to understand the text in light of its original background, and to allow the biblical authors to speak for themselves. The crucial question posed to each passage became, "What is the author trying to say?" rather than the old method, "How can we read this to support our doctrine?" Tradition was discarded in favor of empirical evidence as a deciding factor in the interpretation of biblical texts.

The Reformers left to conservative Protestantism this great legacy, insisting on such basic principles as authorial intent (what the author intended to communicate to the original audience) and "the Analogy of Faith" (Scripture interprets Scripture). Further, they demanded that matters of faith and practice be determined by Scripture alone (*Sola Scriptura*) and by reference to the "Full Counsel of God" (taking everything the Scriptures say about a given subject, not simply one or two out-of-context passages).¹

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Editorials

KENNETH COPELAND AT THE CROSS

Staunch defender of Word-Faith adherents, James R. Spencer appeared on Trinity Broadcasting Network's *Praise the Lord Show* to promote his publication, **Heresy Hunters**, and denounce those he called "self-appointed watchdogs." He defended evangelist Kenneth Copeland, whom Christian Research Institute's Hank Hanegraaff has called "the worst of all heretics," by stressing the similarities between the charismatic teacher's theology and orthodox Christian belief.

However, Spencer errs in his effort to establish Copeland's orthodoxy by showing similarities. Apologist Dr. Norman L. Geisler emphasizes the defect of just such an undertaking:

"A simple fallacy that almost all people use when they're dealing with false religions [is] they look at the truth that's there, and overlook the error ... You don't tell a counterfeit by the similarities, you tell a counterfeit by the differences. Because it's the differences that make the difference. And it's those differences that you have to look at under the microscope. Do you know what the difference between a counterfeit \$10 bill and a real one is? Probably less than one-tenth of 1 percent. Some minute little thing that only an expert can see under a microscope" (*More Last Words from the Apostle Paul*, cassette tape).

One of the best ways to determine if one is a heretic is to

take them back to the cross. Using an imaginary time machine, we'll easily be able to determine whether Copeland glories in the cross of Christ or if he is an "enemy of the cross of Christ." If the latter, he is indeed a heretic.

The time: Passover, approximately 30 A.D.

The place: Jerusalem's Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

The event: Christ is hanging on the cross.

Witnesses: A Christian and Kenneth Copeland.

It is difficult to see Christ Jesus because the sun has stopped shining (Luke 23:44-45). Perhaps it's just a glowing ember. To be sure, there are no rain clouds or approaching storm as is popularly portrayed in the movie "The Robe" or some contemporary Christian music. Such things only detract from the supernatural nature of the event. Standing but a short distance from Christ, we hear this conversation:

Christian: This is awesome. Jesus Christ is dying for the sins of mankind.

Copeland: You don't know what happened at the cross! (*What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, cassette tape #00-0303, 1984 / #02-0017, 1991).

Christian: Excuse me? I should know what happened at the cross for it is the core of the Gospel and my salvation depends upon it. But tell me, why do you think that I don't know what's happening on yonder hill?

Copeland: I want to show you some things from the
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News Updates

MISDIAGNOSIS THROWS COLD WATER ON HEALING CLAIM

Late last year, boxing officials lifted the ban on former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield's return to boxing. Holyfield had been forced into retirement after being diagnosed with a heart problem following his April 1994 loss to Michael Moorer.

Weeks later, faith healer Benny Hinn claimed to have healed Holyfield during a Philadelphia crusade. During a recent segment on Trinity Broadcasting Network's *Praise The Lord Show*, Hinn said:

"Oh, by the way, I've got to tell about Evander. It was on the news, you people probably saw it but, he went to the Mayo Clinic and they gave him a clean bill of health. Isn't that great? ... So he's getting back into boxing. ... [Holyfield had been ordered] not to fight. Of course, he had something wrong with his heart. But in Philly [Hinn's Philadelphia Miracle Crusade], God did touch him and I have it on video when I said, 'The Lord is telling me He's healing his heart completely.' And now we have the confirmation and he's going back into boxing" (Dec. 6, 1994).

But a medical mixup, not divine intervention, has allowed Holyfield to return to the ring. The lifting of the ban had nothing to do with Hinn's "revelation" or the boxer's "miraculous" encounter with the controversial faith healer.

According to the Dec. 3, 1994, *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, "Dr. Christopher Vaughns, Holyfield's internist, said last week that 'circumstances may have misled cardiologists' to conclude Holyfield had a non-compliant left ventricle. Those circumstances had to do with his treatment immediately following the fight in Las Vegas, including excessive fluids for dehydration and pain medication" (pg. C2).

Therefore, the medical attention and treatment Holyfield received, in addition to inadequate information being forwarded to cardiologists, led to an "inaccurate diagnosis." There was no heart problem to be repaired.

The Dec. 28, 1994, *Atlanta Constitution* added: "But a five-physician panel confirmed Tuesday what Holyfield had learned in recent months – that he was misdiagnosed by cardiologist Dr. Douglas Morris of Emory Crawford-Long Hospital, in large part because Morris had not been fully apprised of Holyfield's treatment in Las Vegas following the fight. Holyfield was given excessive drugs and fluids during his 30-hour stay at Las Vegas' Valley Hospital, testimony

showed, and, for reasons still unknown, that information was never forwarded to Morris" (pg. G1).

The doctors now confirm what Holyfield says he knew all along. "Holyfield now believes circumstances unbeknownst to doctors at Emory may have led to the non-compliant-ventricle diagnosis. He is confident he never had a heart problem" (*The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Nov. 25, 1994, pg. D3).

In addition, Holyfield "now denies ever intimating he was 'healed' by self-proclaimed faith-healer Benny Hinn. He merely insists he never had the heart ailment that was diagnosed" (*The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Dec. 27, 1994, pg. D3).

Additionally, sports writer Terence Moore of the paper said, "Holyfield told me in the aftermath that he never thought the faith healer had an effect on his heart." "Says Holyfield, 'There really wasn't anything for him (the faith healer) to heal. That's because I don't believe I had a problem with my heart to begin with'" (Jan. 8, 1995, pg. F3).

Holyfield maintained: "I'm not upset, I'm just thankful everything is OK. ... Truth prevailed. Doctors are human. I'm not going to bash doctors. I believe in doctors. All I wanted was true answers" (op. cit., Nov. 25, 1994).

—MKG

MOSES DAVID REPORTED DEAD

David Brandt Berg, founder and leader of the controversial sect now known as The Family of Love (or just The Family) is reportedly dead at age 75. A group spokesman made the announcement last November, but did not give a cause, date, location or other details. Berg was known to his followers as Moses David and Father David.

In the late 1960s, Berg founded the communal sect from among West Coast hippies during the rise of the Jesus movement. The group first became known as The Children of God. It quickly strayed into unbiblical and sexually aberrant teaching, including lesbianism and flirty fishing, the use of sex to recruit new members. The sect claims to have abandoned flirty fishing in 1987.

Cult-monitoring groups watched the COG from its beginning, as it was considered a mind-control cult. The COG leadership eventually left the United States, only to have accusations of kidnaping, brainwashing and sexual perversion follow them around the world.

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The Latter Rain Movement

Showering Heresy on the Church for Nearly Fifty Years

by M. Kurt Goedelman
with G. Richard Fisher

HISTORY

The spiritual fires of the Azusa Street Revival, which kindled modern Pentecostalism, had long modified, calmed and settled by the mid-twentieth century. The Assemblies of God appeared to be the grandchild and direct heir of Azusa Street. Yet this turn-of-the-century awakening became a rationale for the post-World War II revival known as the "New Order of Latter Rain," which bore similarities to its 1906 predecessor.

The "Latter Rain" movement adopted its title from its emphasis on the imminent, premillennial Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The group expected the Lord's return would be preceded by a final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in accord with the "former rain" and "latter rain" prophecy of Joel 2:28. Accordingly, the "former rain" was Pentecost, the "latter rain" was the outpouring of the purportedly supernatural power upon its ranks.

The major Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God in the United States and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada moved swiftly to forestall the movement's influence among its ministers and churches. Yet despite the condemnation, its influence was not easily resisted. Its experience-oriented theology helped spark the charismatic revival of the 1960s and 1970s and other movements and its effects can be felt to this day.

The Latter Rain movement began in November 1947 among 70 students assembled by former Pentecostal Assemblies ministers George Hawtin and Percy G. Hunt and Four-Square Gospel minister Herrick Holt. The students came from the Bethel Bible Institute to the newly formed Sharon Orphanage and Schools in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. They gathered to fast, pray and study God's Word. This continued until Feb. 11, 1948, when a young woman prophesied that an outpouring of God's Spirit was about to occur. The next day "revival" swept the student body.

The school's newsletter published an account:

"Soon a visible manifestation of gifts was received when candidates were prayed over, and many as a result began to be healed, as gifts of healing were received. Day after day the Glory and power of God came among us. Great repentance, humbling, fasting and prayer prevailed in everyone" (*Sharon Star*, "How This Revival Began," Aug. 1, 1949, cited in **A Survey of 20th-Century Revival Movements in North America** by Richard M. Riss, pp. 112-113).

Word of the phenomena, specifically healing, spread and attracted people from around the world. Its widening success prompted invitations to its leaders to travel and minister throughout North America. As the movement grew, emphasis on North Battleford diminished as it became only one of many arenas for Latter Rain teaching.

From its very onset, the ministry, teachings and healing campaigns of William Branham helped shape and advance the movement. (For more information on Branham, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4.) Others, such as faith healers Franklin Hall and Oral Roberts, also contributed a favorable climate for Latter Rain.

Franklin Hall contrived several theological peculiarities, which even Pentecostals considered extreme. His teachings on fasting and prayer were substance for the Latter Rain. In addition, he promoted "bodyfelt salvation," which he asserts to be "700% greater than ordinary healing power." While some of his teachings parallel modern charismatic thought, others are absurd. Church historian David E. Harrell notes: "When one was clothed with the Holy Ghost fire, according to Hall, he no longer had any type of body odor. Disciple Thelma Moore of San Francisco testified that she wore the same hose for six months without washing

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THE ANIMALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY

Chaos in the Vineyard

by G. Richard Fisher
and M. Kurt Goedelman

"All of the animal sounds are really interesting. ... Our official answer is we don't know why people do that." John Arnott, pastor, Airport Vineyard, Toronto.

"Even John Arnott, the senior pastor at the Vineyard, admits that some people get into the flesh in their manifestations. ... So I, too, will not focus on some of the messy, fleshly reactions that do occur at the Airport Vineyard, but instead will look at their end product." Mark Virkler, in *Destiny Image Digest*, January-February 1995, (pg. 14).

"This is normal Christianity."
Todd Hunter, Vineyard pastor.

Barking, braying, clucking, howling and roaring are all being heard at meetings of Vineyard Ministries International but the sounds are not coming from dogs, donkeys, chickens, wolves or lions. They're coming from people.

One can trace the phenomenon to South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne, who about two years ago, introduced American Charismatics to "laughing in the spirit" (see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pg. 1, 13-16). The craze has swept through charismatic churches across the

continent and England.

Now, what has evolved — or devolved — from this unrestrained, anything-goes commotion, are the utterances of animal-like noises and other rantings that last for hours, sounds that are attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Some don't find this alarming. Word-Faith apologist William DeArteaga, author of *Quenching the Spirit*, said last fall at the

Airport Vineyard in Toronto:

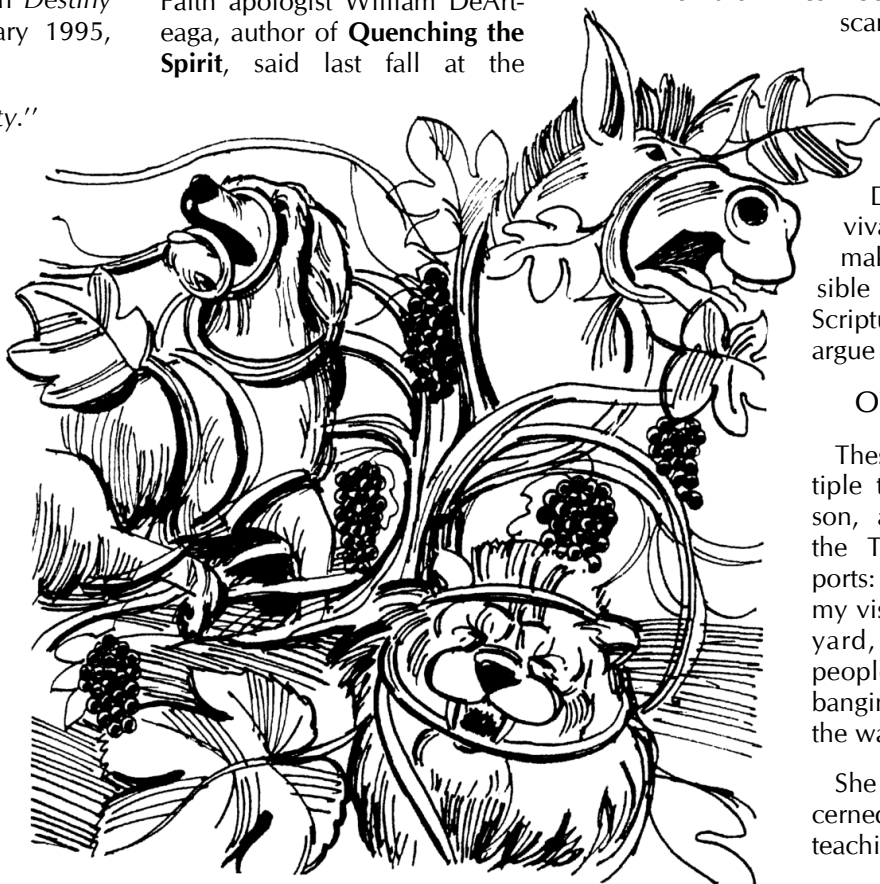
"...The Holy Spirit has a very high tolerance of allowing, and I don't know why, allowing fleshly phenomena and even demonic infiltration into a revival. That sounds horrible, but it's true. Take a look at the Corinthian church. Paul is saying, while they're going on in revival, you know, 'Even some of you are not really from us.' Demonic infiltration. He's also saying, 'Give it more orderliness.' He's disciplining it. Some of it is in flesh. So the Holy Spirit is not scared away by overexuberant enthusiasm ..." (Transcript of audiotape, Oct. 13, 1994).

