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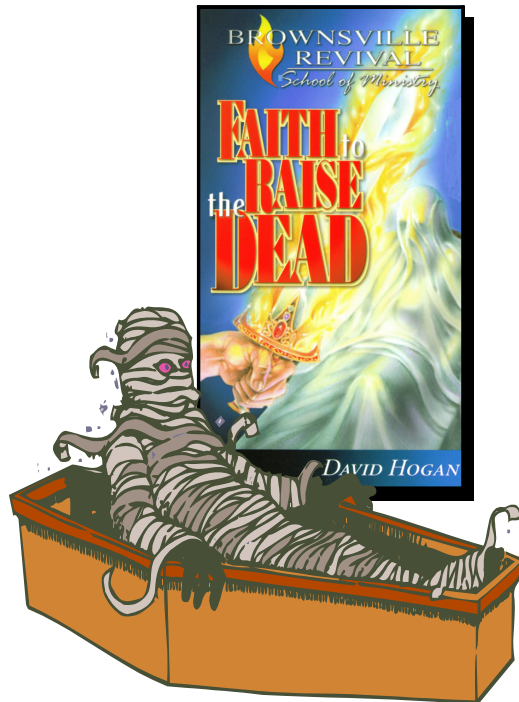
EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

The Remarkable Exploits of David Hogan Astonishing Miracles or Incredible Hype?

by G. Richard Fisher

Suppose a minister got up on Sunday morning and told his congregation:

- He raises people from the dead;
- He is thrown supernaturally across rooms into walls;
- He multiplies food;
- He drives his vehicle underwater;
- Angels are assigned to him and have to go where he goes;
- He is miraculously transported from place to place without the aid of planes, trains or automobiles;
- He is invigorated when new demons are unleashed on him;
- A demon has tried to tear out the innards of his child;
- He has a little son who has a hanky that is so anointed he can make people fly just by shaking it at them;
- He has seen limbs grow on limbless people;
- He has seen the creation of new brains in a brainless baby;
- Jesus talks to his dog and horse;
- He has seen people fly around



the room under the anointing of God.

However, this minister never raises the dead, levitates, multiplies food, restores missing body parts or makes people fly there where he preaches. He only reports that it happens elsewhere, without offering any documentation.

That minister would be looking for a job in short order and people would rightly conclude that he is either an unscrupulous show-off, delusional or even worse. Any sensible congregation would want to check his medical history and diet. They might even suggest someone for counseling. Proximity and familiarity are the equalizers when it comes to wild claims.

HOGAN THE HERO

Yet, David Hogan has made all of the above claims and many more.

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Editorials

A MILESTONE YEAR FOR PFO

The year 2000 marks several milestones for Personal Freedom Outreach. It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization's founding. The ministry began with a handful of Christians meeting to hone their ability to defend their faith. Some in the group repeatedly encountered questions and comments about Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter-day Saints. They knew that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons were not Christian, but they didn't know why.

This year also enters the 20th year of publication of PFO's newsletter. In 1981, a young newspaper copy editor moved from Milwaukee to St. Louis to work for the city's morning newspaper. He had formerly embraced and even taught the principles of Transcendental Meditation (T.M.) prior to his conversion to Christianity. Following his conversion, he on occasion assisted the apologetic ministry CARIS, which is based in Milwaukee. As he made his move south, he was told that once he was settled, he should make contact with PFO, which he did.

He soon asked how he could use his gifts and talents for the ministry. The idea of a newsletter had been considered but not realized up until that time because of a lack of the right skills.

The initial newsletter was a six-page edition. Current issues now run up to 24 pages. Originally known as the

Personal Freedom Outreach Newsletter, it was renamed *The Quarterly Journal* in 1988. It now is considered one of the most consistent and well-respected publications in the countercult and apologetics field. The newsletter repeatedly has served as a way for PFO to realize its objective of educating the Church on the dangers of cultic and aberrational theologies.

In the late 1980s, PFO's newsletter entered a new phase as it moved into investigative reporting.

