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The Preacher Who Doesn't Tell It Like It Is The Truth Twisting and Tall Tales of Joyce Meyer

by Paul R. Belli
and G. Richard Fisher

Joyce Meyer has finally arrived into the top echelons of the Charismatic "Big League." Her image has appeared next to many of the "Who's Who" of Charismatic icons again and again in the pages of *Charisma* magazine.

Last November, she made it to the cover of the sensationalistic publication. *Charisma* promised on the cover "Straight Talk From Joyce Meyer," and titled the inside cover story of the St. Louis-based Meyer, "The Preacher Who Tells It Like It Is." Her book sales are soaring as well, but does Joyce Meyer really tell it like it is? That is — *like it really is?*

Meyer's visibility these days has brought her such popularity that even some of the Charismatic superstars have been writing articles for her ministry's monthly magazine, *Life in the Word*.

On occasion, the favor is reciprocated as Kenneth Copeland's magazine, *The Believer's Voice of Victory*, has featured some of her articles. Yes, she has definitely arrived in the "Top Ten." However, for an already undis-

mirrors the teachings of her unhealthy associations.

NOT A SINNER

For years, *Charisma* magazine has left a lot to be desired. Double standards, subjective journalism, mysticism, attacks upon historic and orthodox Christianity, and little regard for hermeneutics appear with frequency in the magazine. The issue featuring Meyer was no exception.

Take, for example, the magazine's slamming of those who have evaluated her theology:

"Joyce is not the subject of intense controversy, but she has faced her critics. Various cult-watchers have attacked her, including one who lambasted her on St. Louis radio and challenged

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cerning Church, this is not a good thing when you consider that she

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FORTUNE TELLERS NEVER GET IT RIGHT

Jesus said that, "men love darkness rather than light" (John 3:19). Never is it more clearly seen than in the undying propensity of people to run after psychics and psychic predictions. This is not limited to the occult and the tabloids, but is seen in increasing measure in Charismatic circles and, alarmingly, within some Evangelical circles as well.

The Apostle Peter said that we have a word more sure or a "prophetic word confirmed" (2 Peter 1:19). We have in the Word of God, all we need for salvation, all we need for sanctification (2 Timothy 3:15-17, John 17:17), and all we need for prophecy (Revelation 22). If God wanted us to know any more, He would have inspired more books to be added to the Bible. Still, lost people and some confused Christians do not think so and prefer the guesswork, failures and darkness of false prophets and tabloid prognosticators.

If one does just a little tabloid perusing or religious channel surfing, the misses and failures of modern "prophets" are obvious. Remember that God demanded 100% accuracy (Deuteronomy 13:5-10, 18:19-22). This clearly leaves all of the psychics and their predictions on eroding ground or no ground at all.

Cult researcher Bill Alnor reminds us:

"When biblical prophets told of the future they were without error, and their words were usually specific — such as that Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and that he would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9). It is simply not true, as some teach today, that modern prophets can sometimes be wrong" (*UFO Cults and the New Millennium*, pg. 59).

In 1998, we saw that the mystics and soothsayers were constantly *wrong*. Their "visions of an apocalypse" and the "wrath-of-God-like hailstorms in Texas" missed completely. Their visions of Clinton's dog, Buddy, involved in an international scandal missed it entirely ("The Fault Lies Not in the Stars" by Buck Wolf from ABC News web site, Jan. 2, 1999, pg. 1).

It is most interesting that the psychics own up to their own shortcomings and lack of accuracy. Yet, some overreach and claim 90% accuracy. That is highly suspect. And because of the apathy or lack of diligence on the part of followers of psychics, some predictions are tweaked or altered after the fact for greater success and fulfillment. No one really keeps score and sadly no one seems to care.

Major earthquakes did not come to Hawaii, but the Rev. Leon LeGrant just blows it off by saying he is glad for people that the predictions did not come true. LeGrant is predicting flooding in the deserts of Arizona, California and Nevada for 1999. LeGrant combines his
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WORD-FAITH PUBLISHER HARRISON DIES

Following what *Charisma* magazine labeled "a long bout with cancer," Doyle "Buddy" Harrison, died Nov. 28 in Tulsa, Okla. He was 59.

Harrison was a prevailing influence within the Word-Faith element of Charismatic circles for more than two decades. In the 1970s, he founded Harrison House, which became a leading publisher of Word-Faith literature. Authors for Harrison House included Kenneth Hagin Sr., Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Charles Capps, Joyce Meyer, Roberts Liardon, Oral Roberts and many others who promoted the "health and wealth" gospel message. In all, Harrison's enterprise has published "more than 700 titles by nearly 70 authors," *Charisma* reported.

Harrison also established Faith Christian Fellowship International, an affiliation of hundreds of churches. In December 1987, Harrison's organization reordained Jim Bakker, who had been defrocked by the Assemblies of God after admitting to sexual and financial improprieties.

Harrison's funeral was held last Dec. 2 at the Rhema Bible Church founded by Hagin Sr., who also was his father-in-law. The last years of Harrison's life, apparently, were a contradiction of the message he promoted.

—MKG

MANSLAUGHTER RULED IN DEATH OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

On December 18, following nearly four days of deliberation, a Pomona, Calif., jury convicted a drunken driver of manslaughter rather than murder in the death of a Jehovah's Witness who died after refusing a blood transfusion. On March 7, 1998, Keith Cook was driving with a 0.17 blood-alcohol level when his truck slammed into a car that hit Jadine Russell. Russell, 55, was on the side of the road with police officers because of an earlier minor traffic accident.

As a result of the car's impact, Russell suffered broken bones and massive bleeding. She repeatedly told the paramedics, emergency workers and attending physicians, "No blood!" The collision also injured the woman's daughter and two police officers at the scene.

Charles Unger, the defense attorney for the 32-year-old auto mechanic, contended that it was the woman's religious beliefs that actually killed her. Prosecutor Larry Larson acknowledged "the lack of a transfusion was a contributing factor," but he argued that Cook alone was responsible for the events which led to Russell's death and, as such, was guilty of murder. He also declared that Cook was already on probation for a 1996 drunken-driving conviction.

While the jury's verdict reduced the murder charge to manslaughter, the latter conviction carries the same penalty — 15 years to life — because of Cook's prior conviction.

—MKG

SCANDALS PLAGUE HINN'S MINISTRY

A legal settlement totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars, revelations of heroin abuse, and a gag order imposed upon a former security chief have all cropped up within the ministry of faith healer Benny Hinn.

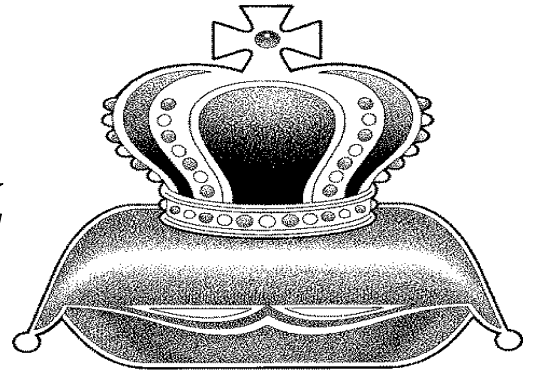
Last October, Hinn and his church, along with the Orange County Sheriff's Office, agreed to pay \$610,000 to 10 religious protesters who brought suit after they said they were arrested without cause outside the church of the Orlando-based minister. In June 1996, Pastor Ricky L. Johnston and members of his Volusia County congregation were demonstrating in front of Hinn's World Outreach Center when they encountered the church's security force.

An early investigation revealed that members of the sheriff's department, who also worked at the World Outreach Center, had harassed and illegally arrested the protesters. A six-month internal investigation by the Orange County Sheriff's Department also turned up falsification of off-duty records, lying to investigators, and abuse by commanders of their positions of authority. The findings resulted in the firing of two commanders and a volunteer reserve deputy, and the suspension of three other officers. The televangelist's younger brother, Christopher Hinn, was the reserve deputy fired for abuse of power.

The trespassing case became known as "Church-gate" among the media in Orlando. The charges made against the demonstrators never were prosecuted. Cmdr. Steve

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Is BENNY HINN'S "FIRE" ANOINTING REALLY JUST THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES?



by M. Kurt Goedelman

Faith healer Benny Hinn is a man with an "anointing" for all seasons. Like Baskin-Robbins has flavors of ice cream, Hinn has anointings. There's one for almost everyone's taste. Following the success of his book, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, his second volume for Thomas Nelson Publishers, titled simply *The Anointing*, introduced readers to an unembellished anointing — perhaps the "vanilla" of his other anointings.

Hinn has also pitched a "Double Portion Anointing," which included the macabre tale of visiting graves of the late faith healers Kathryn Kuhlman and Aimee Semple McPherson, where he is said to have felt "terrific" and "incredible" anointings (see further, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, pp. 196-198). People, he claims, have been physically healed by visits to Kuhlman's grave because of the anointing that lingers there. "Totally healed by God's power," he alleges. He said he planned to take some of his ministerial staff to these graves so that they can feel these "incredible" and "amazing" anointings for themselves.

Then at his 1992 miracle crusade in Little Rock, Ark., Hinn demonstrated a "fresh" anointing, which left bodies strewn across the stage and on the floor — more casualties than a Rambo movie. In Little Rock, the anointing was so strong and powerful it sup-

posedly radiated from his suit coat. Scores of victims hit the floor, slain in the Spirit, as he took off his suit coat and swung it like a baseball bat at the onslaught of people, including ministers, charging onto the stage. The feats of baseball legend Mark McGwire pale in comparison.

Now comes what appears to be the *pièce de résistance* of anointings — the "fire" anointing. Those attending his Anaheim Miracle Crusade last year got to experience the phenomenon firsthand. Other Hinn enthusiasts were treated to the spectacle on a November airing of his *This Is Your Day* television broadcast.

Hinn told viewers, "That incredible anointing that hit at one point in that service is something that I'll never forget as long as I live." And then divulged, "Listen saints, what we're about to show you we rarely ever show on any program. The fire of God hit and the Lord kept saying to me, 'Say, Fire! Speak the word, Fire!' And as I did you're about to see the results. You may never be the same again after this." Thus, under God's direction, Hinn becomes one of the very few who is permitted to yell "Fire!" in a crowded building.

Hinn told the crusade audience that, "We're about to receive a revelation

of Him for I believe the Body of Christ is ready now for a fresh manifestation of Christ." These comments assault the Word of God and its sufficiency as revelation of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, these statements also gain a greater allegiance to Hinn by his followers as he sets himself up as the conduit of this "fresh manifestation." But Hinn's campaign was not finished:

"There's coming a time in our lives as believers when we're going to have a fresh revelation of who He is. And we're going to come into a new walk with Him. Remember, He declared we would be baptized with fire. Fire. ... Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know, the day will come when the fire of God's presence will visibly appear in public meetings. You may have never heard that before — it's biblical. ... We've known the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but we have not yet known the fire. And I'm here to tell you in Southern California, God is about to visit you and the whole Church with fresh fire."

The Church, according to Hinn, is lacking and deficient because of the absence of this "fire" anointing. He explains: "The reason the Church has not known fullness of liberty, the reason the Church has had partial

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THE WANDERING RIVER OF BROWNSVILLE

“Awake America!” Crusades Transfer the Chaos of the Pensacola Outpouring

by G. Richard Fisher

Mundus vult decepti — The world wants to be deceived.

The leadership of the Brownsville Assembly of God church, during the past several months, has been trying to go national with its Awake America! meetings. The meetings are scheduled for 12 major cities in the United States this year alone.

The Brownsville church in Pensacola, Fla., has been spreading errors both in doctrine and practice among visiting devotees for almost four years. It is only slightly more than halfway to eclipsing the seven-year span of the Azusa Street phenomenon of the early 1900s in Los Angeles. Charismatic “pilgrims” just can’t seem to get enough of the wild and wooly. Emotional excess has become an addictive drug to hyperfaith and hyper-Charismatics.