DeArteaga thinks revival has a resiliency that makes it nearly impossible to abate. History, and Scripture (I Corinthians 14), argue the opposite.

OTHER DANGERS

These antics pose multiple threats. Cheryl Thomson, a former member of the Toronto Vineyard, reports: "On the evening of my visit to the Airport Vineyard, I witnessed two people seated in chairs banging their heads against the wall behind them."

She adds: "I became concerned that there was little teaching on spiritual coun-



terfeits and demonology, especially when prayer and meditation techniques were introduced which had the potential to open doors to the powers of darkness. ... Today there are many immature Christians who are being exposed to spiritual warfare they are not prepared to handle" (*Christian Week*, "Not Recognizing the Dangers," Oct. 18, 1994).

William Alnor, president of Eastern Christian Outreach, reported on a Nov. 12, 1994, Vineyard meeting he attended in Valley Forge, Pa.:

"The Pastor abandoned his message and there were two hours of nonstop rolling around in the aisles, hooting and hollering and the people making animal noises. People were glued to the floor and one woman was chopping wood in convulsions for about 20 minutes while another woman ran in place seemingly in a trance for 30 minutes. ... I almost got kicked. A number of people were making animal noises and one person who issued a prophecy, a word from the Lord, was later seen grunting and moaning while other Vineyardites surrounded him to cast a demon out!" (personal fax to PFO, Nov. 14, 1994).

This current excitement is not a unique occurrence to the Vineyard's history. Questionable faith and practices have plagued this group from nearly its beginning.

VINEYARD HISTORY

Vineyard Ministries International can be traced to John Wimber, a former jazz musician who, along with his wife, embraced Christianity in 1962. His wife adopted a charismatic persuasion and, in October 1976, initiated a home prayer/fellowship group which soon grew to 50 members. Wimber, citing what he believed was direct guidance from God, began to pastor the group. In May 1977, he held its first public meeting.

Initially, his assembly operated under the name Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda, Calif., and was affiliated with Pastor Chuck Smith and the Calvary Chapel fellowships. In 1983, Wimber left the Calvary Chapel association and aligned with a group of six churches

known as the "Vineyards." In 1987, the Association of Vineyard Churches was officially formed.

During a broadcast of the *Praise The Lord Show*, Wimber said, "In effect, my call to the ministry occurred before I was converted," a statement that caught even Paul Crouch off guard. "That's an interesting switch," Crouch said. "I don't think I've ever heard one quite like that" (Jan. 25, 1994).

Wimber claims to have had visitations from Jesus at an early age. When describing his conversion, he said: "Suddenly there was a revelation of Jesus. 'I know you. I've known you since I was a little boy. I remember when you use to come into the room at night and comfort me when I was alone ... I have known you, but I didn't know you. I didn't know you were Jesus.'"

He goes on to say that during his conversion he sought the meaning of Christ's teaching on the pearl of great price. What resulted was a "mystical" interpretation of the parable as he asked his spiritual mentor, "Do you mean that I might have to give up my career? ... And he said, 'Well, what do you think it means?' And I said, 'Well, that's all it can mean. The pearl of great price, sold everything he owned, it's just gotta mean that.' And he said, 'Well, that's a matter of personal revelation to you. But if that's what you think it means, it means that to you.'"

Throughout the history of the Vineyard, Wimber has placed an unhealthy significance on "signs and wonders" and other charismatic phenomenon. He does acknowledge that "a central task of evangelism is the bold proclamation of the Gospel, a clear and precise presentation of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ," but eclipses that by adding: "But for this message to be heard and understood there must be more than the dissemination of information" (*Power Evangelism*, pg. xviii). His emphasis is on "power evangelism," defined as evangelism being demonstrated by healings, signs, wonders and exorcisms. This, according to Wimber, is the biblical standard.

This power evangelism, with its signs and wonders, has been criticized for

being devoid of the cross, which is essential to the Gospel. Wimber himself has admitted that his book by that title "was imbalanced, lacking as it does any real exposition of the Gospel or evangelism" (*The Briefing*, April 24, 1990, pg. 5).

Confusion about the Gospel and its power appear commonplace among Vineyard leaders. In 1990, Dr. Jack Deere of Vineyard was asked to define the Gospel. "I'm not sure," he replied, before saying it was more than justification by faith and that it included healings and exorcisms. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pg. 2.)

In 1982, Wimber helped teach a course called "The Miraculous and Church Growth" at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. The course, which later became known as "Signs, Wonders and Church Growth," was the most popular in the seminary's history and the most controversial. It was discontinued in 1986.

"We haven't had anything this disruptive on campus since I have been here — 11 years," said faculty member Roberta Hestenes. The professor also said she had "heard Wimber claim virtual infallibility" and she knew of "particular cases where his 'word of the Lord' has been wrong" (*Christianity Today*, Aug. 8, 1986, pp. 20-21).

VINEYARD HEALINGS

Today, Wimber sees a difference between the miracles of Jesus and the Apostles and contemporary ones. The latter fit into I Corinthians 12-14 and the gifts of healing, a position apparently the result of advice given him by Deere. This modified conviction might help account for the low percentage of healings experienced in the group. The Australian magazine, *The Briefing*, reported:

"[Wimber] admitted that not all diseases are equally responsive to healing. Blindness, for example, has a success rate of 3-8% depending upon the cause of the blindness — blindness from disease having more healing than blindness from accidents or birth" (op. cit., pg. 4).

The magazine documented Wimber's unsuccessful efforts "by raising the possible healing of children with Down Syndrome. This genetic disease cannot be caused or healed by psychosomatic 'mind-over-body' factors. It is an ideal 'test case' disease, being relatively easy to diagnose genetically both before and after the 'healing.' John Wimber claimed to have prayed over more than 200 children with Down Syndrome. To his genuine disappointment, only one of the 200 has shown any sign of healing. This one child has still many symptoms of his problem (i.e., visual features), but has reached 'the lower end of normal range' in educational attainments. John was careful to emphasize that it was the lower end, but within the normal range. The healing rate, then, for Down Syndrome is 0.5%, and the healing that did take place was only partial (unlike Jesus' healings)" (ibid.).

The publication concluded:

"From a medical viewpoint, John Wimber's 0.5% success rate with Down Syndrome is less than is achieved through the efforts of health professionals" (ibid.).

Dr. Norman Geisler drew a similar conclusion following a study of Wimber's purported healings:

"John Wimber claimed that he prayed for a lady whose toe was cut off. And while he was praying, her toe grew right back on. Now that would be a miracle. The only problem is [magician] Danny Korem followed up [on] the lady. She took off her shoe and sock and she still doesn't have a toe. It never grew on. He [Korem] said, 'Now, I don't know whether John Wimber is deceiving or being deceived. I do know that the toe never grew back on'" (*More Last Words from the Apostle Paul*, cassette tape).

In April 1993, Wimber was faced with an illness of his own. Doctors discovered a "malignant tumor in his nasal pharynx." The "inoperable but treatable" cancer forced Wimber to suspend his ministry and undergo the more established treatment, radiation therapy. A few months later, Wimber "felt strong enough to speak at recent

conferences in Holland and Switzerland," but that the "effects of the radiation have made it difficult for [him] to eat." Because of the disease and treatment, he reportedly has lost more than 100 pounds.

Wimber alludes to a demonic origin of his bout with cancer. During the Jan. 25, 1994, edition of the *Praise The Lord Show*, he said, "I think the genesis of all this, this is theoretical, I'm not sure of it, but I think the beginning of my cancer occurred in Hong Kong. I was there speaking and God gave me an opportunity for evangelism that night. ... Well, I don't know for sure, but I think I got a Chinese cancer that night from a demon." He said he received divine insight that his cure would be gained not through supernatural efforts, but through more natural means of physicians and medicine.

A HISTORY OF HISTRIONICS

The phenomena of laughing and animal noises, which are being touted as signs of a spontaneous revival, actually can be traced to a cross-pollination of ideas and methods over almost two years. Randy Clark, pastor of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in St. Louis, says that in the summer of 1993 he was emotionally, spiritually and physically on the brink of burnout but he was invigorated after speaking to a colleague who had just returned from a conference led by Rodney Howard-Browne.

The next Howard-Browne meetings were in Tulsa, Okla., at Kenneth Hagin, Jr.'s Rhema Bible Church. This presented a hindrance to Clark, who had theological differences with Hagin. However, Clark said, "The Lord spoke to me immediately, and said, 'You have a denominational spirit. How badly do you want to be touched afresh?'" Clark then attended the meetings, where he witnessed the pandemonium Howard-Browne regularly generates.

Then, in October 1993, at a Vineyard regional meeting in Lake Geneva, Wis., Vineyard's Bill Jackson had Clark tell about the Tulsa meeting. This forum allowed news of the phenomenon to reach a large and influential constitu-

ency.

Then, at the national board meetings in November 1993, Vineyard leader Happy Leman saw John Arnott, pastor of the Airport Vineyard in Toronto, who said he had witnessed spiritual revival elsewhere, in part due to encounters with Benny Hinn. Arnott invited Clark to Toronto to transplant the new message. According to *Charisma* magazine, "Clark credits Howard-Browne for what has happened at his church." (See *Charisma* magazine, June 1994, "Renewal Excites Canadian Churches," pp. 52-53 and *Evangelical Times*, November 1994, "How the Toronto Blessing Came to Town," pg. 17.)

As the "laughing revival" gained momentum, it found itself taking root in other groups already far removed from the bedrock of Scripture. The End-Time Handmaidens have sanctioned it, saying, "The Toronto Blessing is real!" The January 1995 *End-Time Handmaidens Magazine* applauded the Vineyard meetings and featured reports from both John Arnott and Randy Clark. (For more on the Handmaidens, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 4-9.)

VINEYARD HERMENEUTICS

While Vineyard leaders try to cite Scripture to support the antics taking place at their meetings, their Bible interpretation is severely flawed. Alan Morrison addresses those who distort the Scripture to justify their teachings:

"The fact that animal noises are mentioned in the Bible does not mean that we are to set about imitating them. However, roaring, howling and wailing are among the sounds that are commonly manifesting themselves in charismatic churches. It has even been reported that a man crowed like a cockerel in a service, and the word of interpretation given was 'The Lord says "A new day is dawning"' ("Falling for the Lie" *Evangelical Times*, October 1994, pg. 15).

Morrison continues:

"The justification for these particular noises has been found in Bible texts such as: 'Because of this I will weep and wail ... I will howl like a jackal and

moan like an owl' (Micah 1:8). But what on earth do the animal noises made in charismatic church services today have to do with Micah's unique, divinely-appointed prophetic ministry? The prophet here is lamenting in a typical Middle-Eastern manner the awfulness of God's judgement on Judah and Samaria. The imagery is that of a profoundly grief-stricken mourner, which bears no relation to the frivolity associated with the 'Toronto Blessing'" (ibid.).

In Hosea 11:10, God is said to "roar like a lion" that is in fierce judgment. Nevertheless, one should be careful in taking that as a proof text for pandemonium, since the devil is identified as a "roaring lion," in I Peter 5:8. Joe Dillow calls this "voodoo exegesis."

One could use Peter as a justification to install a new charismatic fad, "snoring in the Spirit," since he slept in the Garden of Gethsemane, or Christians could begin to "baaaa in the Spirit," since the Bible refers to them as sheep. One could begin conversing with donkeys, citing Numbers 22:22-35.

The fall 1994 issue of the *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter* notes that "Holy Laughter" is not uncommon in metaphysical sects. Advanced spiritual leaders and gurus of the New Age are said to be able to help release one's "kundalini energy" and that "Among the most common manifestations ... are unmotivated and unnatural laughter or crying, talking tongues ... and imitating a variety of animal sounds and movements." The periodical adds that Swami Baba Muktananda can transfer "guru's grace," the manifestation of which includes "uncontrollable laughing, roaring, barking, hissing, crying, shaking, etc. Some devotees became mute or unconscious. Many felt themselves being infused with feelings of great joy and peace and love" (pg. 14).

John Arnott himself made some interesting and revealing admissions at a pastors' meeting, saying: "All of the animal sounds are really interesting. A challenging question. Our official answer is we don't know why people do that. That's the official answer, that's the answer you'll see from John Wim-

ber's desk and stuff like that. However, if you eliminate the possibilities, it's either demonic or it's the flesh or it's the Holy Spirit. Those are the three options, I think, right? So, assuming it's the Holy Spirit, then what could He possibly be doing?" (audiotape transcript, Oct. 19, 1994 meeting).

The problem with Arnott's stance is in the phrase, "assuming it's the Holy Spirit." There is no scriptural support for people worshipping that way. One could more easily assume it is the flesh or the devil.