The initial article studied the ministry and practices of Rebecca Brown, M.D., a self-proclaimed occult expert. Brown, who spun tales of satanic conspiracies in the Midwest, gained notoriety through the endorsement and sponsorship of Jack Chick, a publisher of religious tracts and comic books. Chick long had been a platform for questionable conspiracy promoters. And up until PFO's investigation, the pronouncements — no matter how bizarre and unbelievable — by "occult experts" such as Brown, Lauren Stratford, Mike Warnke, Bob Larson and others, far too often went unsubstantiated and unchallenged.

Through primary research, PFO presented the facts about a woman whose life was overrun with a prescription-drug addiction and delusional stories of occultic warfare. Even people within the occult community recognized PFO's research as balanced and credible. One newspaper crime reporter said PFO's research into Brown was done "with the tools of an investigative reporter, seeking out eyewitnesses, court documents and

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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

MISSOURI

P.O. Box 26062
Saint Louis, MO 63136
(314) 921-9800

NEW JERSEY

P.O. Box 514
Bricktown, NJ 08723
(732) 477-6577

PENNSYLVANIA

Route 3 - Box 127
Kunkletown, PA 18058
(610) 381-3661

OHIO

P. O. Box 493
Niles, OH 44446
(330) 652-3713

ARIZONA

P.O. Box 11512
Glendale, AZ 85312
(623) 825-3150

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WILKERSON ATTAINS "HERESY HUNTERS" STATUS

According to a recent edition of *Charisma* magazine, famed New York City pastor David Wilkerson has blasted "prosperity doctrines, 'holy laughter' and the flamboyance of evangelist Benny Hinn." The October 1999 article cited a sermon given by Wilkerson to his Times Square Church last April 11 in which the preacher firmly directed members of his congregation to "burn books" by Faith teachers and to "stay away" from the summer crusade of Rodney Howard-Browne (which was held at Madison Square Gardens).

Charisma also reported that "Wilkerson leveled blasphemy charges at the prosperity doctrines of Bible teacher Kenneth Copeland." In addition, Word-Faith preacher Kenneth Hagin Sr., Hinn and Howard-Browne were criticized by Wilkerson "as examples of those who have perpetrated misrepresentations of the Holy Spirit's manifestations."

"I weep when I see these videos that are sent to me from all over the country. Whole groups of bodies jerking out of control, falling on the floor, laughing hysterically, staggering around like drunkards," Wilkerson said in his sermon titled, "Reproach of the Solemn Assembly."

Wilkerson has long been well-respected within Pentecostal and Charismatic camps. Howard-Browne refused to comment directly about Wilkerson's criticisms, saying, "I have been thoroughly blessed by the ministry of David Wilkerson."

—MKG

CROUCHS' SALARIES GET MAJOR BOOST

Paul and Jan Crouch, who head the Trinity Broadcasting Network, received substantial raises in 1998, according to an October report published in *The Orange County (Calif.) Register*. The report was based on information from a survey of the non-profit industry.

According to the initial report from *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Paul Crouch, TBN's founder and president, received a raise of more than 64 percent in 1998. The newspaper said it was "the largest pay increase in the country for the top executive of a major not-for-profit

group." Crouch's earnings went from \$159,500 in 1997 to \$262,915 the following year. Jan, the organization's vice president, also received a big raise. Her earnings more than doubled, going from \$159,500 to \$321,375 during the same time period.

A spokesman for TBN said, "The network felt they needed to compensate them more so their retirement fund could be increased accordingly." Crouch's average annual salary since the network's founding in 1973 has been about \$70,000. Jan did not receive a salary until 1981.

Crouch has grown TBN into the world's largest religious broadcaster, with more than 1,200 outlets, according to November 1999 figures. He also has ventured into the motion picture business with the production of *The Omega Code*, a full-length feature film. The movie opened in theaters across the country last October and earned a sizable share of attendance ratings for the fall season. The film's story line is based upon a secret code hidden within the pages of Scripture and is an outgrowth of *The Bible Code* phenomenon of a few years ago. (See *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pg. 4.)