Steve Rabey, religion writer for *Christianity Today*, questions the effect of the crusades in his otherwise generally favorable book, *Revival in Brownsville*. Rabey assesses the meetings this way:

“...revival leaders have been presenting Awake America rallies, which are designed to spread the revival’s effects throughout the land. Each of the rallies, which began in 1997, has attracted thousands of faithful and curious, although it’s impossible to

tell if they have had any deeper impact.”¹

The Brownsville leadership never tires of providing the new, the bizarre and the dramatic. It all has become a lucrative business for pastor John Kilpatrick, evangelist Stephen Hill, theologian Michael Brown and music leader Lindell Cooley. Their individual corporations have raked in hundreds of thousands of dollars.²

It appears that these men must keep the adrenalin pumping and push followers to crazed extremes to keep the “revival” going. Manifestations of the most extreme kind have been documented. Reports from ex-revival fans tell of almost crazed and driven attempts with pushing and shoving matches to be touched and slain by the key revival leaders. These men have taken on an aura of rock stars. Hypnotic swoons are fashionable. Crazyness is in vogue.

One former devotee tells how she was persuaded into buying a ram’s horn for over \$200. She was told that when it was blown from the highest point in her city, Satan would get confused thinking it was the last trump and run out of town and the city would be delivered from demonic strongholds.

From most objective accounts, the visiting crowds at Pensacola are wan-

ing as people tire of the same old show. Therefore, the leadership is more earnest about getting the show on the road, although the concept of their traveling road show (Awake America!) goes back long before this.

Newspaper accounts factually report that errors abound and are still being spread. It is the belief of many of the careful observers of the phenomenon that the unbelievable practices can be accounted for by peer pressure, expectation, crowd control, hypnotic techniques, suggestibility and altered states of consciousness. Some even suggest the demonic is at work. These wild extended sessions still continue in spite of the blighted fruit.

There can be no doubt that there is a market for these shenanigans or they could not be exported from state to state. Benny Hinn and his miracle crusades have proved that all too well. It seems that people want to be deceived. They want their emotions stretched to the extreme. Christianity is hardly recognizable in all of this.

Esteemed pastor, teacher and author John MacArthur shares his views after having visited Pensacola and seeing the show for himself:

“I was down in Florida. People are being rocked down there by this Pensacola crazyness that’s going on in the name of revival.

And people flipping and flopping and diving on the floor and gyrating and speaking in bizarre and unintelligible fashion and all of this kind of wild thing is going on. And they keep saying, 'This is God. This is of God.' Can I be very straight forward with you? It is an offense to a rational, truth-revealing God, it is an offense to the true work of His Son, it is an offense to the true work of the Holy Spirit to use the names of God or of Christ or of the Holy Spirit in any mindless, emotional orgy marked by irrational, sensual and fleshly behavior produced by altered states of consciousness, peer pressure, heightened expectation or suggestibility. That is sociopsychological manipulation and mesmerism and it is a prostitution of the glorious revelation of God taught clearly and powerfully to an eager, attentive and controlled mind. What feeds sensual desires pragmatically or ecstatically cannot honor God. You have to preach the truth to the mind. That's where the real battle is fought. So we bring God to people through His Word. That's the only way we can do it."³

First Timothy 4:3 tells of a day when people will "heap to themselves teachers," eager to have their ears tickled or entertain sensual messages. Linguist Marvin Vincent says of that situation and that verse:

"In periods of unsettled faith, skepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies of Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found."⁴

In a report on the meetings at the Bryce Jordan Center in State College, Pa., *The Christian News* provided disturbing seductions as the prescript for the meeting:

"A press release declared the AWAKE AMERICA! crusade

was not a denominational event, nor a Bible conference. Rather it was a 'God' thing, as 'the Church is lifted over the dividing walls of gender, race, church affiliation, doctrinal issues and traditional rituals. The Brownsville leadership believe that Christ demands that Christians look beyond themselves — their history, even their theology — as He moves us further into His kingdom with fresh illumination of His Holy Word.'"⁵

So, from the start, the participants were advised to check their brains at the door, forget what they believe along with their doctrinal convictions and be open to whatever the leadership brought as "fresh illumination" no matter how outlandish. And the Pennsylvania meeting did get outlandish.

A reading of 1 Timothy would show anyone that doctrine was central in Paul's view and that theology was not to be forgotten or compromised. The "shaking, dancing, swaying, and jumping," along with the "slaying of the Spirit," reported by *The Christian News* shows that the news release worked *once the crowds were worked*. It seems apparent that most wanted to be worked. As Vincent observed above, the demand creates the supply.

IT WON'T STOP RAINING

It is almost laughable to hear this referred to as "latter rain" falling, as did the National Coordinator of this event. Since 1901 and Azusa Street (the beginnings of the modern Pentecostal movement) every new "revival" or "wave" has been referred to under the same pretense. The heretical Latter Rain Movement in the late 1940s even named itself such. It was soundly condemned by the Assemblies of God denomination.⁶

In the 1960s, the Charismatic movement referred to itself as "the latter rain outpouring." John Wimber once claimed the same thing, as has Rodney Howard-Browne, Benny Hinn, the Kansas City Prophets and the Brownsville team. Who will be next? The "latter rain" experiences just keep

drying up. Meanwhile, all the "latter rains" have done is drown the Church in false teaching.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Every new Pentecostal trickle is trying to claim that a contrived event is actually a contemporary fulfillment of Pentecost. According to the Apostle Peter, this is impossible since the prediction of Pentecost already occurred *at Pentecost* almost 2000 years ago. There is not a Scripture anywhere that would hint that Pentecost is a continual event that happens repeatedly during the 1900s — or in any other century. Peter says without hesitation that the events described in Acts 2 are what was prophesied by the Old Testament prophet Joel ("*this is that*," v. 16). That is why every new move of emotional outbursts and wild claims keeps missing it and a subsequent move then makes the same claim. This is just one of the inconsistencies that finally drove this writer from the "Full Gospel" camp years ago.

Most shocking is the blatant disparaging of preaching by the worship leader of Awake America! reported in *The Christian News*. Cooley told the participants:

"If preaching would have saved the world, it would be saved. The only thing that will do it is God's fire!"⁷

What is being suggested here is absolutely horrid. It is hard to fathom and frightening that the 12,000 people did not walk out of the auditorium at that point — especially since many of them were preachers and knew better. Modern-day Pentecostals are being boiled by small degrees as in the old story of the frog in a kettle of water. Regrettably, it's an indication of how they are slipping from the Scriptures and how undiscerning they are becoming. Just think of it — preaching is not adequate any more, only "fire." So-called "fire" is the strange fire of slaying frenzies, pandemonium, altered states of consciousness and deluded emotionalism.⁸

In another Awake America! meeting in Denver (June 2, 1998), there was no message and the preaching was replaced by frenzy. David Works, an obvious advocate of the chaos, gleefully reported:

“Then the meeting seemed to transform into a Benny Hinn-style healing service as it was clear there was a heavy anointing in the house. We even sang ‘Alleluia’ like Bro. Hinn does. People started lining up immediately with testimonies and there were screams, shouts and one young lady took a lap around the arena floor! Some testimonies were given and there were more bodies out under the power on the platform. The meeting once again changed in a different direction. It was also a night of warfare. Michael Brown took the mike and remarked how when the children of Israel took Jericho a shout went up. The resulting shout from the crowd was deafening!”

Works further reports that the drummer pounded a drum for 10 minutes while the crowd was led in a chant of “Jesus, Jesus!” He also details that a man was introduced who gave his vision and makes this telling remark:

“The offering was rushed to keep the flow of the Spirit *and there was no main message*, the time being used instead for the altar call and personal ministry.”

Works then explained what “personal ministry” means:

“Personally, I waited before going down on the floor as I wrestled with my desire to have Steve Hill lay hands on me and nobody else. (Hey, I’m human!) Finally, I realized that the entire ministry team was under authority, I was under authority, so what the heck? Pastor Kilpatrick made his way around toward us and people were dropping left and right. I kept watching the guy who couldn’t walk as I thought it was cool.”⁹

ABSENCE OF THE REAL MESSAGE

If the Apostle Paul had been in Denver or Pennsylvania those nights, he may have well gotten right in the face of those Awake America! leaders and loudly said:

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the *message preached* to save those who believe. ... But we *preach Christ*” (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21, 23).

It is unbelievable that anyone in a Christian pulpit could suggest that something other than preaching is what is needed for the world’s salvation and to malign the Christian message in such a way.

Consider the Apostle’s words in Romans 10:14-15:

“How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things.”

Paul’s above declaration, evidently, is of little significance to these fire-wielding sorcerers. Moreover, one of the main thrusts of the New Testament is the centrality of preaching (see esp. Mark 1:38). For all the solicitation to the Gospels and the Book of Acts by Charismatics to establish their “signs and wonders,” they missed the very crucial fact that nearly every encounter with the unsaved in these Scriptures (the Gospels and Acts) was a preaching, witnessing or teaching event. It was a rational cognitive event filled with content

and meaning. Check it out.

SHOUTING “FIRE” IN A CROWDED BUILDING

“God’s fire” (shorthand for the lunacy and craziness of the Brownsville meetings which is nowhere in the Bible) could not save because it has no content and nothing on which to base faith and trust. It is, in all fact, a different gospel. Faith (Greek: *pisteuō*) always implies an object. The objects must be God and His Word.

The “fire” theme is an old — but persistently revisited — Pentecostal canard. It is tried and true. Benjamin Irwin founded the Fire Baptized Holiness Church in 1895, claiming to impart a “baptism of fire” in which people would see balls of fire or feel burning in their bodies.¹⁰

The people could not get enough and Irwin went on to dream up three more baptisms with the unlikely names of “dynamite, lyddite and oxidite.” Irwin departed the ministry in moral disgrace, left the movement in chaos, and his trinity of baptisms were eventually discarded by the group’s new leadership. His own “fire” had not helped him win the war over sin.

We have witnessed Steve Hill charging through the crowds while screaming: “Fire-Fire-Fire-Fire!” It worked with some but not with others. We were not convinced or impressed.

Someone needs to inform Hill that the baptism of fire in Matthew 3:11-12, is clearly about the eternal judgment of God and the fires of hell. God’s people neither want nor will see that fire.

Vincent also explains clearly the obvious intent of Matthew 3:11-12:

“The whole metaphor represents the Messiah as separating the evil from the good, according to the tests of his kingdom and Gospel, receiving the worthy into his kingdom and consigning the unworthy to destruction (compare Matt. xiii. 30; 39-43; 48-50).”¹¹

MORE UNVERIFIED CLAIMS

Evangelist Hill went on to make some outlandish claims as if God had given him an anointing straight from heaven and “a direct revelation.” If God is giving direct revelations to these men, He must be confused considering the kinds of mixed messages they are conveying. Kilpatrick claimed a direct message from God in a “prophecy” of the downfall of the Christian Research Institute’s director, Hank Hanegraaff and then had to “repent” for his arrogance and stupidity.¹²

Hill then said that he knew someone who had led more than two million people to Jesus but there was no name given nor any documentation. Outlandish and unverified claims are made constantly by the unblushing leadership; everything from false reports about crime rates falling in Pensacola, to Hill’s autobiography, to the cumulative numbering of the same people over and over in their attendance figures and decisions at the Brownsville meetings.

With many more Awake America! crusades scheduled during 1999, it will be sad to see the errors, untruths and hype multiply along with the damaged lives and churches. The meandering and wandering of Brownsville’s polluted river is a blight on the Church.

DOES MIGHT MEAN RIGHT?

The Christian News report also noted that Michael Brown made the boastful and elitist claim that for “every Baptist on the earth today, there are four Pentecostal/Charismatics.” So what? Do numbers necessarily guarantee truth? What does a claim like that mean? Does a simple majority somehow establish what is right and good? Does it mean that a larger group has a larger share or more of the truth?

If the size of a group was any indicator of how close its members are to rightness and truth, then the one billion Moslems or 800 million Roman Catholics must be looked upon with favor. The Old Testament prophets constantly warned the masses in Israel that it was the “remnant” of truth seekers that God

saw with favor (cf. Isaiah 1:9, Micah 2:12, Zephaniah 2:9, Zechariah 8:12). In many cases, at least in God’s eyes, the minority rules. Especially if that minority is grounded and founded on Scripture and lives by God’s rules of decency and decorum in worship as commanded in 1 Corinthians 14.