Arnott continues: "So you felt great strength and greatly empowered, so it's kind of a Samson anointing for strength. I don't know what sort of noises Samson made when the Spirit of God came on him and he carried the gates to the top of the hill, but I assume he didn't just go, 'Oh, well, let's just do this quietly,' you know" (ibid.).

Once again people are asked to rely upon assumptions. More important, from a biblical standpoint, is the fact that Samson is not a primary, much less positive, role model in Scripture. Much of what Samson did was clearly sinful. His anger was part of his downfall. Jesus is the Christian's perfect role model. We are instructed to follow His steps (I Peter 2:21).

At the pastors' meeting, Arnott continued:

"In the case of Jesus we see Him not only called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but also the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. So God Himself has no hesitation of comparing Himself to an animal in that sense, reflecting the nature and the character and what that animal represents, really. Therefore, I don't think that other argument is valid. That's just my opinion. But you're going to have to process some of the animal noises that prophetic people do and you're going to have to decide if it's the devil, if it's the flesh, if it's the Holy Spirit. But if it's the Holy Spirit, it can be pastored through, very often, to prophetic revelation" (ibid.).

Arnott also appears to be unfamiliar with the concept of metaphors, defined

by Milton Terry as "an implied comparison. ... [a] figure of speech in which the sense of one word is transferred to another" (**Biblical Hermeneutics**, pg. 258), and similes, which are a formal comparison between two different objects. Metaphors and similes illuminate and illustrate truth. That is their main purpose in the biblical text. To require any more of them is silly and dangerous.

Arnott's irreverence is evident when he says, "And so now we're starting to see people prophetically acting like lions and oxen and eagles and even warriors. We had a phone call one time, it said, 'One of our congregation's been acting like an eagle flying around the room. We can't get them to stop, what do we do?' And we thought, you know, throw a rabbit out in the middle of the floor and maybe they'll come down" (audiotape transcript, op. cit.).

VINEYARD HYPE

By Arnott's own admission, scriptural support for these practices is thin, "too thin," he says on the tape. The primary Scripture cited is Acts 2:13, which says, "Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'" The assumption is made since some said the Apostles appeared to be drunk, it must be all right to reel, stagger, fall and so forth. In fact, to some it is a sign of spirituality to do so. However, a proper understanding of Acts 2:13 shows that some used this misrepresentation to mock the disciples.

Dr. Randolph O. Yeager writes:

"The attitude of the men who spoke in verse 12 was not scorn. On the contrary, others found the sight amusing and in their desire to ridicule they moved through the crowd repeating their charge that the disciples were intoxicated" (**The Renaissance New Testament**, Vol. 9, pp. 147-148).

Lacking much scriptural support, Arnott and his following turn elsewhere for support.

When comparing similar events in contemporary Church history, it must be noted that our standard for faith and practice must be the Scripture and not

the changing ways of men. If one looks hard enough, one can find any practice in Church history.

A prime example is The Cane Ridge Revival at the turn of the 19th century. There were strange manifestations reported in 1801 at the Red River Presbyterian Church in Bourbon County, Ky. Hysteria, laughing and barking all were reported taking place there (**The Holiness Pentecostal Movement** by Vinson Synan, pp. 24-25). Mormons reported the same phenomenon within their church in the 1800s (*ibid.*, pg. 25).

Another example has to do with John Wesley and Jonathan and Sarah Edwards. Concerning Wesley, it has been reported that bodily agitations might have accompanied conviction of sin and conversion at his services and sometimes accompanied the process of evangelism. Still, this is hardly the frenzied laughter and animal antics, devoid of deep sorrow and conviction of sin currently practiced in Vineyard congregations. Wesley himself warned that emotional outbursts sought for too long would cause nature or human emotions to mix with grace (**The Journal of John Wesley**, pg. 239).

Biographers of Jonathan Edwards write that his wife, Sarah, was very emotional, but she was not given to frenzy and hysteria, simply bodily weakness. In these states, she was still said to converse with believers. Her husband considered these states "a weakness, a disadvantage, not of any spiritual significance at all" (*Evangelical Times*, "Sarah Edwards and Toronto," December 1994, pg. 18).

The appeal to Edwards to buttress the conduct of the Vineyard worship services is, at best, selectively dishonest. Edwards' theology concerning spiritual gifts is a polar opposite to Vineyard's; he was a cessationist, emphasizing that extraordinary gifts were given only during the establishment of the Church, after which it continued by normal means. In **Charity and its Fruit**, Edwards wrote:

"The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as the gifts of tongues, of miracles,

of prophecy, etc., are called extraordinary, because they are such as are not given in the ordinary course of God's providence. They are not bestowed in the way of God's ordinary providential dealings with his children, but only on extraordinary occasions, as they were bestowed on the prophets and apostles to enable them to reveal the mind and will of God before the canon of Scripture was complete, and so on the primitive Church, in order to the founding and establishing of it in the world" (pg. 29).

Edwards concludes:

"But since the canon of the Scripture has been completed and the Christian Church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased" (pg. 30).

By today's charismatic standards, Edwards would be labeled by some as a "pharisee" and a "heresy hunter."

Edwards never would have sanctioned the laughing and other phenomena appearing today. In his **Treatise Concerning Religious Affections**, he is clear how he viewed the Christian life. He asked the question, "What is the nature of true religious experience?" and reasoned that the "affections," as he called them, were the "sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul." In other words, man was to be deliberately, and aggressively good. The "acts of the will," were called "affections," since they had "some effect on the body." Far from being out of control, Edwards taught "the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will" (**Jonathan Edwards Basic Writings**, pp. 184-192).

So, in fact, Edwards promoted practical Christian living. He taught that true religion ought to really affect us and move us toward earnest activity, love to God and His people, mercy and merciful acts (*ibid.*, pp. 194-195).

Emotional outbursts occurred at Edwards' meetings, too, but they were brought on by conviction of sin. Edwards also saw the increase in pandemonium as a main cause of the waning of revival. John MacArthur writes:

"Clearly Jonathan Edwards believed the Great Awakening was quenched not by concerns for theological correctness but by spiritual extremism that was tolerated and even encouraged by the revival's most enthusiastic supporters" (**Reckless Faith**, pg. 167).


Later in the book, MacArthur writes:

"Edwards continually tied the nobility of true religious affections to the working of the *mind*. Having witnessed so much of people's runaway passions at the end of the Great Awakening, he wanted nothing to do with that sort of thing. So it should be quite clear what Jonathan Edwards would think of twentieth-century emotionalism. 'Holy laughter' epitomizes the fanaticism he blamed for the demise of the Great Awakening. He insisted that the mind must be active in all legitimate religious affections. There is no way he can be enlisted as an apologist for modern mysticism" (pg. 174).

Finally, is the appeal to "results" as proof. All religions can produce euphoria and good feelings, sometimes called results. Happiness is not a valid measure of truth. Obedience to the truth and the will of God is the final test (Matthew 7:21, John 12:48). The consistent, historical worship pattern of orthodoxy was prayer, song, giving and preaching. These are the biblical elements, all of which are documented in **History of the Christian Church** by Philip Schaff (Vol. II, pp. 222-228).

In speaking of God's will revealed in the Word, Alan Morrison says, "In the final analysis, that is the only fruit by which these phenomena can be judged" (*Evangelical Times*, October 1994, *op. cit.*).

The Vineyard movement continues to assault and abuse the Word of God in defense of its unbiblical methods. Its reshaping of Christian faith and practice should be avoided. The Vineyard is indeed in chaos, letting carnal minds and imaginations to run rampant.

We are told to look at the fruit of this movement. It is bitter fruit, indeed. Jesus said, "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit." The real fruit of the laughing and animal "revivals" is spoiled and rotten. 

them: 'They never did get stiff ... They never had any unpleasant odor about them'" (**All Things Are Possible**, pg. 213).

Despite the popularity of the Latter Rain assemblies, the ministers and churches affected were, for the most part, free from any prominent Pentecostal denomination's control. Yet not all the reports of the movement's activities were favorable. **The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements** says:

"While many people received renewed faith and hope with respect to their gifts and callings as a result of prophetic ministry of this type, there were a few people whose faith had become shipwrecked, perhaps after receiving the laying on of hands with prophecy from inexperienced people or from others who may have engaged in these practices with mixed motives. The controversy that raged as a result of these problems served to discredit the entire movement in the eyes of most of the major Pentecostal denominations" (pg. 533).

Charles W.H. Scott, district superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Michigan, also analyzed the spiritual defects of the movement. **Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God** says, "Scott outlined the history and errors of the new teaching. He emphasized in particular the misplaced emphasis on the gift of prophecy, the impartation of gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of hands by self-styled apostles and prophets, and the fact that the revival was not, after all, new at all, but rather the reappearance of enthusiastic mysticism common in Church history" (pp. 323-324).

The General Council of the Assemblies of God met in Seattle, Wash., in 1949 and called for a resolution disapproving of the practices of the Latter Rain. The resolution, adopted by an overwhelming majority and published in early 1950, denounced the New Order of the Latter Rain for:

"1. Overemphasis relative to impart-

ing, identifying, bestowing or confirming gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

2. The wrong teaching that the church is built upon the foundation of present-day apostles and prophets.

3. The extreme teaching as advocated by the new order regarding confession of sin to man and deliverance as practiced, which claims prerogatives to human agency which belong only to Christ.

4. The erroneous teaching concerning the impartation of the gift of languages as special equipment for missionary service.

5. The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of utterance.

6. Such other wrestings and distortions of Scripture, interpretations which are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us" (*Minutes of the 1949 General Council of the Assemblies of God*, pp. 26-27).

Despite the unfavorable reports and censure, the movement was able to gain pastors and churches who defected from the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In some instances, the defecting bodies initiated or cultivated other congregations.

One of the more notable defections was Stanley H. Frodsham who, under pressure, withdrew from the Assemblies of God in 1949. Frodsham was an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God and, more importantly, the longtime editor of the church's *Pentecostal Evangel* magazine. Frodsham believed that within the movement God was "graciously restoring the gifts of the Spirit."

Another prominent factor was the movement's effect on Ivan Q. Spencer. Spencer was the founder of the Elim Bible Institute in Lima, N.Y., and was closely associated with the Elim Missionary Assemblies. This association helped advance the Latter Rain practices and teachings in the modern charismatic movement. A further vital link into the charismatic renewal was the Latter Rain's impact on Swedish-American evangelist missionary Joseph Mattsson-Boze and Mennonite minister

Gerald Derstine. Both edited the *Herald of Faith/Harvest Time*, which was the predecessor of the *Logos Journal*, a widely circulated charismatic periodical.

George and Stephen Jeffries were leading lights in the Elim Pentecostal Church. Their brief attachment to Smith Wigglesworth furthered some of their bizarre claims. The mission reported an appearance of the face of Jesus on their walls (see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol 15, No. 1, "Back to the Source — The Truth About Smith Wigglesworth," pg. 12).

THE TEACHINGS

A chief attraction of the movement was its declaration of purported gifts of healing and prophecy, both of which were believed germane and commonplace in the Church today. Divine healing was re-established in the Christian Body in the 19th century and was one of several "truths" being restored to the Church since the Reformation. The restoration conjecture, which is the teaching that true and complete Christianity was lost and now must be returned to the Church, is more at home in the cults than in the Body of Christ.

Among its other, more aberrant, teachings were:

Impartation. The teaching that a select people have the power, through the laying on of hands, to bestow upon others the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues and healing, and other spiritual gifts. The denunciation of this belief was one of the prime targets of the critics of the movement. Faith healer Benny Hinn currently is an advocate of impartation (see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1, "Reversing the Reformation," pp. 7-8).

Immortalization of the Church. The doctrine that Christians will gain immortality on Earth before Christ's Second Coming. The perfection and glorification of the saints on Earth will usher in Christ's Second Coming and be a testimony to the world.

Fivefold Ministry of Ephesians 4:11. The teaching that the modern Church performs all five functions listed in

Ephesians 4:11: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The elders holding these offices give the Church unity, direction and new doctrinal revelations. This declaration pushed the movement toward elitism as a heavy emphasis was placed upon its apostles and prophets.

THE HERETICAL OFFSPRING

As a result of error begetting error, subsequent generations gave birth to further unorthodoxy and a fresh cast of characters. Larry M. Thomas, founder of Amazing Grace Ministries, addresses the resurgence of the Latter Rain teaching:

“The false doctrines of Restoration and the Latter Rain have been around for years, but have been confined to a few fringe groups. Now, however, many of these and other teachings are gaining credibility within the mainstream of the Pentecostal world. Probably the biggest reason for their recent gains has been access to television. The Kingdom Message is now being pumped into millions of homes each week over Christian broadcasting networks and by smaller ministries that buy time on local stations” (*False Teachings of the Kingdom*, pg. 7).

The physical and spiritual effects of some of Latter Rain’s doctrinal offspring have been even more toxic to Christians today. The more significant trends include:

Shepherding. In the recent history of the charismatic movement, one of the most controversial aspects to challenge its ranks was shepherding, which placed an unscriptural emphasis on submission to human leadership. Each Christian was to have a personal spiritual leader, or “shepherd,” who was God’s designated authority. This shepherd became the believer’s ambassador, who provided daily counsel and even made mundane decisions for him.

Submission was pushed even to the point of following unscriptural dictates by a shepherd.

Foremost in the promotion of the shepherding controversy was a group of men known as the “Florida Five.” This

body consisted of Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince and Charles Simpson and operated under the title of Christian Growth Ministries in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

As in the case of the Latter Rain dispute, fierce objections arose from within Pentecostal circles. According to the **Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements**, Pat Robertson used his Christian Broadcasting Network to pronounce the shepherding teaching witchcraft and said the only difference between it and Jonestown was Kool-Aid (pg. 784).