Not all critics were kind to Crouch's motion picture. One Christian reviewer called it, "A new 'Christian' film that leaves God's Word in the lobby." The review further stated that the film "strays even farther from Scripture in its attempt to entertain with the truth. The unfortunate reality is that viewers unfamiliar with the actual teaching of Scripture regarding end-time events will come away with a grossly inaccurate impression of God's plan for the end of the age."

—MKG

WATCHTOWER APPOINTS NEW GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

The Watchtower Society has added four members to its Governing Body, whose numbers had dwindled to nine after the death last summer of member Lloyd Barry.

The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses has shrunk steadily in recent years. Current members are elderly and the society has been slow to name replacements. At one time, this body consisted of 18 members.

Barry died of a heart attack while speaking at the "God's Prophetic Word" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses on July 2 in Hawaii. He had served on
(continues on page 22)

Skating on

THE THIN ICE

Benny Hinn's Fiasco in New Guinea

Gilbert Chesterton declared: "It is this silent swerving from accuracy by an inch that is the uncanny element in everything."¹

Faith healer Benny Hinn has been swerving from truth and accuracy for years and continues to do so not by inches but by miles. It is nothing short of amazing that no matter what Hinn says, teaches or practices — even if it is outrageously unbiblical and outlandish — his adoring fans blindly follow and attack anyone who points out his heresies and untruths.

A broadcast of the *Praise the Lord* show last May — on which Hinn was the featured guest — was a liberal specimen of the faith healer's distortion of facts and his torture of responsible scriptural interpretations.²

When Hinn took his "miracle crusade" to Papua New Guinea, it was not his "anointing" that ruled but Murphy's Law. It was not miracles but mishaps that ruled the day. Hinn's efforts there were a public relations disaster from start to finish.

Papua New Guinea is a Pacific island nation of about 4.5 million people, 96.8% of whom profess Christianity. There are 600,000 Pentecostals alone.³ It is one of the most evangelized places on earth.

by G. Richard Fisher
with M. Kurt Goedelman

The Roman Catholic population is over a million strong and is a potent religious and political force. With all these demographics working in Hinn's favor, it is no wonder he was able to pull in 300,000 people for the meeting. He was, for the most part, preaching to a largely Pentecostal "choir." All those who attended the New Guinea meetings became unwitting partners in this charade, becoming free "extras" for what amounted to a slick promotional film that tried to foster the illusion that Hinn had won an entire heathen nation to Christ. During the *Praise the Lord* show, the people of Papua New Guinea were referred to by Hinn and Jan Crouch as "headhunters." Hinn's promotional piece called them "witch doctors and headhunters."⁴

Paul Crouch, Trinity Broadcasting Network's chief executive, was trying to establish a TBN affiliate in Papua New Guinea. A letter from Crouch to New Guinea's Prime Minister apparently tried to capitalize upon what appeared to be Hinn's influence with the chief political leader of the country. Hinn promised that because of his intervention through the Prime Minister, TBN would be moving into

Papua New Guinea.

RAGING ROMANS

Hinn's Papua saga all started with advertisements for the crusade, which enraged the Roman Catholic establishment. Hinn had a photograph published in the local newspapers of himself with Pope John Paul II. It was supposed to give him credibility and acceptability but backfired with a vengeance.

The *Post-Courier* of Papua announced, "Hinn's crusade gets Catholic rebuff." The newspaper's report disclosed:

"THE Catholic Church has questioned the benefits and genuineness of the Benny Hinn crusade to be held in Port Moresby over the next two nights. The church said this in a statement issued yesterday when objecting to the use of a photograph of Pastor Hinn's meeting with the Pope to promote the crusade. President of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of PNG and Solomon Islands, Bishop Stephen Reichert, said the advertisement implied that the Holy Father (Pope) and the Catholic Church gave uncritical support for this and similar crusades. ... 'We see the use of Pope John Paul's picture in the advertisement for the Benny

Hinn Crusade as an unscrupulous misrepresentation that is meant to mislead those who see it.' ... Fr. Ambane said in a statement that people should be wary of televangelists who line their already rich pockets under the guise of faith healing. He said Pastor Hinn had come under strong criticism, doubt and skepticism by those he tried unsuccessfully to heal, theologians and by the international media."⁵

The news article went on to fault Hinn for being a "multi-millionaire" who lives in a "luxurious mansion," suggesting he was a con artist who was in collusion with certain politicians there for mutual gain.