What Brown failed to mention was that within that mass of Pentecostal/Charismatic people are Trinity-denying Oneness Pentecostals, Latter Rain heretics, Word Faith adherents with a false Gospel of man as God and a demonic Jesus who had to be born again. Add to that the false prophets of the counterfeit revival, those being led astray by unscrupulous money-mongering televangelists, and the numbers are obviously reduced to a great degree. The remnant concept appears to apply to the Charismatic/Pentecostals more than ever. It seems that there are fewer and fewer of them with any sense.

After all, Paul says (1 Corinthians 14) if unbelievers see professed believers out of control (as in the Awake America! meetings), they have every right to conclude that these people are out of their minds (v. 23). No one can claim to be out of control because of the Holy Spirit, Paul insists (vv. 32-33). Beside that, the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit is “self control” (Galatians 5:23). It is absurd to pass off pandemonium as a work of the Spirit. The antics of Brownsville will not awake America or Americans. The real question is when are Christians and especially the Pentecostal/Charismatics that support these things, going to wake up?

DANCING IN THE DARK

Of course, Kilpatrick tries to justify the uncontrolled emotionalism by referring to David’s “dancing before the Lord” in 2 Samuel 6:14. We have heard this before.

Kilpatrick, in a surly statement, pronounced the following:

“If people do not like what you are doing — that is tough. If you have a problem with the shaking, you may not ever see revival. When you see people shaking on the floor — remember this is

Pentecost again. I am sick of churches that do not have shaking and falling on the floor. God told David to dance before the Lord.”¹³

First, Scripture does not record (in Acts 2) that people were shaking on the floor on Pentecost. There was a clear, sane and rational Gospel presentation. There was also a miraculous ability to preach in other languages. Brownsville still provides hearing mechanisms with interpreters for foreign visitors because they have not even come close to a real Pentecost. Interesting also is that they still have a section for the people in wheelchairs. There are no real miracles taking place there either.

So then, are the shaking and falling justified by David’s “dance” before the Lord? Is this a proper use of the Bible? Is this a sound interpretation or just another passage ripped out of context? The question is further begged: How do we equate dancing, falling and shaking? Are they the same? One could not shake, fall and dance all at the same time.

Looking at the specific event of David’s “dancing” in 2 Samuel 6 as well as other scriptural references to dancing all reveal obvious dissimilarities. In addition, proper exegesis of the 2 Samuel passage demonstrates Kilpatrick’s constant disregard for proper biblical interpretation and understanding. He has no texts, only pretexts. Consider the following points concerning the Bible’s mention of “dancing”:

1. David’s “dance” was a unique event. It does not establish a normative pattern for worship or a worship precedent, especially New Testament worship. The New Testament Church just didn’t dance. That is clear.

2. The word “dance” occurs twice in Matthew, once in Mark, and twice in Luke. Four of the occurrences are decidedly negative and not used of worship. One is of the homecoming feast of the prodigal, in other words a Jewish party to celebrate a homecoming. It was understandable and appropriate.

3. There is no mention of "dancing" in Acts or the Epistles. To attach it to New Testament worship is not only "slim pickings" but there are no pickings at all. Why impose something on the Church that is never given in Scripture? Instead of being "sick" of those who do not fall, Kilpatrick should be sick of those who impose their will and strange practices on the people of the Church.

4. Any temple "dances" in the Old Testament were choreographed moves planned and done with decorum and dignity.

Remember that the Ark of the Covenant had been in the house of Obed Edom for three months (v. 11). David led a public procession taking the Ark toward Jerusalem and the temple. David *with full presence of mind* "danced" before the Lord (v. 16). At no time did he shake and fall as Kilpatrick's interpretation suggests.

Something about that act caused David's wife to despise him, (v. 16). Was it just that his wife, Michal, was against enthusiasm or dancing? Was she just a stick in the mud and against emotional expression or is there more to it? Note that she never says: "I am mad because you danced before God" or "Dancing before the Lord upset me." That is key. *She never mentions dancing.*

A clue as to what upset Michal is found in verse 20 when she says that David "*uncovered*" himself "*as one of those vain fellows.*" It is apparent that she was not distressed and upset just because David acted emotionally toward God but revealed an even deeper problem. It had to do with pride of place and social status. David, in stripping his outer kingly robe and taking a place of less dignity, aggravated Michal's proud sensibilities. It really had nothing to do with David's dance but rather with (in her mind) the disgrace of lowering himself, uncovering himself and acting like a common person as we'll see. The disrobing offended her.

Barbara Bowen explains the sense of what was going on and David's strange reply in verse 22: "I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be

base in my own sight." Bowen then offers these comments:

"At the head of a great procession there would frequently be seen a half naked buffoon dancing, going through gesticulations usual on such occasions. It was all done in honor of the person to whom the procession was made, and was the office of a slave only."

Bowen continues:

"King David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with trumpets; and David danced before the Lord, he took the place of a slave at the head of the procession to do honor to Jehovah. Michal, King David's wife, not understanding her husband's motive, and thinking he had lowered himself before the people, reproached him bitterly, and despised him in her heart."¹⁴

Addressing David's comment in verse 22 ("I will yet be more vile") British scholar Adam Clarke paraphrases it: "I am not ashamed of humbling myself."¹⁵ For a King to act as a slave is a long step down. The perfect example of that is Jesus (Philippians 2). It seems that the "dancing" is not even a big point in the text. Kilpatrick's narrative does not even come close.

A further important note often overlooked is that the word "dance" in 2 Samuel 6 may not be the English word dance at all. The Hebrew word *karar* (only used in 2 Samuel 6) means simply to move around. So, in the end, David was not shaking, falling, spastic, out of control and out of his mind. He disrobed (as a servant would have), consciously, deliberately, willingly and took the place of a servant. He stepped down. In New Testament terms it would be similar to us becoming servants to others in practical ways and patiently ministering to them, *not doing "carpet time" or spiritual "breakdancing."* Serving God by serving others no matter what the inconvenience is certainly one big implication from this event.

SHAMANISTIC ROOTS

One can only speculate on how Kilpatrick's American Indian heritage influences his theatrics today. Our past, while not having a determinative influence, does influence us. By God's grace the negative influence does not have to rule us. Kilpatrick's equating dancing with shaking and falling (in the above quote) is interesting and bears looking at and analyzing.

Kilpatrick documents his Native American descent through his mother in his small autobiography, *Feast of Fire*.¹⁶ He is not very clear but seems to indicate that he lived with his maternal grandparents in Alabama for a time.¹⁷ How much exposure did Kilpatrick have to the mystical, shamanistic, occultic influences of native American religion and how much does it affect him today? Preaching in Washington, D.C., Kilpatrick offered the information that his mother "was an Indian."¹⁸

In this service at the National Church of God in our nation's capital (pastored by Dr. T.L. Lowry of Mary E. Baxter fame), Kilpatrick's exposure to and influence from Native American sources becomes evident. Toward the end of the service, during which he never even opened the Bible, he is heard leading the people in an eerie chant for an extended time. It sounds bizarre to hear a Christian pastor in a lengthy sing-song of "aaa-ooo, wee-oo wee-oo, wee-oo wee-oo, way-ooo way-oo" interspersed with singing tongues, "sheee-ooo, sheee-ooo." The incessant chanting sounds New Age and incredibly like an Indian chant as the excitement of the crowd escalates. The congregation chants back in a hypnotic fashion as Kilpatrick screams, "My, what an anointing! This is awesome. Lift your voices again, again and again. ... The anointing destroys the yoke, pshuuuuu."¹⁹ All of this goes on for an extended period of time before the tape finally runs out. It is unknown how much longer the hypnotic chanting went on.

In all this writer's exposure to Pentecostal practice during involvement with the Assembly of God and

Full Gospel churches, I have not heard anything quite like this. My immediate thought was that it sounded strangely like a Native American chant. Why would anything like this be introduced into a Christian meeting? It is not biblical, so is it just filler or an attempt to mesmerize? Is it a drawing from the past for novelty and effect? Is it a remembered knee-jerk expression, a sort of religious cryptnesia?

Secondly, in the late 1800s the Sioux Nation accepted a false Messiah named Wovoka who promised them heaven on earth. It was a Christianized Indian version of a counterfeit revival with a super prophet (Wovoka) and the Kingdom Now. Wovoka claimed a vision of Christ and revelations directly from Him. He also introduced an occult and shamanistic practice called the Ghost Dance. The bizarre ritual of the Ghost Dance was picked up and practiced by numerous other tribes as they awaited the imminent, final consummation. These were "charismatic" Indians with some truth and a lot of error. Indian dances today reflect and have roots in this.

The similarity between the Ghost Dance practices and Brownsville's manifestations may not be directly related. It may simply be that man cannot invent anything new. However, these comparisons, like those with the New Age Kundalini yoga, are striking.²⁰

Robert Utley explains the strange goings-on in many of the reservations in 1890:

"By praying, dancing the Ghost Dance, and singing the Ghost Dance songs, Indians could 'die' and journey to this paradise for brief visits before it actually appeared. Wovoka taught the delegates the mechanics of the dance and the words of some songs. By dancing, singing, and praying, they worked themselves into emotional frenzies. They went into trances that enabled each to 'die' for a short time and to see what the future held in store for the Indian race. ... Yet, as powerfully as Christianity in-

fluenced the Ghost Dance religion, there were features, such as the dance itself, that evoked the old pagan religion; and the object of the whole movement, of course, was the restoration of the old savage life and its dominant values. Christianity and paganism had united to form the common denominator of a doctrine that offered grounds for belief to all Indians, progressive and nonprogressive alike. Such a combination appealed strongly to the heart and mind of the American Indians of 1890."²¹

Of course, the disaster came when the kingdom did not come and Wovoka was discredited. This end was facilitated as well by the Sioux becoming more aggressive and militant in forcing the "kingdom" into existence. Believing themselves to be invincible, they fought a losing war.

Again the mysticism and manifestations in the Ghost Dance practices parallel the Brownsville phenomena. Kilpatrick's exposure to Indian ways is documented. The likenesses could be tenuously connected or just be attributable to the repetitive nature of man's error. In any case, nothing in Christianity should parallel New Age practices or shamanism.

It is amazing that knowledgeable people cannot put two and two together. David Works mentioned the incessant pounding of a drum and chanting. Kilpatrick talks about dancing and falling. Dr. Leonard George explains the ease with which people can be moved into altered states of consciousness:

"Humanity has developed an immense technology for induction methods. ... increasing stimulation, including dancing, drumming and various forms of RHYTHMIC SENSORY STIMULATION; focused attention and hyperalertness, as in concentrative MEDITATION; lowered alertness, as in states bordering sleep and some forms of HYPNOSIS; and psychophysical factors such as stress and drugs. ... If the nonconsensual reality experienced following an ecstatic dance is thought to be the abode

of devils, then the person may well feel as if he or she has encountered some. Or, if the dancer expects a divine visitation after the dance, a very different altered state will likely happen."²²

George concludes that the efficacy of the experience is really in the eye and expectation of the beholder. In other words whether a person has a good "trip" or a bad one depends on how they want to interpret their own emotional experiences and feelings. This is hardly a good basis on which to determine truth and reality.