In the 1980s, some members of the “Florida Five” renounced the abuses that took place in the name of shepherding and publicly repented of their part in the misuse of the role of leadership.

Another group that came under fire was Maranatha Christian Churches, also known as Maranatha Christian Ministries. This organization was founded in 1972 by Robert and Rose Weiner in Paducah, Ky. Starting as a successful evangelistic outreach to high school students, the ministry moved to college campuses. Its impact was felt worldwide.

After concerns from parents because of aggressive proselytizing techniques, extreme authority structure and exclusivism, Maranatha Christian Ministries enlisted an ad hoc committee of apologists and cult watchers to evaluate the organization and its practices. Maranatha had hoped for a positive report. What it got was anything but favorable.

Despite the pleas of correction and change within Maranatha, one committee member, PFO’s Stephen Cannon, stated “the changes and reforms of MCC are cosmetic and do not strike at the heart of expressed concerns.” Therefore, the conclusion of the ad hoc committee’s evaluation remained valid: “... until we see more discernible evidence of change in the lives of people being impacted by MCC, we would not recommend this organization to anyone” (Ad hoc committee, *A Statement of Evaluation Regarding Maranatha Campus Ministries/Maranatha Christian Ministries/Maranatha Chris-*

tian Church, May 1984, pg. 7).

In the late 1980s, Weiner contends that the Holy Spirit told him to dissolve the union of Maranatha Christian Churches. In November 1989, it was disbanded.

Manifest Sons of God. This is a direct outgrowth of Latter Rain’s teaching of the Church’s immortality. Manifest Sons of God claim not just a last-days revival, but a restoration of creation to pre-Fall status. Adherents teach that in the life of the believer there are three steps to godhood: salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and finally being revealed as a “son of God” with a glorified body (or “little god”) before the Second Coming.

These transformed “little god” Christians will deliver creation and execute judgment on the wicked. Televangelist and pastor Earl Paulk, Jr. writes: “Until we comprehend that we are little gods, we cannot manifest the Kingdom of God” (**Satan Unmasked**, pg. 97). Romans 8:19 is erroneously argued as the basis of this teaching. However, the clear context of Romans 8 is easily seen as a future heavenly hope. It deals with the culmination in future resurrection (verse 23). Glorification of the body clearly takes place as a result of the return of Jesus, (I Corinthians 15, and I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Latter Rain has just put an unbiblical twist on post-millennialism.

In addition to Paulk, other prominent subscribers to the sonship teaching include Bill Britton, founder and pastor of the House of Prayer in Springfield, Mo., and John Robert Stevens, founder of the Church of the Living Word, also known as The Walk.

Positive Confession. Probably the most dominant of the Latter Rain descendants, the message behind this belief is that which a Christian says, or confesses, is what he will receive or become. This teaching becomes an end to all of life’s problems. If a believer is in need of a healing, confess it. Money? Employment? A new home or car? You can have what you want, if you will only start confessing.


Korean pastor David (Paul) Yonggi Cho, a positive-confession adherent, writes in his book, **The Fourth Dimension**:

“You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth. If you speak about salvation, the saving Jesus appears. If you speak divine healing, then you will have the healing Christ in your congregation. If you speak the miracle performing Jesus, then the presence of the miracle performing Jesus is released. He is bound by your lips and by your words. He is depending on you, and if you do not speak clearly because of your fear of Satan, how will Jesus Christ manifest His power to this generation? So speak boldly ... Remember that Christ is depending upon you and your spoken word to release His presence. What are you going to do with this Jesus who is riding on your tongue? Are you going to release Him for the blessing of others? Or are you going to lock Him up with a still tongue and a

closed mouth?” (pp. 83, 86).

Calvary Chapel Pastor Chuck Smith summarizes the error of this belief: “If I could have things by just making a positive confession, if God *must* yield to my demands, do you see what that immediately does? It elevates me to the position of God and puts God in the subservient position. I’m no longer serving God, but God is serving me and my every whim. To put God in this kind of position, as Paul declares in Romans 1:21, is to fail to glorify God as God. It doesn’t make God ‘God’ any more but some kind of servant who has to run around and do my will, follow my commands, and fill out my confessions. It puts me in control and God in the servant’s seat. To exalt my demands, wishes, and my will above God’s will is audacious, perverted, and insane” (*PFO Newsletter*, “The Error of Positive Confession,” Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 4-5).

The theology of “positive confession” is indefensible biblically and can bring reproach to the Gospel. This writer remembers Christian friends of the “name it and claim it” persuasion, who, with no funds in their checking account, “claimed” the money was in their account and wrote checks for rent and other expenses. The checks were returned, marked “insufficient funds.” Christ was not glorified in the eyes of the banker, landlord or any other creditor.

The old song *Pennies From Heaven* goes, “For it isn’t raining rain you know, it’s raining violets.” Looking at the Latter Rain and all its schism, division and false teaching one can easily see that it isn’t raining blessing or truth. “For it isn’t raining good you know, it’s raining virulent error.” An old hymn speaks of “showers of blessing,” the Latter Rain movement has sent showers of bad and distorted theology upon the Church. 

BENNY HINN

(continued from page 1)

The battle for the Bible was won by the Reformers, but each subsequent generation has had to re-engage in this ongoing war. It appears that the present generation is not faring well in its battle over biblical interpretation.² More and more, the Protestant church of today is coming to resemble the church of the Middle Ages. In this age of high technology, information superhighways, and (supposed) rationalism, the Church is all too willing to yield its Priesthood of Every Believer status over to “professionals” who sway “laymen” not by the evidence, but by the force of their own personalities, by their own mystical experiences, and by their own subjective “insights.” The limits of the interpreter’s own (too often fertile) imagination frequently replace the “controls” of interpretation left to us by the Reformers.

Enter Benny Hinn. It goes unquestioned that he is the most popular figure in Christian media today.³ He is humorous, charismatic, and *convincing*. Despite his admitted lack of formal

Bible training and his doctrinal retractions of the past, he continues to speak with the utmost authority, boldly declaring that his teachings rest firmly on no less authority than the Word of God itself.

At the beginning of this study of Hinn and his hermeneutics (methods of interpretation) it appeared that there was no rhyme, reason, or consistent systematic approach to his Bible interpretations. It seemed his choice of scriptures and how he handled them was simply a random, somewhat naive, “shotgun” approach which defies careful analysis and categorization. Upon greater scrutiny, however, and further exposure to his written materials and taped and live broadcasts, a very consistent pattern becomes clearly discernible.

Hinn is working within the historical framework of conservative Protestantism. Therefore, he must base everything he says and does upon the Bible. Despite the fact that much he says sounds more Catholic than Protestant, he has, for whatever reason, decided to “play by the rules” of Protestantism. His constant appeal will be to the

Scriptures we all hold to be the *only* rule for matters of faith and practice. What separates him from Protestantism is not his constant appeals to the Bible as his authority; rather, it is the manner in which he *approaches* the Bible. What distances Hinn from historical orthodoxy is his *hermeneutical methodology*.

The passages dealt with below are representative of the vast majority of Hinn’s interpretations. Admittedly, there are times when his preaching and teaching are biblically and theologically sound. These are in the minority, however, and do not reflect the true agenda that is at the heart of his ministry, namely the exaltation of the exegete.

In the world of biblical interpretation, the authority of the exegete (interpreter) has historically been established by his training, ecclesiastical investiture (delegated authority), and proven experience (time- and evidence-tested track record of reliability and consistency). Because these accepted avenues are unavailable to Hinn, he regularly appeals to three other criteria to establish his interpretive authority: 1) his claim to

“insider’s knowledge” of the biblical world, 2) his claim of divine origin of his interpretations, and 3) his claim of novelty (claim to exceptional spiritual intuition to reveal “new,” “deeper,” or “hidden” meanings of biblical texts which are not perceivable to the average Christian).

“INSIDER’S KNOWLEDGE” OF THE BIBLICAL WORLD

Because Hinn was born and lived his first 14 years in Israel, he promotes himself as having greater insight into the biblical world. In his mind, this places his interpretive authority above laymen and scholars alike. Here, however, it is best to allow Hinn to speak for himself:

“Now. The Bible promises seven blessings to every giver and every one of them you ought to claim every time you give. Malachi 3:10 says, “‘Bring ye all the tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith,” saith the LORD of Hosts.’ And here is the first blessing: ‘If I will not open the windows of heaven.’ Listen! Every time you give, God promises revival. ‘Windows of heaven’ deal with *revival*. And believe me when I tell you, **I am an Israelite, from Israel, and I can read this thing in Hebrew and tell ya. And I know the culture and the tradition and the mentality.** ‘Windows’ *always* deal with revival to the Jewish mind. *Always!* ...third... ‘and I will *rebuke* the devourer for your sakes.’ You know what the word ‘rebuke’ means? I, I looked it up. John [Avanzini], you, you would [sic] love this. It means ‘I will *paralyze*.’ ‘I will *paralyze* the devourer’ ...and the word ‘paralyze’ means ‘putting him [the devourer] behind bars.’ If you want the devil behind bars, start giving. God will paralyze him for you, for your sake. He’ll quit eating your seed. ...fifth... it states, ‘Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field.’ You know what that means? ‘*Vine*’ deal with [sic] family, your family. Jesus said, ‘I am the vine, you are the branches,’ right? That’s family... Your vine, family will not forsake the children. What are the fruits of the vine? The children in the family. So what God’s Word says is if we give, our

children will never lack. ... Now this is something that the Holy Ghost said to me. He said, ‘Every time you give, not only will *you* reap the harvest. Your *children*, when they grow up, will reap the harvest you are sowing for them...’ The seventh, I think, is the greatest. He says, ‘And ye shall be [a] *delightful* land...’ And the word ‘delightful,’ I looked it up — **remember I told you I am from that part of the world.** The word ‘delightful’ means **in Hebrew** ‘highly desired.’ God will highly desire you, which means He’ll start using you... *It’s in the Word. It’s in the Word.* You know, every time I give, I tell the Lord, ‘I want all seven Lord.’”⁴

In the evangelist’s opening statement, Hinn established his belief in the Prosperity Gospel (give expecting to get some specific remuneration in return). This is a doctrine which he is on record as renouncing numerous times, but continues to promote in one expression or another.

“Windows of heaven” or “windows” do not “*always* deal with revival.” In point of fact, there is not one place in the entire Bible which is even remotely suggestive of such a meaning. In most places, the reference is to literal windows (I Kings 7:4, 5; Daniel. 6:10, etc.). Three times the phrase “windows of heaven” is connected with *judgment* (Genesis 7:11; 8:2; Isaiah 24:18). In Ecclesiastes 12:3, “windows” is used metaphorically (symbolically) to refer to “eyes.” The same phrase which occurs in Malachi 3:10 appears also in II Kings 7:2, 19. Here it is clear that the reference is to divine provision. This is clearly the intent of the statement in Malachi as well.

The statement, “I am an Israelite,” is simply not correct. As much as Hinn might like to be, and as much as he might wish that his audience would think that he is, he is **not Jewish**. Although he was born in Israel, his ethnic identity is Arabic.

There are **no** authoritative Hebrew lexicons which attribute the meaning “to paralyze” to the word *ga’ar*.⁵ In all instances in which this word occurs, “rebuke” is the proper rendering, with no other nuance connected to it.

One wonders, “If Hinn is an Israelite, and an expert in the Hebrew language, having spoken it from his youth,⁶ why would he have to look this word up?” *Ga’ar* appears in the Bible 29 times,⁷ and is used in spoken Hebrew today.⁸

The word *ocel* (devourer) appears in the Hebrew Bible 21 times in this form,⁹ but never in a context which suggests that it might be understood as referring to the Devil. None of the authoritative Hebrew lexicons list such a meaning.¹⁰

Hinn’s interpretation of vine/cast/fruit as referring to family/forsaking/children is simply arbitrary assignment of allegorical meanings to words which do *not* occur in an allegorical or symbolic context. The larger context clearly reveals that the vine referred to is a real vine. The prophet is here addressing the poor, agriculturally-oriented society of the post-exilic period, which was tithing in large measure directly from the produce of their fields. The reader will recall the phrases, “...that there may be *food* in my house” (v. 10) and “*fruits* of your *soil*” (v. 11), both of which speak of the literal harvest of the field. The word “fruit” in the phrase “neither shall your vine cast her *fruit* before the time in the field,” although it appears in the KJV, is nevertheless **absent** in the Hebrew, in which Hinn claims the expertise of a native speaker. A literal translation would therefore read, “Your vine in the field will not *miscarry*.”¹¹

Thus, Hinn has created an allegorical/spiritualized meaning for a word which does not even exist in the Hebrew text! This observation also serves to clarify the term “cast,” which never has the sense of “forsake” ascribed to it by Hinn. Rather, here it is an agricultural term used to refer to grapes falling off before they are ripe.

Finally, with respect to children benefiting directly from the giving of their parents, this would appear to be in direct contradiction to the doctrine of personal responsibility taught by the Bible (e.g. Jeremiah 31:29; Ezekiel 18:2-20; Romans 2:6; II Corinthians 5:10, etc.). It seems to more closely resemble the Roman Catholic doctrine of “treasury of merits.” It is clear that children benefit from the godly example when they see parents giving

from a heart of gratitude, expecting nothing in return. It is **not** clear that they will benefit at all from the attitude encouraged by Hinn and other purveyors of the "Give-to-Get Gospel."