Hinn was off to a bad start, but it got worse.

NO MIRACULOUS FORESIGHT

Hinn says he has a gift of "revelation knowledge" and can speak "words of knowledge." His faithful believe he can somehow discern their ailments, call them out and pronounce healings. Although this is more like fortune-telling than truth, it is always used on those who blindly believe in Hinn's powers. It is an illusion based on the laws of probability that anyone can perform. There are no supernatural powers involved.⁶

Apparently Hinn's supernatural radar was off considerably in angering the Catholic Church and stirring their ire even more by showcasing his meetings with Bill Skate, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. Skate was, for months before Hinn's crusade, under attack by members of his parliament and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church for poor management, corruption and unethical and immoral behavior. His administration, from the very start, was rife with scandals. An international news report disclosed:

"Just four months after national elections in Papua New Guinea resulted in the installation of Bill Skate as head of an unstable coalition, a corruption scandal has left the government in disarray."⁷

Hinn presumably was oblivious to the sour political climate of the country; knowledge of which could have been easily obtained from published news reports by the self-proclaimed conduit of supernatural information. Such information would have perhaps kept Hinn from making the bold pronouncement that "God has put you [Skate] in that position because you are a righteous man. And I am volunteering as your ambassador at large, spiritually speaking, to keep promoting your country."⁸

Skate was a poor poster boy for Hinn in spite of his political position. *Tête-à-tête*s with corrupt politicians are not the best advertisement for a Christian minister. The local headlines could have read "Skate on thin ice." It was, perhaps, thinner than Hinn and Skate realized.

The *Post-Courier* newspaper reported on Jan. 4, 1999, that the Catholic Archbishop of Papua New Guinea had called for Skate's ouster to "rescue the country and its people from suffering and disaster."⁹

Skate, the man whom Hinn was using as a photo opportunity, was a corrupt politician who in turn thought he was using Hinn to bolster his image as a moral kind of guy. Hinn would have been just as well off buddying up to a mobster.

Despite the political unrest prior to and in the wake of his crusade, Hinn apparently decided to pitch his New Guinea Crusade on TBN to prove to his supporters and partners all that God was doing through him. Perhaps Hinn reasoned that there was no use in dumping a perfectly good publicity newsreel — especially when the presentation stemmed from a small, otherwise remote, island in the Pacific. Patronizing and fawning, Jan and Paul Crouch surely agreed with Hinn as they gushed all over him at the amazing demonstration of his abilities, great powers and political influence.

Hinn's ministry web site advertised that "Prime Minister Bill Skate, a Christian, personally invited Pastor Benny Hinn to come and speak to the nation."¹⁰

It was during this time that Skate was under investigation by his own cabinet for corruption and was in a struggle for his political life. He had been firing opponents and hiring accomplices to try to hold onto his faltering position. This political battle was being reported daily by the news media.

Yet those with a handle on New Guinea's political climate and Skate's legacy were not beguiled by Hinn. A reporter who specializes in Pacific politics told PFO:

"I take it you saw the way Hinn made sure to build up Skate at his rally in PNG? Sickening and utterly transparent. The pair needed each other — Skate because he desperately required some sort of religious backing to deflect the criticism from the churches, and Hinn because he can use his relay station in PNG to extort more money from gullible Americans on the theory that he is saving a whole country from cannibalism and headhunting and turning the poor ignorant savages to Jesus. Never mind that PNG has been almost totally Christian for the last hundred or so years and the place is overrun with churches, that won't get widows digging into their pensions in Indiana to send to Benny Hinn to 'convert the natives'."¹¹

But Skate's effort at a public relations coup failed.

EXIT STAGE RIGHT

Just two months after Hinn's crusade, on July 7, Skate resigned as Prime Minister to pre-empt his expected ouster by a no-confidence motion of his cabinet. He stated that his resignation was to stabilize Papua New Guinea's politics. If Hinn accomplished nothing else, he helped to hasten the demise of Bill Skate. Unwittingly, Hinn and Skate focused the opponents and set up Skate's last outrage. Many there would say that this is the only blessing that came out of Hinn's visit.