He also makes us aware of the power of dance:

"From the caverns of the Old Stone Age to contemporary music concerts, dancing has been a popular method to induce ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS. Two components of vigorous, repetitive movements — EMOTIONAL AROUSAL and RYTHMIC SENSORY STIMULATION — can overload and disrupt normal patterns of brain functioning."²³

British pastor and author Alan Morrison reminds us of how easily sinful people can be manipulated:

"What we are really dealing with here are mind-games on a vast scale. For the collective, unregenerate imagination is a vast, open canvas on which the 'powers of the air', in conjunction with the corruption of the world, can paint whatever suggestion the observer, through his own inherent sinfulness, is open to receive — whether it is a vision in keeping with his religious tradition, the illusion of an acquired 'divinity', the belief that one's leg has been lengthened by a faith-healing session, the urge to murder or steal, a recurrent sexual obsession, the re-experiencing of an early life trauma, or (as any advertising magnate will aver) the desire to buy a particular brand of baked beans!"²⁴

Perhaps some thought-out, well-choreographed dance in a biblical

drama presentation might be edifying to the viewers since those performing and those watching are bringing solid rational thought to the experience. But mindless, gyrating, spinning, pogoing, jumping and what Kilpatrick calls "dancing," is a mind-altering, mind-battering New Age technique whether he cares to admit it or not. He was wrong about Hank Hanegraaff's demise and he is dead wrong about this as well.

Jude's words certainly apply: "these are sensual (soulish) persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit" (v. 19). It is dangerous indeed to claim that our sensual emotions are the Holy Spirit.

WAKE UP AMERICA!

The way in which the leaders of Brownsville are distorting Scripture, denigrating the Bible, and moving people away from true worship is to be deplored. It is sensual and deadly. Yes, America does need to wake up. This country needs to wake up to true repentance, true holiness, the dignity and decorum of worship and the fear of God. Moreover, the Christian Church needs to wake up and *revive the gift of discernment* rather than *despise and attack those who have it*.

Dr. Colas, in his *Christian News* article, concluded his evaluation of the Awake America! crusade with these words:

"There was a lot of emphasis on emotion and experience and very little, if any, emphasis about testing their experience by the Bible, instead of testing the Bible by their experience."²⁵

Amen! Awake America! is a travesty and a tragedy. What a tragic day when professing Christians want and even crave deception.

Endnotes:

1. Steve Rabey, *Revival in Brownsville*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, pg. 177
2. See M. Kurt Goedelman, "The Green River of Brownsville," *The Quarterly Journal*, Oct.-Dec. 1998, pp. 2, 17-19.
3. From the cassette tape, "God's Word in Today's Church: Five Reasons Why I Teach the Bible (2 Timothy 3:1-4:4)," tape #80180T, 1998, side 2.
4. Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946, Vol. 4, pg. 321.
5. Dr. Ralph G. Colas, "Charismatics Awake America," *The Christian News*, Nov. 2, 1998, pg. 22.
6. See further, M. Kurt Goedelman with G. Richard Fisher, "The Latter Rain Movement: Showering Heresy on the Church for Nearly Fifty Years," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1995, pp. 4, 10-12.
7. "Charismatics Awake America," op. cit.
8. See further the article on Benny Hinn's "Fire" Anointing contained in this *Journal*.
9. David Works, Internet report, "Awake America Denver," <http://www.sni.net/~dworks>, copy on file, emphasis added.
10. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, editors, *Dictionary of Pentecostal*

and Charismatic Movements. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988, pg. 309.

11. *Word Studies in the New Testament*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pg. 25.
12. See M. Kurt Goedelman, "Brownsville Pastor Confirms Non-Prophet Status," *The Quarterly Journal*, Oct.-Dec. 1997, pp. 2, 18-19.
13. "Charismatics Awake America," op. cit.
14. Barbara Bowen, *Strange Scriptures that Perplex the Western Mind - Clarified in the Light of Customs and Conditions in Bible Lands*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965, pg. 23.
15. Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1967, pg. 323.
16. John Kilpatrick, *Feast of Fire*. Pensacola, Fla.: self-published, 1995, pg. 3.
17. *Ibid.*, pg. 4.
18. John Kilpatrick, June 7, 1997 service, National Church of God, Washington, D.C., cassette tape on file.
19. *Ibid.*
20. For a comparison of Kundalini yoga with modern day revivalism, see Warren Smith and Danny Aguiree, "Some Examples of Holy Laughter in Other Religions," *SCP Newsletter*, Fall 1994, pg. 14.
21. Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press (printed by Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton, NY), 1963, pp. 69-70.
22. Dr. Leonard George, *Alternative Realities*. New York: Facts on File, 1995, pp. 12-13.
23. *Ibid.*, pg. 61.
24. Alan Morrison, *The Serpent and the Cross*. Birmingham, England: K&M Books, 1994, pg. 274.
25. "Charismatics Awake America," op. cit.

EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

(continued from page 4)

liberty, is because we have not known the fullness of fire. The anointing as fire is coming to your life." Hinn tells us that this new "fire" anointing will burn away bondage and sin.

This declaration immediately begs two very elementary questions. First, what has happened to the blood of Jesus Christ that we now need "fire" to burn away sin? (1 Peter 1:18-19). And secondly, more specifically for Hinn and his enthusiasts, is his 1993 volume, *The Blood*, now null and

void? In this work Hinn claims "The Holy Spirit showed me how powerful God's blood covenant is." Hinn said in the book that *the blood* "would lead you to a greater freedom," give "God's protection for your household," and offers "freedom from feelings of guilt over past sin." Evidently, the Holy Spirit is now *showing* him something different.

The bottom line is that for Hinn and his followers, it's never enough. There always has to be something fresh, something never heard before, something more powerful, something the next guy does not have. And as such,

tragically, there's a distorting and discounting of the true power of the Holy Spirit through a steady and progressive means of biblical sanctification in a believer's life. It all becomes very sad to realize how the likes of Hinn steadily infect and erode the Church and distort the blessed anointing which is promised and which we already possess (1 John 2:20).

Hinn and his devotees are simply not, as New Testament professor Thomas R. Edgar astutely cautions, "satisfied by the promise of the Spirit." (Edgar's work by that title is a sane

and biblical treatise of the subject and a breath of fresh air into a Church gone mad by the antics of Hinn and others.)

What transpired at Hinn's meeting at Anaheim's Arrowhead Pond Arena is beyond belief and description. It demonstrates a man out of control and further displays just how deceived his followers are as they drink in his "fire" anointing and go along with the "show." Hinn exhibits mannerisms and voice inflections that would cause mortal fear and spiritual trepidation to most individuals. "Get my children up here! ... Get my wife up here!" he thunders in a deep and almost demonic voice. Like in Little Rock, bodies are strewn across the stage and in the choir section under the influence of his new anointing.

As Hinn runs back and forth across the stage, people are slain under the fire anointing as he yells, screams, physically seizes, and near head-butts his victims. Once on the platform, his wife, Suzanne, and daughters and son are also subjected to the same intense and forceful handling of a man gone wild. "Fire, I said! Fire, I said! Fire, I said!" he roars to his wife as she succumbs to the floor for a second time. One by one, and most by name, Hinn calls people to the stage for targets of his powerful anointing. His family, his staff, his ministerial colleagues and their families, and his prominent friends all help to create a scene beyond belief and hard to describe.

The entire pathetic spectacle is classified by Hinn as the "power of God" and he further flaunts to his viewing audience and his crusade associates David Palmquist and singer Steve Brock:

"I don't understand why sometimes the anointing comes that mighty and strong. All I know is it's been absolutely incredible. It's been incredible. I have never known the anointing, gentlemen, like I saw it that meeting, especially during that period in that service on Friday night when literally every part of my body was electrocuted with God's [power]."

His associates agree. "The pure power of God," Brock exults. It "just breaks the chains that bounds. It sets us free," the singer further asserts. "I've never seen you like that before," his associate pastor Palmquist maintains.

The whole episode (and really all of Hinn's claimed anointings) is nothing more than a contemporary retelling of the 1837 parable "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen. The tragedy in all this is that it is no longer just a fairy tale.

If you recall, Andersen tells the story of an emperor who was well known for his desire for new clothes. So much so that, "he spent all his money in order to obtain them; his only ambition was to be always well dressed. ... He had a coat for every hour of the day." His appetite for new garments gave great opportunity for the unscrupulous. One day, two swindlers came to the emperor's city and bragged of their ability to weave for him the "finest cloth to be imagined." The emperor gave them a large sum of money and set them to the task. The suit that was to be made would not only be exceptionally beautiful, but would be unseen by those unfit for their offices or the unpardonably stupid.

All the emperor's money and the fine materials made their way, not into the new clothes, but into the knapsacks of the two perpetrators. "How well they look! How well they fit! ... What a beautiful pattern! What fine colours! That is a magnificent suit of clothes!" the swindlers boasted to the emperor. There were, in fact, no new magnificent garments at all and the emperor paraded naked under the pretense of being adorned with his new clothes. In town, everyone was frightened to admit that they saw nothing for fear of being thought unfit or stupid. They were unable to see anything, yet who were they to say? As the emperor marched unclothed, attendants behind him with outstretched hands pretended to carry the train of his new clothes. Everyone just went along with the show.

Finally, a little child revealed the "naked truth." "But he has nothing on at all," the child cried. The young boy's declaration finally permeated the crowd until all agreed, "He has nothing on at all!" Yet the emperor thought to himself, "Now I must bear up to the end," as he and his servants marched on with even greater dignity.

Unlike the Andersen parable, the misfortune with Hinn's anointing is that his faithful flock refuses to admit the naked truth: There simply is *no* anointing. They continue persistent and passionate in their desire not to be thought stupid or unfit — or even worse, unspiritual!

The Charismatic decree, heard over and over again, no doubt reverberates in their thinking. They have been victimized into thinking that questioning his anointing is tantamount to touching God's anointed, doing God's prophets harm, or blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The employment of such verses of Scripture (1 Chronicles 12:22, Psalm 105:15, Matthew 12:31), used out of context, is equal to nothing less than spiritual terrorism.

Hinn is able to engage the power of the mind in his approach to the miraculous and his anointings. His onstage persona creates a highly charged level of suggestibility and with this he is able to initiate desired responses and activity from his faithful. Hinn sets himself up with a "Heads I win, tails you lose" environment. If one goes along with his anointing, telling of its wonders and falling to the ground (being "slain in the Spirit") you confirm his claim that the power of God is being imparted through him ("Heads I win"). But if you do not succumb to his anointing and fail to go under, you are the one who is thought to be spiritually deficient with perhaps sin or Satan as the cause of your dormancy to his anointing ("Tails you lose").

There are many small details recorded on the video which demonstrate the human element and theatrics in all of this. They are, for the most part, missed by the unobservant eye. One classic moment is when one of Hinn's female victims, half-sitting,

half-laying on the stage after being "slain" under the alleged power imparted by Hinn, misreads a cue. Hinn comes near her and dispenses the "fire" anointing and she immediately flops back down. However, Hinn was not imparting the "powerful" anointing at her, but towards his associate minister David Palmquist. "Fire on David, Fire!" Hinn screams at Palmquist as he complies and also goes under the power.

Hinn's wife, as well, leaves for the careful observer tell-tale signs. There are two instances where she takes time to adjust her clothing after she has been slain and knocked to the stage floor. This is hardly activity one would expect from someone truly impacted under the numbing power of Hinn's Holy Ghost fire anointing. Another instance is by a woman, who before "falling" under the power, makes a quick glance behind herself to insure that a "catcher" is in position and ready to catch her and lay her gently to the floor as she swoons. This quick glance action should have well been taken by another of Hinn's female players as the "catcher" missed his cue and allowed her to crash to the stage floor unrestrained. She is a clear example of how one has a better chance of being hurt, rather than healed, at a Hinn Miracle Crusade.

Yves Brault, author of *Behind the Scenes - The True Face of the Faith Fake Healers*, and himself a victim for several years of Hinn's seductive and

deceptive power, also recognized the faith healer's orchestration. He told PFO:

"To understand the recent performance of Benny Hinn at the Arrowhead Pond Arena, we must signal the promise he had made on Sept. 9, on his daily program: 'You mark my word. The next three crusades: Birmingham, Anaheim, and Orlando, we are gonna see unusual creative miracles. Notable miracles. God in those crusades will do what hasn't happened in all the 24 years of ministry I've been in.'"

Brault urges that,


"Since there were no notable creative miracles, Benny had to 'create' an entertaining show of his own. What better way than the 'slaying in the Spirit' method. First he called the preachers on stage who naturally cooperated, then several staff members who know the drill well. His music director, Jim Cernero, standing at his pulpit leading the choir has his name loudly called as Benny throws the 'fire anointing' at him, indicating it's his turn to go down. A subtle trick to warn one who is not facing the show. Cernero's knees bend but he doesn't fall, as there is no 'catcher' in the vicinity."