The following is another example of Hinn's "insider exegesis":

"And one day He [Jesus] stood and said, 'I am the Way. I am the Truth. I am the Life.' You know why the Jews got angry with Him? ... **I am an Israelite. I know something that most Westerners don't know.** The reason they got angry with Him when He said, 'I am the Way, Truth, Life,' is because the tabernacle of Moses had three entrances. The gate was called 'The Way,' the holy place had a door called 'The Truth,' and the Holy of Holies had a veil called 'The Life.' When Jesus said, 'I'm the Way, Truth, and Life,' He was saying, 'I'm the gate of the tabernacle, the door to the holy place, and the veil to the Holy of Holies.' And they got angry at Him. They said, 'How dare this man declare he's the way to the Holy of Holies where the ark is!'"¹²

Hinn's failure to properly handle the Word of God is all too obvious from his exegesis of John's narrative. First, the "Jews" never got angry. They never heard Jesus say these words (John 14:6). This teaching of Jesus was at the Last Supper, attended only by Jesus and the disciples. From the biblical account, it appears that the disciples accepted it willingly, and loyally remained with Jesus until his arrest (John 13:1-18:14). Since these "Jews" never heard this teaching, they could not have asked the question put on their lips and thus added to the biblical account by Hinn.

Moreover, his comment, "I am an Israelite. I know something that most Westerners don't know," is again very telling. He seems to think his middle-eastern experience gives him exegetical powers and perception beyond that of normal men. This writer has lived and studied extensively in Israel, and know of others who have had as much or more experience as I, yet there is a difference. Neither I nor these others regularly appeal to our experiences as an "insider" to create the same "cult of personality" and sense of authoritative definitiveness as does Hinn. Our inter-

pretations must stand or fall on the basis of the evidence we put forth to support them. Nor are the mistakes made by other experts who have first-hand experience with the land of the Bible so glaring and so frequent when drawing from that experience as those of Hinn.

It is also instructive to note that the tabernacle was not in existence during the earthly ministry of Jesus. The temple was the edifice which was the visible representation of the dwelling presence of God in Christ's day. Although this might appear to be historical nit-picking, historical accuracy is the least we should expect from one who touts himself as an authority on the biblical world.

Therefore, the names of the three gates, or more appropriately, "entranceways" of the tabernacle is a moot issue, since the historical setting Hinn has recreated is impossible. Nevertheless, it is instructive to delve deeper into the origin of this "insider's knowledge" about the names of these "gates." The Bible itself offers no evidence by which to determine the names of the entranceways of either the tabernacle or the temple.

Likewise, there is no extra-biblical text (from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Philo, Rabbinic Literature, etc.) which ascribed any name to these places. Therefore, the origin of this material is the fertile imagination of the interpreter.

In the time of Jesus, the ark no longer resided in the Holy of Holies. According to the contemporary historian Josephus, *nothing* was found in the Holy of Holies at this time (**War** 5:219). It was not present when Pompey entered the Holy of Holies in 63 BC (**War** 1:152-153).

Further, when the Romans looted the temple at its destruction in AD 70, there is no mention of the Ark being among the treasures taken, although the lampstand(s) appear in this account (**War** 6:387-391). These also appear on the "Arch of Titus" in Rome, a monument constructed in commemoration of this event, yet the Ark of the Covenant is strangely absent. The rabbis of the time stated that the ark no longer

resided in the temple after the time of King Josiah (Mishnah *Yoma* 5:2).

One final example will further illustrate Hinn's appeal to "insider's knowledge." Hinn offered *Praise The Lord Show* viewers the following interpretation of the destruction of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea:

"You talk about watching God divide an ocean, taking the wheels off the chariots of the Egyptians. And here this wall of ice, it was, by the way a wall of ice, if you read your scriptures, that's right. The Hebrew word, and I can show it to you after the show, Paul [Crouch]. But the Hebrew word, uh-uh-wh-when God divided the—that Red Sea, as the walls stood, it actually froze with God's breath. So when the—when the water came down it was ice coming that crushed the Egyptians. **It's in the Word. It's in the Hebrew.** You—it's not in the King James, but **it's in the Hebrew** and I'll show it to Paul and he can show it to you after I'm all done, maybe next week. **You—you—you Hebrew scholars look me up, you'll find I'm right.**"¹³

We did. He was wrong again. Not only was he wrong about the meaning of words and the proper interpretation of this passage, but as is all too often the case when Hinn is involved, serious theological problems arise out of this manner of handling the Word of God.

A "strong east wind" is the agent God used to accomplish the miracle (Exodus 14:21). This is a well-known meteorological phenomenon of the Middle-East, both in antiquity and today. The phrase describes a fluctuation in the normal air-flow, which moves from west to east, bringing moisture and more moderate temperatures from the Mediterranean Sea. The "east wind," on the other hand, describes a wind which moves east to west. Called in Arabic, *Hamseen*, it comes off the desert and is therefore unusually hot and arid.

This contrast was known by the writers of Scripture and is easily seen in passages such as Genesis 41:6; Exodus 14:21; Job 15:2; Isaiah 27:8; Ezekiel 17:10; 19:12; Hosea 13:15; and Jonah 4:8. The point here is that God would

not send a hot wind to freeze anything. The passages given describe the drying, scorching, withering effect of the wind, not its cooling action. Anyone such as Hinn, who lived in Israel for 14 years, experienced at least 14 of these, and should know first-hand the devastating heat it brings in its wake.

Hinn further misses the term consistently used throughout the narrative: "waters" (14:22, 26, 28, 29; 15:1, 4, 5, 10, 19, 21; always plural in Hebrew). There is no indication that the actual chemical make-up of the waters changed, since the term remains the same, and the number remains in the plural (i.e., it did not become a solid block of ice).

In addition, there are a number of terms which occur in the Old Testament describing the action of freezing or hardening, following the commonly used translations, and none of these appear in the passage in question. Examples of words available to the ancient author, but unused include *davak* (II Samuel 23:10), *yatsak* (Job 37:10), and *lachad* (Job 38:30). In addition to the action of freezing, the term "ice" (*kerach*) is also conspicuous in its absence. That the term was available and used in the Old Testament, even by Moses himself, is clear from its appearance in Genesis 31:40 (cf. Job 6:16; 37:10; 38:29; Psalm 147:17; and Jeremiah 36:30).

Also, in Exodus 15:4, 5, and 10 (cf. 14:26-28, 30; 15:19), the demise of the Egyptian army is described as "drowning." The Hebrew term *tava'* means "to sink" or "to sink down" (cf. Job 38:6; Psalms 9:15; 69:2, 14-15; Jeremiah 38:6, 22; Lamentations 2:9). Because this term is in the text in question and its meaning is abundantly clear, it is impossible to support the statement that "...it was ice coming [down] that crushed the Egyptians."

The "Full Counsel of God" and the "Analogy of Faith" or "Scripture Interprets Scripture" require that we fully investigate the testimony of the remainder of Scripture to determine what took place at the Sea. Moses, an eye-witness, describes the event in these terms, "I will sing unto the Lord...the horse and rider he has *thrown into the sea*"

(Exodus 15:1; cf. v. 21). In verse 19 he states, "...the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them." Deuteronomy 11:4 states that God "overwhelmed them *with the waters* of the Red Sea." Joshua 24:7 notes that God "brought the sea over them and covered them." Nehemiah 9:11 adds that God "cast their pursuers *into the depths, as a stone into the mighty waters*" (i.e., they sank/drowned). Psalm 78:13 reads, "[God] made the waters stand up *like a heap*." Psalm 78:53 adds that "the sea overwhelmed their enemies." Psalm 106:11 reminds us that "the waters covered their adversaries." Finally, Hebrews 11:29 informs us, "By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land; but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned" (cf. also Wisdom of Solomon 10:19). The language employed by the majority of these passages is highly suggestive of death by drowning. At least two passages state it explicitly (Exodus 15:4, 5, 10; Hebrews 11:29).

The Holy Spirit will never reveal a meaning of a scripture which contradicts a truth He has revealed in another scripture. When a seeming contradiction does occur, the problem must be said to originate in the human interpreter and not the divine interpreter of Scripture. The interpretation placed upon this scripture by Hinn is not only impossible from the standpoint of philology, meteorology, and immediate context: it is also impossible because it contradicts the clear statements of other scriptures.

Therefore, we can only infer from this that Hinn has effectively placed himself above Scripture in terms of the authority to interpret the acts and revelations of God. This almost has to be the case because of his reference to Hebrew to support his assertions and his challenge to experts to prove him wrong. In this matter it will be difficult to allow him to pass off his heterodoxy as resulting from ignorance or lack of formal Bible training.

In his most recent book, **Welcome, Holy Spirit**, he states that as a child he had already "mastered the Bible" and that he had "spent thousands of hours

studying the Bible."¹⁴ The argument he makes based on the Hebrew presupposes a certain amount of previous reading or research by which he came to his conclusions.

We must also point out one final problem that this exegetical blunder illustrates: Hinn does not know Hebrew to the extent that he purports. Almost every reference he makes to the Hebrew text contains errors a first-year student of Hebrew would not make. For example, on his personal broadcast of October 24, 1994, he stated that the Hebrew of Psalm 46:10 [Hebrew v. 11] reads, "Be still and know Jehovah Elohim." In actuality, the word "Jehovah" (or Adonai or Yahweh or any of its variant spellings) does not even appear in this passage. In the place where Hinn interjects the proper noun "Jehovah," one reads a common pronoun for the word "I," exactly as all the translations have it.

Time and again, he constantly states that he knows something to be the case because he is "from the land of the Bible," or because he is an "Israeli," an "Israelite," a "Hebrew," or a "Sabra" (a technical Hebrew term denoting a *native-born Israeli Jew*).¹⁵ Only the first of these assertions is factual. He is not Jewish, despite these and other intentionally misleading statements. In his writings, he has admitted that he was born of a Greek father and an Armenian mother.¹⁶ Even this statement, however, cannot be maintained in light of testimony, which shows that his father was a Jaffa-born Arab and his mother was a Ramallah-born Arab.¹⁷

These examples should be sufficient to discern the basic pattern. Nevertheless, readers will discover additional instances of this phenomenon below, in passages used to illustrate other aspects of Hinn's interpretive agenda.

CLAIM OF DIVINE ORIGIN

Hinn has established a consistent pattern of appealing to the divine origin of his interpretations as the source of his authority. In other words, Hinn regularly claims that he has been taught a deeper, clearer meaning of a scripture by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit. This is well-documented in the earlier part of

his ministry. In 1991, however, it appeared that Hinn would renounce this aspect of his hermeneutical practices. He promised:

“I’m not about to get up and say, ‘God showed me,’ because my days of doing that are over. I just believe you begin preaching what you feel and believe without having to say, ‘God showed me.’ Because then you’re gonna look like an idiot, you know, if you get back two years later and say, ‘God showed me—showed me something different.’”¹⁸

Despite the many and highly-publicized renunciations of this practice, Hinn continues his attempt to convince his listeners that he speaks with the greatest interpretive authority. Take for example his radicalization of the account of Jesus’ healing of the blind man in John 9:1-34:

“And...one day [Jesus] saw a blind man. And He did this, He collected some mud and spit upon it, and made clay and stuck it on the man’s eyes. [Here Hinn makes two popping sounds with his mouth.] See if you can do that. I thought to myself, ‘Why did Jesus do that? Why did He just not lay His hands and be healed? Why did He have to make mud and spit on it and stick it on the man’s eyes?’ **And the Holy Spirit gave me a marvelous answer.** You remember when God made man and He squeezed mud into shape and He breathed on that? And he became a living soul. The reason Jesus put mud on a guy’s eyes was not because the man was blind. It’s because he had no eyes and He just gave him brand new ones. [Hinn repeats the popping sound.] He is the source of creation.”¹⁹

Hinn’s error here lies in his original point of departure. He questions, “Why did Jesus do that? Why did He just not lay His hands and be healed? Why did He have to make mud and spit on it and stick it on the man’s eyes?” He approaches the Bible immediately looking for hidden, deeper meanings. The questions he asks of the text cannot be answered using the accepted methods of interpretation.

In fact, the information given and *not given* in the text shows the inappropri-

ateness of the questions he asks. Answers to such questions were evidently not of interest, either of the characters in this story or the writer who records it. Now, however, Hinn has created a niche, an opportunity for him to show off his subjective spiritual intuition. Stated another way, he is able to allow his fertile imagination to run free once again.

Another problem with the questions Hinn poses occurs on the theological level. Jesus did not “*have to make mud and spit on it and stick it on the man’s eyes.*” He did not *have to do anything.* He is divine; He has the authority to choose whatever method he wishes to accomplish His purposes.

A quick review of Jesus’ healing techniques reveals incredible diversity. There is no pattern or paradigm discernible which Jesus might have intended to become normative. Nor are there any hidden meanings in the other methods Jesus used. It is as though Jesus chose such a multiplicity of methods of healing for the expressed purpose of showing that there is *no “preferred” method and no deeper meaning hidden in the method.*

Hinn again claims that the Holy Spirit gave him this interpretation. Aside from the obvious ethical problem raised by the breaking of his promise (which he repeated time and time again) not to appeal to divine origin as the source of his interpretations, this “revelation” of the Holy Spirit again has serious theological consequences. Hinn claims that the Holy Spirit explained to him that Jesus placed the mud into the man’s eye sockets because there were no eyes there. He “popped” the mud into the sockets and eyes appeared.