Everything around the New Guinea Crusade and its aftermath conspired against Hinn. As the Pacific politics reporter told PFO, "Now that Skate is gone, it looks as if Hinn and Crouch have lost their chance."¹² Even before Skate's departure, influential parties were calling "for PNG not to grant U.S. televangelists broadcast license."¹³

An Australian radio news article reported:

"Church leaders in Papua New Guinea have reacted angrily to comments by a leading American evangelist that the country needs a Christian television station because Papua New Guineans are cannibals and head hunters. Prime Minister Bill Skate has indicated approval for American evangelists Paul Crouch and Benny Hinn to set up a Christian television station in PNG. But, the general secretary of the Catholic Bishops conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Father Henk Kronenberg, says the comments are un-Christian and a disgrace."¹⁴

DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AS WELL

Within weeks of Hinn's TBN appearance and just days before Skate's political life unraveled, an embarrassing video clip from World Outreach Church (Hinn's church) was broadcast. The footage was aired on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* and featured Hinn's wife Suzanne bellowing to the congregation at WOC that, "If your engine's not revving up — you need a Holy Ghost enema right up your rear end."¹⁵

The comedy show's "God Stuff" segment concluded with Mrs. Hinn frantically darting back and forth behind the pulpit, shrieking and finally taking an unladylike belly flop on the platform.

Hinn and his organization, obviously embarrassed by the unsavory conduct of his wife, directed lawyers to issue a letter to Comedy Central, its producers and associate companies,

including Time Warner Entertainment and Viacom, Inc. The correspondence charged commercial exploitation of Mrs. Hinn's comments from stolen videotape. In addition, the letter suggested that if the network was involved in any way with the theft or misappropriation of the heretofore unreleased tape, it would be held liable. Hinn's lawyers further demanded that Comedy Central reveal how it obtained the footage.

Here the question is begged: If Hinn possesses the gift of "revelation knowledge" and is repeatedly in direct communication with the Divine, why does he need lawyers to demand such information?

sion stories for Hinn himself.

The first conversion of his father appeared in Hinn's 1984 book, *War in the Heavenlies*. In this volume, he writes of his parents' resistance to the Gospel. Hinn claims he had an instant "revelation" which was the key to his parents' salvation. He was to "take authority" and he immediately did that. He then records that his parents, along with all of his brothers and sisters, "came to the Lord." He is specific and clear to say it was "one night."¹⁷ Boldness and "authority" mark the first conversion story. Hinn "took authority."

However, just six years later, the story and the picture changes in his

*"If your engine's not revving up —
you need a Holy Ghost enema right
up your rear end."*

— Suzanne Hinn

Comedy Central and its lawyers were not intimidated by Hinn's threats.

MORE CONFUSING FAMILY CONVERSIONS

Hinn's *Praise the Lord* show appearance was not limited to a publicity project of his New Guinea crusade. As the program progressed, Hinn digressed into unfounded biblical interpretations of the demonic and even spun off a wild tale of the conversion of his father. The latter found him mired in more documented lies and fabrications.

Hinn had previously told two conflicting stories of his father Costandi's conversion to Christianity.¹⁶ His father died in Canada in 1983 of lung cancer. On the May 12 TBN broadcast, Hinn issued a third one — entirely different and consistently contradictory to the previous two. Now there are three conversion stories for his deceased father, just as there are three contradictory conver-

1990, commercially successful book, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*. As noted above, although Hinn often claims direct revelation from God, his memory obviously fails him here.

Hinn wrote in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* that one "unforgettable night" he opened the Bible and led his parents "to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." He is clear to give the precipitating factors as:

1) They came to hear him preach at a church service,

2) At home they asked: "how can we become like you?" and

3) His father was convinced by his preaching.¹⁸

In this 1990 second version, there is nothing about taking "authority" and, in fact, Hinn says he "tiptoed" into his parents' house hoping not to encounter them for fear of their displeasure. When he saw his parents waiting for him, he was "startled," "began to tremble" and described his

condition as “even worse” than being “panic-stricken.”¹⁹ So according to his best-selling publication, it is timidity, fear and surprise — *and a total lack of “taking authority” that mark the second story.* The only commonality between the two vastly different versions is that they both occurred at night. The other details are totally different.