Brault also made similar observations concerning the performance of

Hinn's family members:

"Then came the turn of Benny's own children. 'Get my children up here,' he said. They seem so perturbed, as wishing they were somewhere else. His wife, Suzanne, is also called on stage like a slave. Benny, raging like he's about to hit her, knocks her down screaming, 'Fire, I said! Fire, I said! Fire, I said!' Suzanne acquiesces and falls, but not without stretching her jacket down as she hits the ground. Conscious of her outfit, and fully aware of the scheme, she and other staff members participated in a performance that once again misled multitudes."

Hinn's "fire" anointing, and the claim of its supernatural superiority, will soon fade into the background. Yet tragically, through his many and varied exploits, his followers have lost as much spiritually as the United States has lost morally by way of the exploits of the leadership of this country.

What's next for Hinn? Only time will tell. But, no doubt, tomorrow will bring a new and improved, more powerful, more important anointing to his following who fill auditoriums across the country and the world for his miracle crusades. Yet, it is more than time for the devotees of Hinn to stop and listen to the voice of reason: "He has no anointing; the emperor has no clothes." 

THE PREACHER

(continued from page 1)

her to a debate (which she refused).¹

The "attack" to which *Charisma* alluded was the Dec. 7, 1995 edition of *Issues, Etc.* (KFUO 850 AM in St. Louis). The program was hosted by Lutheran Pastor Don Matzat and the featured guests for the show were none other than the authors of this article.² Evidently, the magazine or Meyer herself surmises that a systematic and biblical analysis of her teach-

ing (with primary documentation from her tapes and writings) constitutes an "attack" or assault of some kind. Paul commended Bereans, while the magazine castigates them.

Matzat, himself involved in the Charismatic movement from 1971-1986, observed:

"Regarding the challenge, as I remember it, was nothing more than an open invitation to Joyce to respond to our comments. Joyce did not avail herself of the opportunity to respond on the air."³

Like others in the Word-Faith camp who are uneducated, untrained and unskilled in doctrine and systematic theology, Meyer is none too eager to openly discuss the Christian faith with one who has worked hard to rightly divide the Word of Truth. However, following the initial radio broadcast, Matzat did have the opportunity to dialogue with Meyer and her husband, Dave. Matzat, a friend of Dave's family, recalled the meeting:

"We had a very nice chat. I told them exactly what I just said here. I said, 'You were distorting

the doctrine of justification.' I said, 'What your doctrine will lead to is what Ken Copeland teaches, that Jesus had to be born again in hell. Because He's simply a man dying for our sins.' She did not reject what Ken Copeland teaches. She simply told me, 'I am not going to change what I teach.'"⁴

Meyer's concept of sinless perfection is the most disturbing element to Matzat. Meyer has claimed,

"Now whether you like it or not, whether you want to admit it or not, whether you want to operate on it or not, you are made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Most people who go to denominational churches never ever hear that! They never hear it! Never! All I was ever taught to say was, 'I, a poor, miserable sinner.' I am not poor. I am not miserable. And I am not a sinner. That is a lie from the pit of hell! That is what I were [sic] and if I still was, then Jesus died in vain. Amen?"⁵

Meyer may be able to say she is not poor and not miserable. First John 1:8, however, would preclude the rest of her comments about not being a sinner. Paul thought himself to be the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). As Christians we are, after all, saved sinners.

Meyer's comments point out the real issue: Just who is lambasting whom? Meyer's declaration clearly lambastes the theology of the Reformers, including, most notably, Lutherans and Calvinists.

As noted in our previous *Journal* article, Meyer no longer distributes the above tape with her perfectionistic ideas.⁶ A staff member from her ministry told PFO that the message is obsolete. What is not clear is what *part of* or if the entire message is obsolete. One of its major themes on the tape is the "born again Jesus" gospel. Yet it can be shown that Meyer still distributes material promoting this heretical gospel, which certainly suggests that she does not

see it as entirely obsolete (at least for the time being).

Moreover, when one examines the now obsolete tape, divine intervention and direct revelation are stated as the source of her message:

"The Bible can't even find any way to explain this. Not really. That's why you've got to get it by revelation. There are no *words* to explain what I'm telling you. I've got to just trust God that He's putting it into your spirit like He put it into mine."⁷

Having foolishly appealed to divine revelation and God's impartation for the message, she now, in essence, has made God culpable for an obsolete message. Thus, one must ask, why does she continue to rely upon *revelation knowledge* when it produces obsolete messages and indicts God as the author of heresy? And how can the average listener discern which part of Meyer's materials are biblical truth and which are destined for the trash heap of obsolescence? The caution of Zechariah 13:4-5 regarding false prophets who change their mind and their message bears consideration here.

JESUS IN HELL?

The *Charisma* article indicates that another of Meyer's critics, apologist Hank Hanegraaff, cited her booklet, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*.⁸ Hanegraaff faulted Meyer for teaching that Jesus was born again in hell. Meyer responded by stating that she does not believe and has never taught that particular doctrine.

Whether Hanegraaff ever used the exact words, "Jesus was born again in hell" or if the *Charisma* writer simply put those words in the Southern California apologist's mouth in an attempt to build a "straw man" is not clear. What is clear, however, in spite of Meyer's denials, is that in the fourth chapter of her booklet, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*, she:

- Teaches a born again Jesus.⁹
- Teaches that hell, not the cross, is where salvation was purchased.¹⁰

She not only delineates and defines the heresy but she blatantly defends it.

While Meyer may deny now that she has ever taught that "Jesus was born again in hell," she has not renounced the teaching nor denounced those who teach it. Were she to do so, she most likely would neither have her picture in or on *Charisma* magazine again, nor would she be invited to speak with the heretics who do believe and teach it: her mentors and friends.

Based on the content of her book, turning to Christ would be the most *impotent* decision one would ever make. By placing faith in "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4) as put forth in her booklet, a new "believer" would not be entitled to the new covenant purchased with Jesus Christ's blood. Rather, the Jesus that Meyer proclaims, is a Jesus whose blood paid for nothing because his "blood was made of no effect," being "treated as an unholy thing" (Hebrews 10:29), because according to this teaching, Jesus' payment was actually made by suffering in hell. This teaching makes the "It is finished" of John 19:30 a lie. First Corinthians 15:3 is very clear: "Jesus was crucified and *died* for our sins," not suffered in hell for our sins.

Thus, Meyer refuses to debate and will not "comment directly on such opposition." Is it any wonder that her husband remarked, "We let God respond" and "That's not our position, to try and come back and straighten them out"?

As noted above, neither Meyer nor her husband has the necessary theological training to defend her indefensible teachings. The only reason the Meyers can say that it's not their "position" to respond and "straighten" us out is that they fail to grasp the basics of biblical interpretation and hermeneutics. As a result, it's not that they *won't* respond, it's because they *cannot* respond. "[Let[ting] God respond" is merely subterfuge. Strange how first-class, super-Christians, who would have us believe they

are tapping into divine revelation, can do all things in Christ, except successfully defend their damnable doctrines of demons.

As we read earlier, the Apostle Paul's attitude was not to just let God respond, but to get into the trenches and do what God called *him* to do, namely to "cut the ground from under those who proclaim" another gospel.

Even worse, their response gives this issue the sense of unimportance. Much to do about nothing! If it were, we would truly be wasting their time. Yet, those in apologetics ministries are keenly aware that this is an essential issue. Corrupting the Gospel produces heretical and damnable doctrine. Hence, we take heed to the Scripture's admonition to "earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). We should not, and cannot, do otherwise.

STOLEN WORDS

Stealing others' errors is directly addressed by the Prophet Jeremiah: "Therefore, declares the Lord, I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me. Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams, declares the Lord. They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least, declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:30, 32).

In her booklet, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*, the first subchapter heading is, WHAT HAPPENED ON THE CROSS? This heading is strikingly similar to the title of Kenneth Copeland's 1984 notorious sermon tape, *What Happened From The Cross To The Throne*. As earlier noted, Meyer also has a tape with the title, *From the Cross to the Throne*. Not only are these titles similar, they each go into great detail about the subject of what happened on, and more significantly, beyond the cross of Christ. And they each go well beyond Scripture to teach the heretical "born again Jesus" gospel.

While Meyer apparently borrowed her content from Copeland, Copeland in turn presumably adopted the title from E.W. Kenyon's book by the same name, as well as the same heretical theme. Both Copeland's and Kenyon's works have become "classics" within the Charismatic camp. In the 1980s, faith healer Benny Hinn also taught the same heresy with the "revelation knowledge" tactic as its source. He has since disavowed the teaching. Others committed to the teaching include: Kenneth Hagin, Fred Price, Charles Capps, Paul and Jan Crouch and John Jacobs (of The Power Team).

In summary (with few variations), the "born again Jesus" gospel teaches that Jesus died two deaths, one physically upon the cross and the other spiritually in hell. His Spirit literally became sin on the cross, taking on the very nature of Satan, thereby being stripped of His Deity. He was ushered into hell where He was tortured for three days and nights by Satan and his demons, was reborn or "born again" in hell, reclaiming His Deity and finally rising bodily from the dead.

The amount of fanciful "revelation knowledge" necessary to contradict the clear teaching of Scripture, in order to teach the "born again Jesus" gospel, is nothing short of amazing. Meyer, like her predecessors, offers the same "you've got to get it by revelation" diversion.

This doctrine removes the clear teaching of Scripture that the atonement took place upon the cross and places the event in hell. It is just one more example how Satan strives to take our focus from the cross.

Although Meyer puts great value upon the "job" Jesus did, she misplaces *where* He did it. When challenged about the unbiblical concept of this teaching, Charismatics will often respond that it doesn't matter where He atoned for our sins. Strangely, Latter-day Saints offer the same rationale because their version of Jesus Christ atoned for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane. Atonement in

hell contradicts the Apostle Paul's admonition to "never boast except in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).

A JOB HELL DONE?

As mentioned above, Meyer's booklet focuses primarily upon the "born again Jesus" gospel. This small volume is still being sold to the public. And the teaching is not confined to just this one booklet. Consider these statements on her tape, *From the Cross to the Throne*:

"And you've got to really glean some things out of the Word of God to really get hold of what He [Jesus] did for you during those three days."

"Jesus said, 'It is finished.' And He meant the Old Covenant. The *job* He had to do was just getting started. He really did the *job* the three days and nights that He was in hell. That's where the *job* was done" (emphasis added).

"He was pronounced guilty on the cross but He paid the price in hell."

"All the hosts of hell was [sic] upon Him. Upon Him. They got on Him. They got Him down in the floor and got on Him. And they were laughing and mocking."

"Sunday morning, here comes the Son. Sunday morning, God gets Himself together. Ho, hoooo. Justice has been met, somehow the thing's been taken care of. And ol' God gets His voice together and He hollers out three words and they go roaring through the universe and entering the gates of hell. He said, '*It is enough! It is enough!*'" (emphasis in the original).

Can she prove that God actually said, "It is enough! It is enough!"? Can she provide chapter and verse for such a declaration? No! Only through the guise of "revelation knowledge" can such information be provided.

Yet, tragically, it is Kenyon, Copeland and others within the Word-Faith camp who are her source for such knowledge. God plainly warns us:

“‘Yes,’ declares the Lord, ‘I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, “The Lord declares”’” (Jeremiah 23:31).

He also warns:

“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1).

Many able expositors have addressed the weakness of the Jesus-in-hell idea. Former CRI researcher Brian Onken points out something that Meyer misses entirely:

“Jesus appears to be conscious of the end of His redemptive suffering. Furthermore it seems evident that His conscious fellowship with God the Father was restored because of His subsequent self-committal: ‘Father, into thy hands I commit My spirit’ (Luke 23:46).”¹¹

Ephesians 1:7 is clear: “In Him we have redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of sins.” Pastor Michael Moriarity emphatically affirms: “As Christians, we affirm that our salvation is based solely on Christ’s atoning work on the cross.”¹² Moriarity’s book has a 22-page appendix dealing with the whole issue of where Jesus atoned for sin.