The Bible, however, states that Jesus “put clay on [his] eyes” (vv. 6, 11, 15), that the man was born “blind,” not “without eyes” (vv. 2, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25), and that Jesus “opened,” not “created” his eyes (vv. 10, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, 32). The testimony here comes from *three* sets of witnesses: the man healed, the authorities, and the man’s parents. They all use the same language to describe the same phenomena. The Holy Spirit inspired the biblical author to record the testimonies of

these three. They are therefore infallible. Yet, we are told that the same Holy Spirit inspired the authoritative interpretation of Hinn, which is in direct contradiction to the repeated statements of Scripture.

In a recent broadcast, Hinn again addressed one of his favorite subjects: financial prosperity. Despite multiple renunciations of what is popularly called the “Faith Message,” the “Confession Message,” and the “Health and Wealth Gospel,” Hinn gives his current understanding of Luke 6:38 and his two sources for that understanding:

“It took **Oral Roberts...** to really wake me up on this thing. ... [He] came to my church...and says uh, ‘Can I talk to you like my son?’ ... He said, ‘You take lousy offerings.’ ... I said, ‘Doc, what do you mean?’ He says, ‘You know...all you did here this morning is emphasize the seed, but never the harvest.’ And then he opened the Bible and showed me a portion of God’s Word I’d seen a million times before. And here it was, Luke 6:38, ‘Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over shall men give into your bosom.’ ... He said, ‘Now how many times did Jesus say, “Give”?’ I said, ‘One time.’ He said, ‘How many times did He say, “Receive”?’ ...Well, I began counting. Seven times, saints, seven times, and here they are. He said, ‘Give’ one time and [counting on his fingers as he recites parts of the verse] ‘it shall be given [raises one finger], unto you [raises a second finger], good measure [raises a third finger], pressed down, [raises a fourth finger], shaken together [raises a fifth finger], running over [raises a sixth finger], shall men give into your bosom [raises a seventh finger].’ Seven times. ... He said, ‘So what is the emphasis, on the seed or on the harvest? ... Begin to tell your people to expect the harvest ... you’ll see a change in your church ... From now on begin to *tell* God what you want ... *tell* Him what you want.’ And I said, ‘Doc,’ I said, ‘Where is it in the Bible?’ [Roberts showed it to him in Luke 6:38] **...the Lord spoke so clearly to [me]...on that Sunday morning and here’s what God said. He [God] said,** ‘Faith is not faith ‘til you believe it.’ ... It wasn’t

long, the entire congregation was doing the same thing, because like priest, like people. They follow what you do."²⁰

The manner in which Roberts and Hinn arrive at the number seven and determine the emphasis in this passage being upon "receiving" has been labeled "atomistic exegesis." This method has never been employed in historical conservative Protestantism, but rather is a prominent feature of liberalism. When doctrine can be supported by reference to a phrase such as "unto you," the church is truly in a precarious position.

Oral Roberts, long-time proponent of the Prosperity Gospel and "the Lord" are Hinn's authorities for this particular teaching. One is usually known by the company one keeps and the authorities one quotes; the reference to Roberts after Hinn's multiple renunciations of the Prosperity Gospel is therefore quite revealing in light of the recent date of this telecast. A second source for this teaching is "the Lord." Again this is despite his numerous promises to avoid appeals to direct revelation in support of his interpretations of Scripture.

A part of this teaching is the heretical practice of *telling* God what you want. Not only is this also indicative of Hinn's continued belief in most aspects of Confession/Prosperity, but it is also in direct contradiction to the clear teachings of Scripture (Matthew 7:7, 11; 21:22; Luke 11:13; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23-24; Ephesians 3:20; James 1:5-6; 4:3-4, 15; I John 3:22; 5:14-15).

Hinn's statement about the nature of faith here reveals that he is still of the opinion that faith is an external, animated "power." His statement which he attributes to God, "Faith is not faith 'til you believe it," resembles liberal existentialism (which has received the title "*rhema* knowledge" in charismatic circles) more than the biblical concept of faith as trust in a covenant-keeping God.

Moreover, Hinn's words, "like priest, like people," is an interesting figure of speech to be found on the lips of a Protestant minister. This would appear to be not only the result of the influence of his Catholic upbringing, but it

also seems to be a clear indicator of the way he views himself today. He considers himself to stand in the role of the medieval priest, who has the sole authority to issue authoritative pronouncements with the full expectation that his flock will blindly follow. Although stated explicitly here, this attitude is implicit in all of his authoritative pronouncements.

On national television, Hinn recently shared an experience which should raise a red flag in the minds of all thinking Christians. In the course of describing a Catholic communion service in Amarillo in which he took part, he stated that he suddenly felt numb, then felt someone step in front of him. The sensation became so real that he then reached out and touched a robe which had

"...a silky feeling, a beautiful softness to the robe. ... The next thing I was feeling was actually the form of a body, the shape of a body. And my body...went totally numb. ... **And God really gave me a revelation that night**, that when we partake communion, it's not just communion, Paul [Crouch]. We are partaking Christ Jesus himself. He did not say, 'Take, eat, this *represents* my body.' He said, 'This *is* my body, broken for you...' When you partake communion, you're partaking Christ, and that heals your body. When you partake Jesus how can you stay weak? ... sick? ... And so tonight, as we partake communion, we're not partaking bread. We're partaking what *He* said we would be partaking of: 'This is my body.'"²¹

Hinn here relates what can only be classified as a mystical experience. He describes the sensations of feeling, touching, and numbness. This experience will soon be seen to supersede the teachings of Scripture and the historic interpretation of most of Protestantism with respect to the meaning of the elements of communion. It will also be seen as the foundation upon which to base his doctrine of transubstantiation (the Roman Catholic teaching that after the priest's blessing, the bread and wine of communion literally become the body and blood of Jesus).

After the ascension, there is no scrip-

tural record of anyone "feeling" the physical body of Jesus. This again appears to be closer to the mystical position of Roman Catholicism.

In this telecast, Hinn states that it was an authority no less than God Himself who taught him that the true interpretation of the elements is that the bread is literally Jesus' physical body. Besides corresponding perfectly to the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, it also contradicts perfectly the clear teaching of Scripture.

In all five accounts of the Lord's Supper found in Scripture, it is abundantly clear that Jesus breaks the bread and commands all His apostles to partake therefrom. His own physical body is still intact and present at the same time in which he institutes these *symbolic* elements. Because Jesus is physically present at the same time that the bread is representing His body, there is sufficient evidence to infer the fundamental difference between His actual physical body and the symbol thereof.

These recent claims of the divine origin of his interpretations are simply the continuation of a pattern which goes back many years. In the past, Hinn has claimed or alluded to divine inspiration for such erroneous teachings as Jesus' rebirth in Hell,²² that women originally gave birth out of their sides,²³ that the Godhead consists of nine persons,²⁴ that God has a body,²⁵ and that Adam could fly and was capable of interplanetary travel.²⁶

The only conclusion one can reach is that with respect to his appeal to divine origin, neither his method nor his results have changed since his series of renunciations and promises of reform. It is also important to note that in a number of the examples listed above, Hinn appeals to divine revelation to establish *doctrines* which are well outside the bounds of biblical Christianity.

CLAIM OF NOVELTY

Novelty has always been an integral part of Benny Hinn's ministry. This is evidenced by his words to his own flock, "Please, please, please, don't think OCC [Orlando Christian Center] is here to repeat something you've heard

for the last fifty years. ... If we quit giving you new revelations we're dead."²⁷

Naturally, there is overlap between this category and his claim of divine origin for many of his interpretations. In this category, however, explicit claim to divine inspiration is not heard. Rather, the implication here is that Hinn possesses exceptional spiritual intuition which is available to none but the elite. What characterizes the following examples is that, outside Hinn's heightened subjective intuition, these "deeper" understandings of scriptures would never have been discovered.

An example of this phenomenon may be observed in his recent comments about God teaching the Prosperity Gospel to Adam at the beginning of creation.

"God creates man and puts him in a Garden of Eden and introduces him to wealth. Because it [the Bible] declares, 'In that garden was gold, the most precious gold found on the planet.' Do you think that God put it there just to tell Adam, 'Here it is, just look at it, enjoy it?' No, no, no. God put it there to let him know that He's the God of abundance. Our God is not a poor God. He's the God of abundance, saints. ... We are not after money...but we *are*, hear this, we *are* after God. And the *Bible* says if you're after God, these things will be added unto you."²⁸

The existence of gold in the Garden is not the emphasis of the biblical text. Despite its appearance in the narrative, it is not the biblical author's intention to suggest that God was using the presence of gold to teach Adam that He is a God of abundance. This interpretation is unique to Hinn; it will not be found among the Reformers or modern commentators. The only mention of gold appears in Genesis 2:12, which is in the midst of a lengthy description of the physical characteristics of the Garden.

If there is any emphasis to be discerned in the biblical narrative, the emphasis would appear to be upon the abundance of *water* (vv. 10, 11, 13, 14). Elsewhere in the Bible this same emphasis is also evident (Genesis 13:10). From the order of the biblical

narrative of creation, it would appear that God used the entire created order to show His abundant care for man, having created an environment which included all things necessary for human survival *before* the creation of man, that man might thrive and multiply.

That gold is simply descriptive in this passage, as opposed to Hinn's understanding that it represented financial prosperity, is evidenced in the observation that at this time there was no established economy in which gold might be perceived as having any more worth than any other commodity. His observation is motivated not by desire to read this passage in its historical context but rather out of a desire to support his own heterodox doctrine of prosperity.

His observation that this gold was "the most precious gold found on the planet" is entirely without textual support. His sole intent is to heighten the importance of the part that "gold" plays in the narrative, and thus provide further support for his doctrine of prosperity.

His constant appeals to the Bible, "And the *Bible* says," is consistent throughout his interpretations. Because he has chosen to play by the rules of Protestantism, he must at least appear to base his teachings on the sacred texts. The reader should be alerted, however, by his use of this technique, and should be aware of Hinn's consistent track record of misreading and adding to the intent of the biblical authors.

Not content with rereading the intentions of Moses, at the end of the comment above, Hinn turns his attention to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33. He suggests that if we are seeking God, that riches will follow. The intent of Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:33, however, when read in context, is that we should not worry (cf. vv. 25, 31, 34) about *physical necessities* (vv. 25-31). There is no promise in this text to suggest that godliness will automatically produce extravagant wealth. Here again we find evidence of the intentional misreading of a biblical text to support the doctrine of Prosperity which he claims to have renounced.

The following is an example of novel exegesis done to support what Hinn understands as an extrabiblical prophecy:

"Really she [Kathryn Kuhlman] laid a foundation that God today is building on. ... You heard [her] prophecy. Now...we *will* see that happen, Paul [Crouch]. Before Jesus comes back, I am going to see that happen. ... I have begun to pray...that God will heal all. And why not? ...[In] Exodus 12...when they all partook of the Passover...a people who came out of slavery *should* be healed. In one glorious service before leaving Egypt, God healed them all...Psalm 105:37."²⁹

The connection between Exodus 12 and the Passover event and Psalm 105:37 is novel exegesis at best. No other reputable commentator has ever suggested such a connection that would presuppose a great healing service at the first Passover observance in which every participant was healed. The original account in Exodus 12 mentions no such miracle. Psalm 105:37 likewise suggests no mass healing service.

If "Scripture interprets Scripture," we should read Psalm 105:37 with Isaiah 63:13-14, which refers to the same event. It is obvious from this second scripture that, rather than referring to divine healing, both passages refer to God's enabling power granted to Israel, which heightened their human ability to travel over the rough desert terrain.

Hinn's teaching on the healing of all Christians is indeed true. The point at which it occurs, however, is the issue. According to Revelation 21:4, this will only take place in the eternal state. It makes no difference what Kathryn Kuhlman "prophesied," what Hinn's interpretation of that "prophecy" is, or what he wants, prays for, or thinks he will see. "All flesh is grass ... but the Word of God abides forever" (Isaiah 40:6-8).

In 1990, Hinn employed novel exegesis to further buttress his teaching on Prosperity:

"We are going to believe that **in one year you'll be out of debt. Now, that's in the Bible!** Genesis 26 states that Isaac sowed in famine and reaped that same year. It said that he got a harvest

that same year! If you want a harvest *this year*, it's gonna happen. **I was out of debt in one year.**"³⁰

After several professed personal reformations, little seems to have changed with Hinn. In 1994, he proclaimed:

"And now here's something wonderful. The Bible says in Genesis 26 that in the same year Isaac sowed, he reaped. The same year. **Well, God Almighty wants to give you that miracle the same year you sow for it.** Let's believe Him tonight for it. And really, it's according to your faith."³¹

The reader should first notice the evidence in both citations of Hinn's pattern of referring to the Bible to establish the credibility of his pronouncements. How he grounds his beliefs in Scripture, however, has exhibited questionable practices in other examples, and is problematic in these instances as well.

Hinn cites Genesis 26:12 and the harvest of Isaac as paradigmatic for all believers in all ages. There are no authoritative commentators, however, who have ever come to such a conclusion. The context of the passage indicates that it is a straightforward historical report of a singular bountiful harvest. The novel interpretation placed on this passage by Hinn has no doubt been fueled by teachers of the Prosperity Gospel who have focused upon the term "hundredfold" which occurs in this verse.

Using this novel interpretation and application of Genesis 26:12, Hinn has established both doctrine and practice. It is important to note that his interpretations do not simply remain in the realm of academic curiosity. Rather, the very purpose of his novel interpretations is usually to support some doctrine which in turn informs how we are to live out our faith practically.