In Hinn’s third and latest attempt to describe his father’s conversion, there again is no mention of “taking authority.” But here, too, his parents’ attendance of a church service to hear young Hinn preach also falls by the wayside. There are now new wrinkles and new details totally unlike the previous two reports. In fact, the father’s conversion in this new story is totally different by way of Hinn having to *destroy a mysterious black book* that had amazing properties. But let Hinn tell the story as he did that evening on the TBN broadcast:

“My father, right before he got saved, he used to always enjoy smoking a hubbly-bubbly. Hubbly-bubbly is a big water bottle that you smoke and it brings — it causes bubbles. Well, he brought this hubbly-bubbly thing from Israel to Canada. And when he quit using it ‘cause he had a new one, he stuck some stuff in it and put a book in it. A little book in it. I prayed for my parents to get saved for a long time, nothing happened. One night in prayer, the Lord said, ‘Go destroy the book!’ Well, I knew I could not because it was inside this bottle. So the Lord said, ‘Destroy the bottle!’ I said, ‘Lord, if my daddy finds, out I’m in trouble.’ That’s what I said to God. And the convicting power of the Holy Spirit was so strong, I had to go and smash that thing. Now saints, you believe this; you don’t, it don’t matter. Because I’m going to tell you what happened. I—I—I destroyed that hubbly-bubbly thing, when my daddy was sleeping, took the book, threw it in the fireplace, it would not burn. I’m telling you, that book would not burn. Now I’d only heard about those things

happening. I thought they were lying to me. I have preachers talk about — oh, yeah, bunch of — I saw it. So I thought, ‘Now, come on.’ So I’m looking at this thing in the fireplace not burning. So I picked up a little thing there by the — by the — by the fireplace and took the book back out with these tongs. And that thing, not even smoke on it. Ahh, now that can’t be, come on, you know, this is not a dream here. It was paper, just like any book. Threw it back in. That thing just laid there with the — with the fire and the fire was hot in there. And something said to me, something said to me, ‘Say in the name of Jesus.’ And when I said, ‘In the name of Jesus’ that thing burned. But the biggest miracle was my — my dad and mom were saved the next day. And — and this is when I began realizing the importance of destroying things that can keep demons in our homes.”²⁰

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH

God the Father is a God of truth (Deuteronomy 32:4). Jesus the Son is truth (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 15:26). However the Apostle Paul warned that people would turn from truth to fables and lies (2 Timothy 4:4). Anyone claiming to represent God should tell the truth at all times. There should be no question about their honesty and genuineness. The spokesman for Hinn’s ministry, David Brokaw, currently speaks to the media for him. Hinn is wise to have a public spokesman because he constantly contradicts himself and cannot keep his stories straight. Brokaw recently told the news media that “critics have hounded the pastor but have yet to turn up evidence of any impropriety.”²¹

Is Brokaw’s remark truthful? It is, but only if you exclude Hinn’s lies, fabrications, myths, exaggerations, fables, tall tales and unbiblical teachings, all of which have been documented.

The dictionary defines truth as: “The quality or state of being true. ...

sincerity, genuineness, honesty. ... correctness, accuracy.”²² That which is true corresponds with reality and facts.