WHAT IS REAL PROOF?

Meyer says “that the changed lives are proof enough,” that she’s “anointed by God to do what I’m doing.”¹³ As is the Charismatic tendency, this is a subjective posture. Every cult and aberrational sect on the face of the Earth appeals to “changed lives” as a means of validating their claims that they represent God. Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others all validate that they are “anointed by God” to do what they’re doing by virtue of “changed lives.” As such, her logic is

as flawed as cult logic. Meyer needs something more concrete on which to base her claims. Remember, Christianity is based on facts, not feelings. Holy Ghost “goose bumps,” liver quivers or even subjective short-term change are not the confirmation of the Christian faith.

Objectively speaking, her literature and tapes are “proof enough” that she is not anointed! Listening to her twists, turns and changes could only lead one to conclude that God is confused. Meyer’s appeal to have God’s blessing upon her ministry is questionable when one considers that God does not empower the vanguards of the Church to teach false and heretical doctrine.

Sadly, when careful exegetes of God’s Word challenge her theology, she resorts to calling them “religious people” (pg. 55) who only criticize her for not being as well-educated as they are and then appeals to her “anointing” as proof that she is free to ignore them.

MISSING CHARACTER

While Meyer claims, “It’s important to me to have character and integrity,”¹⁴ she lacks those qualities when she uses red herrings such as the above in order to evade any and every critic regardless of their status. Criticism directed to her does not stem from her lack of education, it rather stems from her heretical teachings. She not only lacks a sound understanding of Scripture, she lacks integrity and a teachable spirit, the very things she boasts about.

Why does PFO make the charge of “unteachable”? When she met with Matzat to discuss the issues that were brought up on the radio broadcast, she told him that she was not going to change what she taught. This certainly emphasizes that she is not willing to learn sound doctrine or repent of the heretical teaching she promoted. The book of Proverbs is replete with admonitions that a wise man is teachable. Meyer, apparently prefers to hold onto teachings scraped from the garbage cans of the Word-Faith movement.

On the radio broadcast, Matzat spent a great deal of time in his introduction of the program covering the issue of discernment and how it’s not a matter of dealing with the person or getting personal. He took great pains to explain this, “You don’t deal with the individual, rather you deal with the concepts.” Matzat made the truth as palatable as possible. It’s one thing to be confused or unclear on an essential Christian doctrine such as the Gospel, but it’s an entirely different matter when one adamantly refuses to acknowledge the truth when confronted with it.

REAL CHANGE?

Meyer told *Charisma* that she has been radically changed from being “angry, rebellious and hateful toward men” and “mean, ornery, sarcastic, sharp, hard, bitter and full of resentment.”¹⁵ She even admitted to have trouble submitting to her own pastor, “Acknowledging that their strong-willed personalities clashed regularly.”¹⁶ The Lord has worked in her life, she says, and the result is “an absolute, all-out, total miracle.”¹⁷ While there may have been a change in her life, the transformation falls short of being a “miracle.”

Consider this example:

“And from here on, it probably wouldn’t do you one bit of good to try and follow me. So if you’re taking notes, you can write down the Scriptures. Cause very frankly, *I’m not going to have time to wait on you.*”¹⁸

Her words are not exactly what one could label a servant’s heart or a demonstration of patience, nor much of a Christian display of love. Consider, also, these comments:

“Don’t talk to anybody, don’t go to the bathroom, don’t go get a drink of water, don’t move — just listen. Amen? I believe it’s that important.”¹⁹

When listening to her sermon tape in its entirety, there is ample evidence that she possess an aura of haughtiness. For emphasis, she speaks just

short of yelling through the entire tape. There is no doubt in her mind that what she is teaching is gospel truth. Unfortunately, if you first listen to Kenneth Copeland's version of this damnable teaching, it is obvious that Meyer simply heisted not only his title, but his teaching as well. Plagiarizing someone else's material is bad enough, but plagiarizing heresy is even more regrettable. And then naming God as the source is blasphemous.

While she may have mellowed with time, there doesn't seem to be a radical difference between the old and the new Joyce Meyer. The *Charisma* spin attempts to soften her personality, but in fact demonstrates her continued arrogance and combative spirit.

BAD THEOLOGY FOR GOOD

Meyer says that her exodus from the Lutheran church was because her "charismatic beliefs fueled conflict with their congregation."²⁰ While she expresses gratitude to the Lutheran Church for her doctrinal foundation,²¹ she quickly traded sound teaching for the writings of mystics and heretics.

The Lutheran church certainly did not teach her to supplement "Bible study with books such as Watchman Nee's *Spiritual Man*, Brother Lawrence's [*The*] *Practice of the Presence of God* and the writings of Madame Guyon."²²

Charisma writer, Ken Walker, describes Guyon as "a 17th century writer." He fails to mention that Guyon was a French, Catholic mystic. PFO has covered the terrible errors of Guyon in its article, "The Mindless Mysticism Of Madam Guyon," showing the confusion and occultism of this medieval mystic.²³

Likewise, Brother Lawrence was a 17th century Catholic mystic, who claimed, "That perfect resignation to God was a sure way to heaven."²⁴ Lawrence, typical of mystics, failed to realize that Jesus is the *sure* and *only* way to Heaven (John 14:6).

Our Lord said, "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear

good fruit" (Luke 6:43). Meyer, like others lacking discernment, gets her spiritual nourishment from bad trees. Yes, Charismatic beliefs do "fuel conflict" with Evangelical Christianity when their sources are unbiblical and non-Christian.

Speaking of bad theology, it's unfortunate that Vinson Synan, dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University in Virginia, compares "Meyer to Baptist pastor Charles Stanley, saying she can hold a crowd's interest without fiery rhetoric or sensational preaching."²⁵ That's where the similarity ends. Stanley's views are neither in a state of change, nor is his theology aberrant or heretical. Stanley and Meyer are on complete opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to obeying Paul's command to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

In preparation for ministry, Meyer claims a divine call on her life, stating "she sensed the Holy Spirit saying, 'You are going all over the place to teach My Word.'"²⁶ While it is commendable for one to teach God's Word, it is imperative that one obeys God's admonition to: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) and "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16). One cannot be said to be properly teaching God's Word when they violate these commands.

Throughout Meyer's rise into ministry, her mentors and the reservoirs from which she has developed her theology are hazardous-waste sites. From 17th century mystics to 20th century Word-Faith proponents, Meyer has fed on a harmful diet of unbiblical teaching.

CANCEROUS TEACHING

While Meyer has been greatly influenced by the Word-Faith advocates, the "health" message they preach has

not been realized in her own physical well-being. In her tape set, *Overcoming Adversity*, Meyer details her fight with breast cancer and the mastectomy that followed.²⁷

On the back of the album cover she reveals,

"During a routine checkup in 1989, doctors discovered that I had breast cancer; and I was advised to have surgery immediately. Dave and I prayed and sought God about what to do. Our children, staff, pastor, and friends all prayed. For me, it would have been easier to say, 'God will take care of me. I'm not having the surgery.' However, it would have been a statement of the flesh — of presumption — not faith. At the time, I did not have the assurance that only God can give to take such a stand. I had the surgery. The cancer had not reached the lymph nodes, and I do not have cancer anymore!"

No matter how you view Meyer's statement, it is confusing and inconsistent. And it demonstrates that the "faith" message does not work. Once again, God becomes culpable because He did not provide her with the assurance "to take such a stand." Apparently, Meyer has to come up with a rationale as to why she went to a doctor and elected to have the surgery — which is a departure from Word-Faith's "health" gospel message and, in fact, a negative confession.

However, the "wealth" message certainly seems to be fulfilled in her life and ministry. The *Charisma* article stated that approximately 600 radio and television stations, plus seven cable networks and seven satellite networks spanning the globe, carry her program. She adds 30,000 names to her mailing list each month and has sold nearly three million tapes and close to a million books last year.²⁸ This being the case, how then does her ministry manage to grow at such a phenomenal rate? Does not this signify the Spirit's involvement and blessing upon her work?

Pastor Matzat offers this sane and revealing observation:

“Here is the deception in all this: A person gains a following, they get a lot of money because they sell a lot of tapes, and think it’s the blessing of God, when all they are doing is telling sinners what sinners want to hear. What do sinners want to hear? I’m not a sinner! Of course, people flock to you for that and therefore, it’s not the blessing of God. It’s simply a deception.”

Matzat further warns:

“Joyce Meyer is the classic case of an individual who knows absolutely no theology, who has read a few books, picked up some ideas, takes some popular notions then teaches them. It’s these kinds of people who are dangerous in the Body of Christ because they know nothing. She has no grasp of historic systematic theology. Basically what she’s doing is, she’s going back to Rome with her understanding of sin. Because the Roman Catholic church teaches that we are no longer bearing the sinful nature. She has rejected the basic Reformational truth of justification. She’s a heretic!”²⁹

BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

Meyer maintains her “ministry is so important because we’re called to the believers. We’re to help believers mature, and grow up.”³⁰ Yet, how can she fulfill such a noble “call” when she, herself, has no proper understanding of the doctrine of justification and promotes a different gospel? The Gospel is something every true believer should understand. Meyer’s confusion on such a vital tenet of the Christian faith emphasizes an immaturity on her part and an inability to help others. Rather, she is simply blindly leading the blind.

She credits the devil with stealing the knowledge of her salvation as a young believer.³¹ It would appear that Satan is still lying to her regarding the

message of salvation because she has not renounced the “born again Jesus” gospel which she continues to tacitly support.

IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF HERESY

Latter-day Saints have imitation scriptures. Jehovah’s Witnesses have imitation prophecies. Many within the Word-Faith or Charismatic camps, like the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses, have an imitation gospel. This type of imitation is deadly. There should be no doubt that Meyer truly fosters “another gospel.” Unbelievably, she sanctimoniously states on her tape:

“I might as well go and smack Him right in the face if I’m going to go around and feel guilty and condemned. Every time you feel guilty and condemned it’s just like slapping Him in the face and saying, ‘You didn’t do a good job. You didn’t do a complete job. I’m an old rotten this and I’m an old rotten that.’”³²

Here Meyer’s “born again Jesus” gospel further takes on the elements of the “self-love, self-image, self-esteem” gospel. Her words bear further weight to Matzat’s charge that she is simply “telling sinners what sinners want to hear.” The Bible never focuses on man’s worth, but on God’s love. Man does need to experience the guilt and condemnation of his sin. It is only when man feels he is “an old rotten this” that the eminence of Christ’s sacrifice is realized. Therein, also, is the true working and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

PRACTICAL BUT DEADLY

While Meyer’s preaching may be folksy and down-to-earth, it isn’t biblical when it comes to the Gospel, the crux of Christianity. Most of those who hear or watch Meyer via radio and television, are probably unaware that she espouses heresy. Yet Peter warns us:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers

among you. They will *secretly introduce destructive heresies*, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them bringing swift destruction on themselves” (2 Peter 2:1, emphasis added).

In spite of this, many believe that she offers “good practical teaching.” People may enjoy her “folksy” preaching but do they, in the long term, really spiritually benefit from it? We cannot allow symbolism to win out over substance. Paul reminds us, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Corinthians 5:6). Partaking of Meyer’s down-to-earth fare can be as deadly as one trying to eat rat poison and spit out the arsenic from it while nourishing on the cornmeal. It cannot be done. And no, the analogy of eating the chicken and spitting out the bones (of error) just doesn’t cut it when you consider that the average believer doesn’t have the discernment necessary to separate heresy from orthodoxy — babies and small children are incapable of performing such a task of bone-spitting. They choke on the bones.

Saying Joyce Meyer has practical teachings is on the same level as saying she’s a nice person. It doesn’t matter. If you have a nice Jehovah’s Witness or nice New Ager, the value of their message is not established on a congenial disposition but on their core doctrinal beliefs. False prophets, though sometimes nice or practical, are still deadly. So what if one is a *nice* heretic? So what if one is a *practical* false teacher? We benefit nothing from a nice and practical heretic.