Hinn alludes to the fact that the very year he began to believe in an immediate one hundredfold return, he himself was out of debt. He uses this personal experience to provide a further foundation upon which to teach that if all others would adopt this same mindset, all would be out of debt in one year. This is an example of establishing

matters of faith and practice on the basis of personal experience, which is not allowed under the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, the foundational Protestant belief that matters of faith and practice can be established by reference to the Bible alone.

In the 1990 citation Hinn further reinforced his teaching of the Prosperity Gospel with other novel interpretations:

"Jesus said this. Watch this. Now you all know the Bible. And you know Brother John [Avanzini], I love when you teach on Prosperity, 'cause it gets me going! But there's one thing, there's one thing I always think about. Jesus said in Luke 6:38 what? 'Give.' Isn't that right? 'And it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into' What? [The audience answers, 'your bosom.'] Okay. **You give it with your hand but when it comes back it'll take your bosom to carry it! Did you catch this? Brother, you give with your hand, but when you get it back, your hand isn't big enough!** [Other guests, hosts, and audience clap to show their approval.]"³²

Hinn again makes his traditional appeal to the Bible. He suggests, however, that there is something that he has seen in the scripture not discernible to the average reader.

Hinn next expresses his love for the way which John Avanzini teaches the Prosperity Gospel, but indicates that even he has not intuited this novel interpretation from the verse in question.

Then Hinn's presuppositions about giving require that he add the words "with your hand." This addition is necessary to set up the comparison between the size of the hand and the size of the bosom (lap). The reader should recognize, however, that there is nothing in the text that limits the activity of giving to money, which can be held in the hand (and placed in offering plates!).

The kind of giving encouraged by Jesus in this passage is an attitude which incorporates all areas of sacrificial giving. Likewise the comparison

between the size of the hand and the lap is fueled by Hinn's presupposition about the hundredfold return. The reason the Church Fathers, the Reformers, and modern commentators who employ the grammatico-historical method never saw this interpretation is because they were not driven by the "give-to-get" mentality of proponents of the Prosperity Gospel.

Returning to another favorite theme, Hinn wrote in 1993:

"The prophet Jeremiah asked: 'Is there no balm in Gilead, / Is there no physician there? / Why then is there no recovery / For the health of the daughter of my people?' (Jeremiah 8:22). This Scripture contains a marvelous truth that holds a key to your healing. Jeremiah asks, 'Is there no balm in Gilead?' **The word *balm* in Hebrew speaks of healing. And the word *Gilead* speaks of worship. He is asking, 'Is there no healing in worship?' Of course there is.** And you need to act upon the knowledge that your worship brings healing. If you confess the Word and nothing seems to happen, begin to worship the Lord God of heaven."³³

Hinn utilizes this text to support his belief that verbal praise of God brings physical healing. This is a teaching which is presently popular in charismatic circles and especially among adherents of "Restoration Theology." Whether the concept is true or not is not at issue. The question we pose here is whether this verse can be used to support Hinn's assertion. His appeal is again to the Hebrew language which he purports to know so well. It must be stated, however, that in no authoritative lexical work is there any evidence to suggest that the name "Gilead" can ever be understood as symbolizing "worship."³⁴

This manner of spiritualization/allegorization of a geographical point of reference was supposed to have been discarded in favor of a literal reading of the text at the Protestant Reformation. It is unfortunate that such exegetical practices are making a comeback after five hundred years.

Consider a similar example of novel exegesis:

"In Old Testament times, if a person was sick he received a pain killer—myrrh. 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, / That lies all night between my breasts' (Song 1:13). When Christ was on the cross, He was offered myrrh. 'Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it' (Mark 15:23). It was customary to give such a drink to a person being crucified so that he would not feel the pain. Why did the Lord Jesus refuse it? Christ rejected the myrrh because He did not want to die without pain. ... **Christ is your 'pain killer,' ... He will lie beside you in your darkest hour to stop the hurt and bring you healing.**"³⁵

The connection between the function of myrrh in Song of Solomon 1:13 and Mark 15:23 exists only in the mind of Hinn. Those who are familiar with the biblical world are well aware that myrrh has multiple uses. The function of myrrh in the passion narrative was indeed that of a pain killer. However, the myrrh referred to in Song of Solomon 1:13 clearly refers to its use as a perfume.³⁶

The general context of Song of Solomon 1:12-14 provides conclusive proof that the purpose of "the bag of myrrh" was not to give relief from the pain of breast cancer or some other malady, but rather was intended to exude a pleasing aroma. The word "myrrh" here is synonymous with "nard," "fragrance," and "cluster of henna blossoms," none of which contain pain-relieving qualities.

By this point the reader has seen enough examples of this approach used so often by Hinn. The methods by which he accomplishes his intentions are now obvious. It is no longer enough for laymen to read debates between supposed experts who hold opposing views. At some point the reader must exercise his belief in the "Priesthood of the Believer," and engage in the argument himself.

The interpretive practices of Hinn are helping to lead the church back into mysticism, "papal" authority figures, and confusion. The infallibility of the Word is assailed as ambiguity is introduced by the contradictions inherent in

most of his interpretations. His approach places the authority of the interpreter over the divinely inspired authority of the biblical authors. His emphasis on "rhema" or experiential knowledge leads us back into liberalism and existentialism. Allegorization, spiritualization, and constant appeal to "insider" and "revelation" knowledge undermine authorial intent. Such methods are regularly employed by pseudo-Christian cults, and destine those who embrace them to spiritual slavery. Jesus taught, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Unfortunately, the opposite is also true.

Editor's Note: In the next issue of *The Quarterly Journal*, Dr. Nunnally's analysis of Benny Hinn and the Bible will conclude with his examination of the faith healer's promotion of heterodox theological concepts.

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Endnotes:

1. For further reading on the history and nature of proper hermeneutics, see Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, **How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993; D.A. Carson, **Exegetical Fallacies**. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Moisés Silva, **An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994; Grant Osborne, **The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation**. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991; Moisés Silva, **Has the Church Misread the Bible?: The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues**. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987; Henry A. Virkler, **Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation**. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
2. David F. Wells, **No Place for Truth: Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?** Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, pp. 95-136.
3. Richard Mayhue, **The Healing Promise**. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994, pp. 32-33. See his excellent overall critique of Hinn's ministry on pp. 32-35, and illusionist André Kole's analysis on pp. 42-61.
4. The original recording of Hinn's fund raising sermon was during Trinity Broadcasting Network's April 1990 Praise-A-Thon. This date is established by Hinn's comment that Paul Crouch spends the least amount of air time soliciting funds according to a current *Newsweek* magazine. The issue of the magazine with the fund raising statistics was April 9, 1990 (pg. 8). The

entire segment includes not only the prosperity teaching espoused by Hinn, but also the teaching that Christians are "little gods" and "little Christs." In addition, he labels those who question his teachings as "morons." This segment also aired in its entirety during TBN's Praise-A-Thon, November 6, 1990. An abbreviated version of the segment was also aired during TBN's November 1994 Praise-A-Thon.

5. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, **The New Brown - Driver - Briggs - Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon**. Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1980, pg. 172, henceforth referred to as BDB; William L. Holladay, **A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament**. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 63, henceforth referred to as Holladay; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, **Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros**. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958, pg. 191, henceforth referred to as K-B.
6. Benny Hinn, **The Blood: Its Power from Genesis to Jesus to You**. Orlando: Creation House, 1993, pg. 19.
7. Abraham Even-Shoshan, **A New Concordance of the Bible**. Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher Publishing House, 1982, pp. 241-242, henceforth referred to as E-S. My second-year Hebrew students are required to know all words in the Hebrew Bible which occur 25 times or more.
8. Reuben Alcalay, **The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary**. Jerusalem: Massada Publishing Company, 1981, pg. 376, henceforth referred to as Alcalay.
9. E-S, pg. 57.
10. BDB, pp. 37-38; Holladay, pg. 15; K-B, pp. 43-44.
11. Cf. K-B pg. 969; BDB, pp. 1013-1014; Holladay, pg. 369.
12. Benny Hinn, Orlando Christian Center broadcast, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 3/28/94. Taken from a sermon, "Who Is This Jesus?" from the March 3-4, 1994, San Antonio Miracle Crusade.
13. *Praise The Lord Show*, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 7/14/94.
14. Benny Hinn, **Welcome, Holy Spirit**. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995, pp. 57, 199.
15. Cf. **Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary**, pg. 1034; Alcalay, pg. 2150.
16. Benny Hinn, **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pp. 16-17. The reedited version reads the same as the original. In **The Blood: Its Power from Genesis to Jesus to You** (Orlando: Creation House, 1993), pg. 18, he also admits that his family was not Jewish.
17. G. Richard Fisher, et al., **The Confusing World of Benny Hinn**. Saint Louis: Personal Freedom Outreach, 1994, first edition, pp. 23-24.
18. Audio tape made of a three-way telephone interview involving Randy Frame, J. Rodman Williams, and Benny Hinn in preparation for Frame's article which appeared in the 10/28/91 issue of *Christianity Today*, "Best-selling Author Admits Mistakes, Vows Changes," pp. 44-45.
19. Benny Hinn, OCC broadcast, 3/28/94, op. cit.
20. The original recording of this segment was during TBN's April 3-9, 1994 Praise-A-Thon. This date has been established upon the following: 1) Hinn mentions at the beginning of his discourse the healing of a small boy in Argentina; and 2) at

the conclusion of his discourse he says he was in Costa Rica a few weeks prior. Hinn's *Celebrate Jesus* magazine (Vol. 4, No. 1, ©1994) gives a foreign mission report which details a February 1994 "first time" trip to Costa Rica and a mid-March 1994 crusade in Argentina. Also the June 1994 *Praise The Lord* newsletter featured a still photograph of Hinn praying over the financial pledges, an event which happened at the conclusion of the video segment. This segment also aired on August 2, 1994 during TBN's Macedonian Fund Raiser and was rebroadcast during TBN's November 1994 Praise-A-Thon.

21. *Praise The Lord Show*, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 12/27/94.

22. "Our Position in Christ," Cassette tape, Part 1. Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center, 1991.

23. *Ibid.*, Part 5.

24. Benny Hinn, Orlando Christian Center broad-

cast, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 10/13/90.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Praise The Lord Show*, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 12/26/91.

27. Benny Hinn, Orlando Christian Center broadcast, Trinity Broadcasting Network, 12/9/90.

28. TBN's April 1994 Praise-A-Thon, op. cit.

29. *Praise The Lord Show*, 12/27/94, op. cit. That Hinn believes there will come a time when no Christian will be sick is also evidenced in his 1992 report of this same "prophecy" by Kuhlman in his book **The Anointing** (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), pp. 146-147. Here, however, he quotes Kuhlman as saying, "There will not be one sick saint in the body of Christ."

In the excerpt of the tape of that meeting which was shown by Hinn on 12/27/94, it is clear that this is Hinn's interpretation of what Mrs. Kuhlman said, and not her own words or intentions. Her hope/assertion was that there would come a time

in her ministry that all individuals who came to some specific meeting would be healed. It is evident that Hinn has trouble not only in ascertaining the meaning of ancient texts such as the Bible, but also the meaning of contemporary communications as well.

30. TBN's April 1990 Praise-A-Thon, op. cit.

31. TBN's April 1994 Praise-A-Thon, op. cit.

32. TBN's April 1990 Praise-A-Thon, op. cit.

33. Benny Hinn, **Lord, I Need a Miracle**. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, pg. 75.

34. BDB, pp. 167-168; Holladay, pg. 61; K-B, pp. 185-186.

35. **Lord, I Need a Miracle**, op. cit., pg. 76.

36. Any Bible handbook or dictionary will reveal such usage. For example see Merrill F. Unger, **Unger's Bible Dictionary**. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976, pg. 1140.

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

Word of God that are in my estimation, my opinion, the most fascinating thing in the whole Bible. It's very little talked about. Almost nonexistent in traditional church teaching and why, I'll never understand why. I guess because it's been covered up and hidden in tradition. The thing that's necessary for the life of a Christian is knowledge of what happened from the cross to the throne. What took place in the three days and the three nights? (*ibid.*)

Most people today don't [understand] because the truth about what happened at the Cross hasn't been preached to any degree (*The Believer's Voice of Victory* magazine, May 1993, pg. 3).

Christian: What in the world are you talking about? You accuse me of being religious and not knowing what happened at the cross, so let's make that the focus of our attention. If you're wrong about the cross, anything you have to say about what happened beyond the cross is meaningless.

Jesus Christ: [To the penitent thief.] I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43).

Christian: Incredible! Even on the cross He's snatching someone from the jaws of hell. What a glorious time they will have in paradise.

Copeland: He had to pay the penalty for sin. He had to die spiritually, which took Him into the regions of the damned, before He could redeem us (Copeland letter, op. cit., pg. 1, emphasis added).

Every demon in hell ... tortured Him beyond anything that anybody has ever conceived. For three days He suffered everything there is to suffer. Some people don't want to believe that. They want to believe that after his death, Jesus just stayed in that upper region of Sheol that the Bible calls paradise — where the saints waited for

redemption. But they're mistaken! If He had simply stayed there, there would have been no price paid for sin. What then would have been the use of shedding His precious blood? ("The Price of It All," *The Believer's Voice of Victory* magazine, Sept. 1991, pp. 3-4).

It's staggering to consider just how much it cost Jesus to buy us back from sin. He went all the way to Hell and back to pay the price of it all (*ibid.*, cover page).

Christian: I have two things to say to that: First, your words suggest that you feel that Jesus' work on the cross and His shed blood was insufficient to pay for our sins. You thereby reject the cross rather than embrace it. And second, you apparently fail to distinguish payment from penalty. If a judge says you are guilty of a crime and the sentence is thirty days or thirty dollars, he is in effect saying that you can accept the penalty or make a payment to cancel the penalty. But the penalty is not the payment. I could come along and make your thirty-dollar payment but I cannot pay your penalty by serving your thirty-day term in your place.

And even if your logic was valid, Jesus would have to serve multiple eternities in the Lake of Fire before He could finish "pay[ing] the penalty for sin" for the billions He died for. You deny the Sovereign Lord who bought you (II Peter 2:1) by rejecting His work on the cross for you. You are badly mistaken.

By the way, since when are Satan and his demons in charge of hell? Tell me, does he still wear a red union suit? Really though, do you mean that Christ's precious blood was merely a stepping stone to the atonement?

Copeland: When His blood poured out, it did not atone, IT DID AWAY WITH THE HANDWRITING OF THE ORDINANCES THAT WERE AGAINST US (Col. 2:14) (Kenneth Copeland letter, March 12, 1979, pg. 2, capitals in original).

His blood paid the price for the covenant. His spirit paid the price for our spirit to be born again ("The Price of It All," op. cit., pg. 4).

Christian: Why do you disparage the blood of Christ? As it is written, "How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? . . . It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:29, 31).

Jesus Christ: It is finished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (John 19:30, Luke 23:46).

Christian: See! He just used the word *tetelestai*, which means paid in full. *Fini!* Mission accomplished! Read His lips: He did not say *unfinished*. And He committed His spirit to the Father, not to Satan and his demons.

Copeland: But now here's the point I want you to get. When He said "It is finished" on that cross, He was not speaking of the plan of redemption. The plan of redemption had just begun. There were still three days and three nights to be gone through before He went to the throne. Isn't that true? What was finished? The Abrahamic covenant had come to a close! The final sacrifice was hanging on that cross (*What Happened*, op. cit.).

Christian: You are not in good company, Mr. Copeland, for the Rev. Sun Myung Moon has similar sentiments, "...when Jesus uttered his last words on the cross, saying, 'It is finished' (John 19:30), he did not mean that the whole purpose of the providence of salvation was attained through the cross ... Therefore, Jesus meant by the words 'it is finished' that he finished establishing the basis for the providence of spiritual salvation through the cross, which was the secondary providence of salvation" (**Divine Principle**, pp. 151-152). It appears that Rev. Moon glories in the cross of Christ about as much as you do.

Martin Luther called the cross "The Great Exchange," not "The Great Down payment" as you and the cults imply. Are you trying to say that something more needs to be accomplished beyond the cross before our atonement is possible? That the cross is not sufficient?

Copeland: The death of Jesus Christ was not a physical death alone! If it had been a physical death and a physical death only, Abel would have paid the price for the sins of mankind ... Every prophet who walked the face of the Earth under the Abrahamic covenant could have paid the price if it were a physical death only (*What Happened*, op. cit.).

He put Himself and made Himself obedient unto death and the same thing happened to Him that happened to Adam. Spiritual death! Now listen to me, if it had been a physical death only, it wouldn't have worked! And if He hadn't died spiritually that body never would have died (ibid.).

Christian: "For God ... [made] peace through his blood, shed on the cross. ... But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. ... And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a

public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 1:20, 22; 2:15). Whether the blood or the cross is mentioned, it's basically speaking about the sacrifice of Christ's life. Both these are physical.

Consider this: If physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement, as you believe, and the atonement is in hell, then by default you believe in healing from hell. This is interesting.

Copeland: The Spirit of God spoke to me and He said, "...don't let your tradition trip you up. ... A born-again man defeated Satan" I said, "Goodness, gracious sakes alive! ... Well now you don't mean, you couldn't dare mean, that I could have done the same thing?" He said, "Oh yeah, if you'd had the knowledge of the Word of God that He [Jesus] did, you could've done the same thing, 'cause you're a reborn man too" (*Substitution and Identification*, tape #00-0202).

I say this and repeat it so it don't upset you too bad. ...when I read in the Bible where He [Jesus] says, "I AM, yes, I AM, too!" (July 19, 1987, crusade televised on TBN).

Christian: First off, "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him — the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough — that he should live on forever and not see decay" (Psalm 49:7-9 NIV). That includes you! It took the God-Man to redeem mankind, of which you aren't.

Secondly, let's not waste time discussing whether or not Jesus went to hell. While it is true that Jesus *went* to hell, the real area of attention needs to be narrowed down to this: Did He go there to *pay* for our sins? Payment is the issue, not presence. That's where our focus needs to be. Did He pay for our sins and redeem us in hell or upon the cross? It's really very simple.

Copeland: Satan *conquered* Jesus on the Cross and took His spirit to the dark regions of hell (**Holy Bible: Kenneth Copeland Reference Edition**, pg. 129, italics in the original).

Christian: Hmmm. In one of your books, your wife, Gloria, wrote, "To *conquer* means to get the better of in competition or struggle, to master, suppress, prevail over, overwhelm, surmount, to gain superiority, to subdue, to vanquish, to crush, to defeat" (**From Faith to Faith: A Daily Guide to Victory**, Oct. 28 entry, italics in the original). Tell me more.

Copeland: And Satan fell into the trap. He took Him into hell illegally. He carried Him in there. ...there is a new birth [that] takes place in the very guts of the Earth! When the command of God said, "That's enough, loose Him and let Him go!" (*What Happened*, op. cit.). God's Word ripped down through the locked gate of hell and raised Jesus up. ... That Word of the living God went down into that pit of destruction and charged the spirit of Jesus with resurrection power! Suddenly His twisted, death-wracked

spirit began to fill out and come back to life ... He was literally being reborn before the devil's very eyes ("The Price of It All," op. cit., pg. 4).

Christian: What kind of spirit did He have?

Copeland: [An] emaciated, poured out, little, wormy spirit (*The Believer's Voice of Victory* program, April 21, 1991).

He was reborn in the pit of hell and resurrected ... And there's a born again, resurrected, glorified man in charge of the universe, and He's my big brother, praise God. Do you see that? A resurrected, born again man (*What Happened*, op. cit.).

Christian: Get thee behind me, Copeland! It is clear, now, that you do not glory in the cross but disparage it, as all enemies of the cross do, by implying that the work of Christ upon the cross is insufficient for our salvation. Your teaching is worse than the cults who simply imply that it is insufficient, you are shamelessly blatant about it.

It is written, "For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things" (Philippians 3:18-19). You share beliefs with each and every cult. You have a counterfeit Jesus and a counterfeit Gospel (II Corinthians 11:4).

Having struck out at the cross, there is no need to search your theology any further, as Mr. Spencer would have us do. It would be fruitless to discuss your stand on doctrines such as the Rapture, baptism, tithing, Sabbath keeping, predestination, eternal security, dietary laws, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit with you (or any other cultist for that matter) since you reject an essential of the faith—the Gospel.

Essentials are like air, food, and water. One who lacks just one of these requirements for life does not waste time arguing over nonessentials such as clothing, shoes, or shelter.

Remember, the Rapture is not "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." Neither is baptism, nor the gifts. Only the Gospel has the power of God to save the lost (Romans 1:16) while a counterfeit gospel such as yours only kills. Strike one, you're out!

The Jesus I love, serve, worship, and owe my salvation to, conquered Satan on the cross and did not need to be born again. Because He said, "It is finished," I'll take His Word over yours any day.

Because you have arisen within the flock and have "distorted the truth in order to draw away disciples after" yourself (Acts 20:30), you are indeed "the worst of all heretics." Hank Hanegraaff was right; James Spencer needs to stop defending the indefensible and repent.

—Paul Belli

In 1992, the COG resumed U.S. operations.

According to a report in *Christianity Today* magazine, Berg wrote that his "mantle and anointing" would pass to his second wife, Maria and that Berg would speak to her from heaven. Berg's daughter, Deborah Davis, who defected from the group in 1978, said, "They are going to keep going strong with the people they've got in it." Davis also said The Family could "lose some of its continuity" because Maria is not as charismatic as Moses David.

Not all are convinced of Berg's death. Former Family members have told news organizations that the report of Berg's death may be an attempt to throw off the manhunt. Law enforcement agencies worldwide continue to search for him. Interpol, the international police organization, continues to pursue him at the request of Argentinean authorities.

Estimates of The Family's current membership fall well below earlier figures. The group claims about 200 communities comprising 9,000 members in 43 countries. In 1977, Berg claimed to have 2 million followers in 100 countries.

—MKG

BRITISH KRISHNAS MEET OPPOSITION

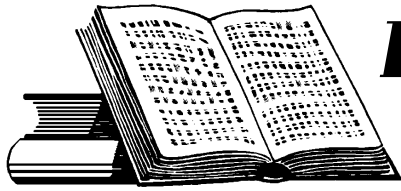
Large assemblies of Hare Krishna devotees gathering for public worship have enraged the residents of Letchmore Heath in England, prompting hearings on the sect's activities' impact on the small town 15 miles northeast of London.

In the 1970s, former Beatle George Harrison donated a 17-acre parcel of land to the Hare Krishna group. The estate, known as Bhaktivedanta Manor, attracts nearly 2,000 worshippers on weekends. As many as 6,000 attend periodic festival days. During the annual two-day Janmash-tami festival, celebrating Krishna's birth, the count swells to 25,000.

Members of the group have demonstrated against the dispute, claiming anti-Hindu bias, not concern over traffic, as the problem. According to a Religious New Service report, "India has reportedly threatened trade sanctions against Great Britain if the issue is not amicably settled."

Sita Rama Das, a priest at the manor, said, "If it's only a planning problem, we've come up with a solution." The sect has bought additional land in which to provide a route around the village. "If they stick strictly to planning, it should go our way," the priest said.

—MKG



Books in Review

RECKLESS FAITH

by John MacArthur

Crossway Books, 256 pages, \$17.99

Do Christians need discernment or just belief in a few essentials?

John MacArthur's new book, subtitled, "When the Church Loses Its Will to Discern," argues convincingly that discernment of a deep and broad range of spiritual matters is paramount. Studying this book could help believers sharpen discernment by showing the need for a solid doctrinal base.

MacArthur also reviews how the Church of today got into its current mindless and mystical state. He examined mindless mysticism — which MacArthur calls reckless faith — and its polar opposite, rote tradition.

MacArthur takes on the Vineyard movement, with its hysteria and laughing craze, and addresses the errors of charismatic defender William DeArteaga. He critiques the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" document, drawn up in March 1994 and signed by several prominent evangelicals.

The chapter titles illustrate the thrust and range of topics: The War Against Reason, The Rise of Reckless Faith, The Biblical Formula for Discernment, What are the Fundamentals of Christianity, Evangelicals and Catholics Together, Laughing Till It Hurts, and Looking for the Truth in All the Wrong Places.

This hard-hitting book could turn out to be one of the most important of the decade.

—GRF

HOW TO RESCUE YOUR LOVED ONE FROM MORMONISM

by David A. Reed and John R. Farkas

Baker Book House, 203 pages, \$8.99

The team of former Jehovah's Witness David A. Reed and former Latter-day Saint John R. Farkas have delivered the second installment of their trilogy of publications examining Mormonism with **How to Rescue Your Loved One from Mormonism**. The book gives practical ways to reach a family member or friend who has bought into the counterfeit gospel of the Latter-day Saints. Its method and

process closely correspond to the techniques discussed in Reed's earlier work on Jehovah's Witnesses.

The book's preface acquaints its reader with the authors by way of brief testimonies. Subsequent chapters are succinct, ranging from two to 23 pages, yet this brevity reflects no inadequacy in facts or information. The chapter titled, "Techniques that Work" presents an excellent choice of methods to temper your Christian witness.

Succeeding chapters examine the lack of archaeological proof for claims in The Book of Mormon, its unbiblical teachings, false prophecies and changes in LDS scriptures. This volume also features more than 40 reproductions of key Mormon documents to support its charges. Appendices furnish a list of ministries to contact for additional support and discuss the language barrier brought on by Mormon redefinition of terms. Subject, biblical and Mormon scripture indexes are included.

The range of information and techniques of this publication will not just be limited to a new convert into Mormonism, but can be equally applied to the LDS missionary at your door, or any seasoned church member.

—MKG

EMBRACED BY THE LIGHT AND THE BIBLE

Betty Eadie and Near-Death Experiences
in the Light of the Bible

by Richard Abanes

Horizon Books, 240 pages, \$15.99

This fascinating book unmask the beliefs of Betty Eadie, author of the bestseller, **Embraced by the Light**, revealing her longtime connection with Mormonism and fascination with New Age teachings.

Most of Eadie's so-called insights into the "world beyond" are shown to be rehashed, plagiarized, Mormon teaching mingled with New Age philosophy. The foreword summarizes: "Her message is carefully examined in the light of Scripture and compared with Mormon, Christian and New Age beliefs."

Author Richard Abanes has thoroughly researched Eadie's eccentric background. From her 1991 Yellow Pages advertisement for a hypnotherapy practice to parallel columns comparing the national and Utah (Mormon) versions of her book, Abanes has accumulated an extensive array of evidence.

Going beyond Eadie, he examines others in the "near death experience" (NDE) movement, showing that they are merely repackaging occult beliefs.

The book is hard to put down. It is extensive, informative and much needed if Christians are to neutralize the phenomenal impact Eadie's book has had on an undiscerning public. It is well worth the price.

—GRF

Editor's Note: The publications featured in our **Books in Review** section are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.75 to the price listed to cover postal costs. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.