The Body of Christ has so disparaged theology that even a rudimentary understanding of heresy is not in the language of the average believer. Practicality has become the sole standard for judging theology because all other standards are absent. Thus, practicality wins the day by default.

Others claim that Meyer espouses a positive faith message. Yet, faith is nothing more than trust, leaning on,

clinging to, and relying upon God. What they're saying, in effect, is that she puts out a positive Word-Faith message. But just how positive can a message be when you have a counterfeit gospel which Galatians 1:8-9 says causes one to be eternally condemned? Not very positive at all!

Consider, too, some of her practical teachings:

"Now, I don't know what hell looks like but God gave me a few ideas. It's hot, fire hot, but at the same time it's cold and clammy. That's kind of different, isn't it. Fire hot, but cold and clammy."³³

Once again, Meyer appeals to God's intervention in going beyond the Scriptures. Then there's her concept that:

"Pain is a spirit. When it gets on your body, tell it to leave."³⁴

That would be practical advice if it worked. But it doesn't.

HOW IMPORTANT CAN A COMMA BE?

Meyer advocates teaching that would endear her to the Jehovah's Witnesses and in doing so aids and encourages them. Consider her words:

"And in Luke 23:43, Jesus said unto him, 'I say unto you today you shall be in paradise with me.' There's no punctuation in the original translations of the Bible. We have punctuated it and in this particular Scripture it was punctuated wrong. They put in there: 'I say unto you comma today you shall be in paradise with me' making it appear that the minute Jesus died on the cross He went straight to paradise. No, no, no. He did not. The way it should read is: 'I say unto you today comma. I'm telling you today. Today I'm telling you that you are going to be in paradise with me.' But He didn't say, 'You're going to be there today.' He said, 'I'm telling you this today.'"³⁵

What Meyer attempts to do here, is explain away a key passage of Scripture which would disprove her belief that Jesus was ushered into the depths of hell, rather than going directly to paradise. Within Charismatic and Pentecostal circles, "spiritual death of Jesus" advocates are relatively alone in their desire to move the comma in Luke 23:43. However, in the cult realm, they are in good (or not so good) company. Strident annihilationists say virtually the same thing. Compare these comments found in a *Watchtower* magazine:

"In the *King James Version* the comma's being placed before the word 'today' makes it appear that Jesus told the evildoer that he would be in Paradise that very same day. This would mean that Jesus would have to come into his Kingdom, and that Jesus, as well as the evildoer, would be in Paradise on that very day that he was speaking."³⁶

Additionally, the Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible, *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, renders Luke 23:43 along the lines of Meyer's scriptural interpretation:

"Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise."

Like the Watchtower, Meyer has absolutely no scholarly foundation for such a belief. She reads into Scripture (eisegesis) whatever it takes in order to buttress her heretical doctrine. This, too, is not very practical.

Since there are no commas used in the Greek manuscripts, the punctuation in English must be determined by the context, as well as the other verses that speak of Jesus' cross work and the afterlife. That is why all versions (except *The New World Translation*) have the comma after "you" and not "today" in Luke 23:43. The immediate and larger context demand that the comma be placed where it is, in virtually every modern version.

Dr. Randolph Yaeger, in his substantial work, *The Renaissance New*

Testament, translates Luke 23:43: "Therefore He said to him, truly I am telling you, Today you will be with me in Paradise."³⁷

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest renders Luke 23:43: "And He said to him, Assuredly I to you am saying, Today with me you shall be in paradise."³⁸

Former Jehovah's Witness David Reed criticizes the Watchtower rationale of: "In keeping with the context, we omit the comma before 'today.'" And perceptively observes: "However, what the JW translators should really say is that 'in keeping with their doctrine,' they move the comma."³⁹

Dr. Ron Rhodes further shows the inconsistency of the moved comma:

"It is helpful to observe how the phrase, 'Truly I say to you' is used elsewhere in Scripture. The phrase — which translates the Greek Words *amen soi lego* — occurs 74 times in the Gospels and is always used as an introductory expression. ... Now here's the important point: In 73 out of the 74 times the phrase occurs in the Gospels, the *New World Translation* places a break — such as a comma — immediately after the phrase, 'Truly I tell you.' Luke 23:43 is the *only* occurrence of this phrase in which the *New World Translation* does not place a break after it. Why? ... this would go against Watchtower theology. Hence the relocated comma."⁴⁰

HELPLESS HELPER

The bedrock theme of her ministry is presenting "before God intervened" illustrations of herself along with "after God intervened" illustrations, then giving advice on how her listeners, using the Word of God, can do the same thing in their lives. The *Charisma* article seems to award her the Christian world's official poster girl for hurting women. Many women suffer from mental and sexual abuse and may benefit from the advice and counsel of someone who's been there.

This in itself is not a bad thing. But if Meyer wants to truly teach the Bible, rightly divide the Word of Truth and affect lives in a lasting way, she needs to get a theological education and a sound doctrinal foundation. Real results can only be gauged by time.

We must remember that her teaching style is not the only thing that draws large crowds — it is also her teachings. Are the teachings sound or only that which tickle itching ears? Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 loom prophetic and timely for our day.

PROBLEM OR SYMPTOM?

Joyce Meyer continues to have a huge impact upon women of every denomination. Yet, despite her false teaching, Meyer is really not the essence of the problem, only an evident symptom. The real problem lies within the leadership of the Body of Christ for not teaching, emphasizing, and reinforcing the essential doctrines of historic, orthodox Christianity and further exhibiting how sound teaching contrasts with the aberrant and heretical theology of the cults. Large portions of the Church's leadership have been lazy. Few churches have counter-cult material available to their people. Yet this is a battle the Christian faces every day.

For too long, the Church has avoided essential Christian doctrine. Because we don't do our homework, we produce theologically weak Christians. As a result, members fall prey to cults which could ultimately lead them away from a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Messages from the pulpit and from Sunday School teachers rarely focus on the essentials of our faith. If anything, they are quickly touched upon or referenced to, causing little understanding and lots of confusion in the process. "Doctrine divides" has been the hue and cry. Yes, doctrine does divide — that's its very purpose. It divides us from the Jehovah's Witnesses and from those, like Meyer, who promote a distorted view of Christ and His atonement.

With such a teaching vacuum cre-

ated, this was bound to happen. Until the issue of how to properly handle the Word of Truth is dealt with by the Body of Christ, these problems are going to continue and false teachers, like Joyce Meyer, will continue to flourish.

Finally, Meyer herself needs to be rebuked, not applauded as "The Preacher Who Tells It Like It Is." She plays with the truth and recreates and fabricates her past as far as what she taught. She fails to understand essential Christian teaching. Scripture, whether knowingly or unknowingly in her view, is insufficient, thereby requiring "revelation knowledge" to supplement it.

Likewise, her gospel is insufficient and needs to be supplemented with an atonement in hell. Is she really fit to be called a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Her endorsement by *Charisma* magazine ought to be evidence enough to disqualify her as an Evangelical minister.

Somehow, those who *really*, "tell it like it is" are looked down upon as overeducated, unanointed, critical, religious attackers. The bottom line is that as a result of not studying to show herself approved unto God, Meyer succumbs to heresies, promotes false teaching and does *not* tell it like it is — she tells it like it isn't.

Endnotes:

1. Ken Walker, "The Preacher Who Tells It Like It Is," *Charisma*, November 1998, pg. 55.
2. The material presented on the broadcast derived from our initial article on Meyer, "The Doctrinal Ambiguity of a Wandering Star," which appeared in *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1. pp. 5-8.
3. Personal interview with Don Matzat by M. Kurt Goedelman, December 20, 1998.
4. Ibid.
5. Joyce Meyer, *From the Cross to the Throne*, cassette tape, sermon recorded at Life Christian Center in Saint Louis, Mo., no date, tape on file.
6. *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1, op. cit., pg. 6.
7. Meyer, *From the Cross to the Throne*, op. cit., emphasis in the original.
8. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 55.
9. Joyce Meyer, *The Most Important Deci-*

sion You Will Ever Make. Fenton, Mo.: Life In The Word, Inc./Joyce Meyer Ministries, August 1991 edition, pg. 36; (pg. 42 of the current edition).

10. Ibid., pp. 35-38, 41, 43; (pp. 41-44, 47, 49 of the current edition).
11. Brian Onken, "The Atonement of Christ and the 'Faith' Message," *Forward*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pg. 14.
12. Michael Moriarity, *The New Charismatics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, pg. 358.
13. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 55.
14. Ibid., pg. 51.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., pg. 53.
17. Ibid., pg. 51.
18. Meyer, *From the Cross to the Throne*, op. cit., emphasis added.
19. Ibid.
20. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 53.
21. Ibid., pg. 54.
22. Ibid., pg. 53.
23. See further, G. Richard Fisher, "The Mindless Mysticism Of Madam Guyon," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 4, 12-15.
24. Brother Lawrence (Nicholas Herman), *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1958, pg. 23. Lawrence's words and letters were compiled into book form by M. Beaufort.
25. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 54, sidebar, Ken Walker, "A New Day For Women Preachers."
26. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 53.
27. Joyce Meyer, *Overcoming Adversity*. Fenton, Mo.: Life In The Word, Inc./Joyce Meyer Ministries, no date, cassette tape #A62.
28. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 50.
29. Matzat personal interview, op. cit.
30. *Charisma*, op. cit., pg. 52-53.
31. Ibid., pg. 53.
32. Meyer, *From the Cross to the Throne*, op. cit., emphasis in original.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1971, pg. 255.
37. Randolph O. Yaeger, *The Renaissance New Testament*. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1982, Vol. 8, pg. 432.
38. Kenneth Wuest, *The New Testament - An Expanded Translation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961, pg. 203.
39. David A. Reed, *Jehovah's Witnesses Answered Verse By Verse*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1986, pg. 68, emphasis in original.
40. Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1993, pg. 328.

bogus predictions with a bit of spiritism and claims he is constantly in touch with dead rock star Jim Morrison (Ibid., pg. 2).

It is obvious that where these people are not outright frauds and fakes, they are occultists of the highest order.

In 1994, Family Radio Network prognosticator Harold Camping told PFO that if his September 1994 date for Christ's return failed, "All we'll do is drop anymore reference to 1994. Somehow an error was made. Maybe by that time we'll know what the error is" (see *The Quarterly Journal*, July-Sept. 1994, pp. 1, 12-14).

Camping's error was quite easy to identify: He went outside the bounds of Scripture and set a date for our Lord's Second Coming (Acts 1:7).

An old proverb says: "To promise and give nothing is a comfort to a fool." People are not only being fooled but are fools. They also have short memories and forget quickly (or choose to ignore) the false prophecies of the likes of Camping, Benny Hinn, John Kilpatrick, Marshall Applewhite, Kim Miller and other "Christian" and cultic superstars.

People need to revisit their Bibles on the subject of direct revelation and predictive prophecy. They need to also revisit the writings of others who have been down the path in times past. Kurt Koch in a classic analysis (1971), reminds us that:

"A distinction has to be made between intuitive and suggestive types of fortune-telling. Fortune-telling itself has two sides to it, influence and fulfillment. Possibly 95% of all fortune-telling, or even more, can be regarded as a matter of fraud, fake and the making of money. Yet because of its suggestive character, even fraudulent fortune-telling can be dangerous. The last 5% is dependent on extrasensory powers whose ethical character is disputed both by theologians and parapsychologists. The Bible, however, is absolutely clear on this matter. Prophecy is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is of God. Fortune-telling is inspired by the spirit of Satan and is of the devil. The effects of fortune-telling speak in a language which is equally as clear. The Scriptures label fortune-telling as blasphemy" (*The Devil's Alphabet*, pg. 57).

Koch continues:

"Is it not part of God's mercy to us that the future is veiled? If we knew everything that lay ahead of us, decisions would be impossible, initiative would be paralyzed, and we would be robbed of our joy of living. The silence of God is far more merciful than the unveiling of the fortune-tellers, although they seek to do it as a service to man. And this neglects the fact that most of this so-called 'unveiling' is of a

dubious nature and carries with it much oppression and many burdens" (Ibid., pp. 58-59).

In their article entitled "Faith in the future," Don Lattin and Richard Cimino, writing from a secular standpoint, concluded that the trend in American religion is toward "Finding faith through experiences, not institutions." In a cold analysis, they affirm that people are not looking to the Bible or to Bible-believing churches for truth but to themselves and their subjective experiences. They state:

"According to a recent poll, 7 in 10 Americans believe you can be religious without going to church. This can frustrate clergy members and religious institutions looking for loyal constituencies; indeed, half of the baby boomers raised in the mainline Presbyterian denomination have dropped out. The emphasis on experience also is seen in the growth of practices that provide a firsthand sense of the sacred, ... About 75 million Americans attend church on Sundays, but they also pick up beliefs and practices from the popular culture and other religions" (*USA Weekend*, Dec. 25-27, 1998, pg. 8).

So we see that people are into do-it-yourself, pick and choose "religious" experiences at times cut off from the Church and most certainly from the Bible. This leaves people open, vulnerable, and prime targets for all kinds of religious deception. While some church institutions need to be rejected, the wholesale rejection of even Bible-believing churches leaves people with no accountability and no spiritual teaching. The trend is not toward discernment but rather mindlessness.

Tabloid teasers, false prophecies and occult experiences are to be avoided and condemned. Whether secular fortune tellers or "Christian" (Charismatic or Evangelical) fortune tellers, born-again people everywhere ought to speak out in condemnation of the froth and fraud and the possible dark link to occultism and Satan. Fortune cookies are probably a safer entity — while their predictions are just as spurious, at least you get a bite to eat.

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Jones, a spokesman for the Sheriff's Department, told *The Orlando Sentinel*, "Settling their lawsuit against the Sheriff's Office was cheaper than going to court." He also stated, "The agreement is not an admission that the agency was at fault." According to the newspaper, the portion of the settlement agreed to by the Sheriff's Office was \$310,000, which includes \$10,000 to cover the legal costs of the plaintiffs. Additional money, according to Jones, would come from Hinn's church.

Despite the agreement, not all the protesters were

favorable to the settlement. Pastor Johnson issued a Nov. 3 statement to the court and to all attorneys involved that said, "Some things are not about money." He condemned the nine other plaintiffs from the Wholeness in Christ Ministry, saying that, "Benny Hinn bought each of you for a dollar." He further stated that Hinn "got his money, by preying upon the Hopeless, the Sick and Destitute."

Then in December, revelations of the heroin-overdose deaths of two of Hinn's employees hounded his ministry. The deaths which occurred in late 1997, finally came to light in a report in the Dec. 2, 1998 edition of *The Orlando Sentinel* newspaper. Up until the newspaper's report, details of the fatalities were known only by law-enforcement and church officials.

The newspaper disclosed, "A longtime aide to Orlando minister Benny Hinn died of chronic heroin abuse last December, a month after coming under suspicion of supplying a fatal heroin overdose to another church worker." David Delgado, who served the televangelist for a decade, was found dead in New York City after returning from Hinn's crusade in Jordan. According to the newspaper, Delgado, 45, began as a "catcher" (one who keeps those being "slain in the Spirit" from hitting the stage floor) at Hinn's healing campaigns and escalated to become a friend and personal assistant to the faith healer. He would help organize details such as Hinn's "schedule, meals and grooming."

Delgado's widow, Mary, revealed that her husband knew he was dying from cirrhosis of the liver, which can be a side effect of heroin abuse.

According to Orange County sheriff's records, at the time of his death, Delgado was under suspicion for the heroin-related death of Sydney Williams. Williams, who at one time took care of Hinn's son, Joshua, and later drove a truck for the ministry, died Nov. 15, 1997 at his Florida home after injecting himself with a massive dose of heroin. Delgado was being investigated in the death because Williams appeared to have been drugged following a visit to Delgado's home.

Officials at Hinn's ministry stressed that they had begun random drug testing of employees as a result of the deaths. It declined any knowledge of drug use by Delgado and Williams and issued a statement that, "Benny Hinn Ministries has given many people the opportunity for employment who have rebuilt broken lives through Biblical principles, healing and a new way of life." Church spokesman David Brokaw told the newspaper, "We will not tolerate and will not condone illegal drug use by employees of the ministry. When we find out about it we will act immediately."

And then just one week after the drug overdose revelations, the Orlando newspaper reported that Hinn had "gone to court to block his former security chief

from disclosing financial secrets that an adviser testified could destroy the television ministry." Mario Licciardello found himself slapped with a federal court gag order to keep from making known information about the financial practices of Hinn's ministry. The newspaper reported that "Licciardello is demanding money to keep him from revealing what he knows about allegations of theft and corruption at Hinn's World Outreach Center."

Hinn employed Licciardello in 1997 to conduct an internal investigation of possible "wrongdoing and corruption concerning the handling of offering money" received by the ministry in the mail and at its international healing crusades. Church officials said the investigator was hired to ensure proper and adequate security measures for the handling of donations.

During the investigation, Licciardello secured sworn statements from nearly three dozen current and former church employees. Hinn's organization is insisting on the return of the transcribed copies of those testimonies, in addition to any written account of the conversations he had with Hinn and any documents detailing the personal lives of former employees which were compiled by the church.

The conflict between Licciardello and Hinn's ministry began in September when, following a routine security check of the Oklahoma investigator, it was discovered from obsolete court papers that Licciardello was arrested and convicted in 1967 in New Jersey for burglary and theft. He thought the conviction had been deleted from his record, having received a pardon for the crime, the report stated. As a result of the disclosure, Licciardello complained that church officials tried to destroy "his reputation by conducting an illegal check of his background" and that he planned to reveal to the "secular media" the findings of his investigation into Hinn's business dealings.

Hinn's church officials maintain that, "There was no theft and no corruption." And in a subsequent *Sentinel* article, Hinn's organization tried to squelch details that originated from within. The report stated: "Lawyers for evangelist Benny Hinn were mistaken when they wrote in court papers that an investigation of corruption in the ministry resulted in the firings of several 'high-level employees,' a Hinn spokesman said." Two of the ministry's higher echelon, chief operating officer Gene Polino and head of international crusades Charles McCuen, left the organization in 1997. Attorney Stephen Beik said the resignation of these men had nothing to do with the Licciardello inquiry. "It was a joint decision that it was time for them to move on," Beik told the newspaper.

Church administrators say Hinn's organization is estimating \$60 million in donations for 1998, up from \$50 million in 1997 and \$35 million in 1996.

—MKG

O'HAIR ESTATE HITS AUCTION BLOCK

The personal belongings of atheist Madilyn Murray O'Hair went on the auction block in January in an effort to pay off \$250,000 in debts, including back taxes and creditors' fees. The auctioned property was seized by the Internal Revenue Service.

O'Hair, along with a son and granddaughter, vanished in September 1995 during a planned trip to San Antonio. They have not been seen or heard from since. Opinions vary as to the threesome's whereabouts. Some suspect foul play, while others suggest a planned, self-disappearance to a life of leisure and seclusion. Another of O'Hair's sons, William Murray, a born again Christian, believes that his estranged family members, including his daughter, are dead.

The possessions included O'Hair's handwritten diaries, photographs, her birth certificate and a children's Bible given in 1988 to the atheist by a group of 12-year-old girls from a Baptist Church in Oklahoma. Other, mundane items, such as clothing, books and dishes also were put up for sale.

The auction was the second attempt to sell off the estate. A federal bankruptcy petition was filed on O'Hair's behalf in March 1997 which blocked an initial attempt to liquidate the assets.

O'Hair first gained fame for her successful battle to have organized prayer removed from public schools in 1963. For nearly three decades, she also has been linked

to unfounded rumors of a petition to the Federal Communications Commission that requested removal of all religious programming from television and radio.

—MKG

PROPHET TO RETIRE

The spiritual head of Church Universal and Triumphant, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, told her flock of her plans to retire in the summer of this year. The announcement came Jan. 1, at the sect's annual New Year's conference in Miami.

According to a news release, Prophet said, "In April, I will be 60 years old and I have been considering cutting back on my work schedule." A year earlier she revealed that doctors had determined she suffered from an undefined neurological disorder. Last November, her physician determined the condition to be Alzheimer's Disease, which causes mental degeneration.

Prophet says she will continue her involvement with the group, including part-time participation in the church's quarterly conferences. She says she expects the church will advance despite her reduced involvement and says, "that she has full confidence in the current leadership to perform the spiritual and administrative duties."

The sect is based in Corwin Springs, Mont.

—MKG

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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



Books in Review

THE PEACEMAKER

by Ken Sande

Baker Book House, 281 pages, \$14.99

Personal conflict is inevitable. It's one of those things that can go on the list with death and taxes. Yet why, how, and when we bring resolution to the certain discords of life and personalities in a way that honors Christ is the commanding emphasis of Ken Sande's book.

The Peacemaker is not a new book (although its current, second edition is relatively new), but it's one that has been taken from my bookshelf time and time again over the years. It's one that has been a great asset to me, not only in working in the area of apologetics and related counseling, but in my role and leadership of my own church family. It's a work that goes well beyond helpfulness and practicality because of its biblical framework. It's a volume that needs wider exposure, that needs to be read and digested, that needs to be applied.

Sande's is not a handbook to use as a battering ram to set others straight or to gain moral conquest over an opponent under the guise of being "biblical." From the start, he calls for a personal examination before resolving the conflict. Far too often a "self-absorbed attitude usually leads to further problems," Sande writes. Not only are there actions the accused must follow to bring about godly resolution, but the accuser is also scripturally bound to certain responsibilities. Sande clearly and systematically develops the biblical principles involved for both parties.

The book is flavored with helpful and easy-to-remember guidelines, such as the four "G's" of "approach" of the conflict and the seven "A's" of the "response" to the conflict. Illustrations and examples are used and most chapters conclude with a "Summary and Application" list of questions to apply that which has been presented. Topic and Scripture indexes, as well as a good bibliography, further enhance the book.

From minor disagreements to major conflicts that have escalated into legal circles, Sande has most all the bases covered. I dare say this is the definitive work for the Christian providing solid biblical answers and actions on

the topic of conflict resolution. It is a book not only for church leaders and apologists, but for every Christian. It is one not just for a bookshelf, but to be employed to the glory of God.

—MKG

UFO CULTS AND THE NEW MILLENNIUM

by William A. Alnor

Baker Book House, 203 pages, \$14.99

Hats off to Bill Alnor. He has penned a significant, relevant, well-researched and well-written book. He has helped to fill in the gaps in a growing cult problem (that is, the rapid rise of deadly and dangerous UFO cults). This is an extremely important work and will be the handbook on cultic space fantasies. It is indexed for easy retrieval and there are Internet sites for further research. He even references a web site for the debunking of the "Alien Autopsy."

The chapter titles are compelling: "Riding on the Tail of a Comet," "A Telepathic Hoax," "Deeper into Madness," "Endtime Delusions," "Hitching a Ride to Sirius," "Science Fiction Armageddon," "Flying Saucer Messiahs," "Flying Saucer Deceivers," "Visions of Ash- tar" and "A Litany of Lies and Other Deceptions."

Alnor certainly delivers on his stated intent laid out on page 17: "All of these groups are bizarre, and because they, like the Heaven's Gate cult, have irrational beliefs, this book may at times startle the reader. But it is not my intention to sensationalize this subject or astound the reader as we look at these cults. Rather, as we survey these groups, I will explain how they have formed and will try to unlock the puzzle of why so many of these groups exist today and why their number appears to be rising. My hope, as a longtime researcher of cults, the occult, and the paranormal, is to shatter the mystique of such cults by exposing their deceptions. I will also show that there is a frightening spiritual agenda behind groups such as the Heaven's Gate and that spiritual deception is evil as it leads to irrationality and sometimes death."

Alnor succeeds on his intent and excels. We highly recommend *UFO Cults and the New Millennium*.

—GRF

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