In the Greek New Testament the word used for truth is *alethes*. Akin to it is *alethinous*. Both are adjectives. W.E. Vine describes the meanings: “actual, true to fact, ... of things, true, conforming to reality, ... denotes true in the sense of real, ideal, genuine; ... of Christ, ... God’s words.”²³

Vine then explains the verb form (*aletheuo*): “signifies to deal faithfully or truly with anyone ... Eph. 4:15, ‘speaking the truth;’ Gal. 3:16, ‘I tell (you) the truth,’ where probably the Apostle is referring to the contents of his Epistle.”²⁴

Greek authority Kenneth S. Wuest says this about those who twist or refuse the truth:

“When people avert their ears from the truth, they lay themselves open to every Satanic influence, and are easily turned aside to error. Instead of being in correct adjustment to the truth, namely, that of seeking it for the purpose of appropriating it, these people have put themselves out of adjustment and have been consequently wrenched out of place. They have become dislocated, put out of joint. Like a dislocated arm which has no freedom of action, they have given themselves over to a delusion which incapacitates them for any independent thinking along religious lines which they might do for themselves.”²⁵

God wants truth externally as well as deep within us (Psalm 51:6). If we cannot trust men who claim to be men of God to tell the truth, whom can we trust?

Apologist Craig Hawkins reminds us:

“God is not glorified nor Christianity benefited by Christians, no matter how well-meaning, who proclaim untruthfulness, even in the attempt to defend and advance the truth.”²⁶

RECKLESS BIBLE COMMENTARY

On the same TBN broadcast in which Hinn boasted of his “accomplishments” in New Guinea and spawned a third conversion story for his father, he also demonstrated how he continues with irresponsible biblical exegesis and ignorance of Scripture.

“And I compared Moses and his boldness to ask, ‘What is your name?’ to God and took the story of the two on the road to Emmaus who never once said, ‘Who are you?’ When Jesus was walking with them, they not one time they said, ‘Well how do you know all this?’ and ‘Where are you from?’ And frankly missed an incredible opportunity. *And the Holy Spirit made it so clear to us that these two were never mentioned again in the Bible. It’s almost like they were dis — dishonored. We don’t even know who they are. To this day we do not know their names.* And it’s very clear that God Almighty, seeing that they’ve missed their incredible opportunity to say, ‘Who are you Lord?’ *God wouldn’t even honor them to give us their names.*”²⁷

The scriptural record of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and their encounter with the risen Christ in Luke 24:13-35 provides a portrait quite dissimilar from the one Hinn painted.

Here are just six facts from Scripture that Hinn disregards:

- 1) One of the disciples *is* named. His name is Cleopas (v. 18).
- 2) Their inability to discern that it was the Lord who walked with them was a result of divine intervention (vv. 16, 31).
- 3) The Lord went to great lengths to teach the pair from the Word (v. 27).
- 4) Their hearts burned as the Lord revealed the fulfilled Scriptures to them (v. 32).
- 5) The two disciples were not dishonored but are again distinguished to witness the resurrected Lord when

He appeared to His group of apostles (vv. 33-36).

6) Although not by name, these disciples are mentioned again in God’s Word, as they would certainly be part of the collective number who witnessed the resurrected Christ described by Paul (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

It is, without doubt, ironic that Hinn would contort this exact scriptural record. In verse 27, Luke tells us, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He *explained* to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.” The word “explained” in the text is the Greek word, *diermeneuo*, which is a strengthened form of the word for hermeneutics. Luke is telling us that Jesus carefully and thoroughly interpreted and explained the Word of God. How unlike the exegetical antics of Benny Hinn.

Hinn was not finished. He went on to teach a convoluted creation account from Genesis 1.

AN ADAM BEFORE ADAM

As Hinn taught the TBN audience on demons and their strongholds, he drifted into a rehash of his 1984 book, *War in the Heavens*. He proposed the creation of Genesis 1:1 occurred billions of years ago, thereby placing a long gap between it and Genesis 1:2. This idea and teaching departs drastically from historical orthodox interpretations of creation.

Hinn’s “gap theory” idea (as have many other heresies and quirky doctrines) has been fostered straight out of the dangerous and heretical *Dake Annotated Study Bible*.²⁸ “I found out some things that to this day most Christians have no clue about,” he boasted.

The view of creation Hinn presented has been referred to as the “Ruin/Reconstruction theory” or more simply, the “gap theory.” Briefly, it proposes that God created everything in Genesis 1:1 including dinosaurs, land animals, and multitudes of people (a pre-Adamic race). It was during this juncture that Satan fell and became the god of this world. Women from this pre-Adamic race

had sexual relations with fallen angels, producing grotesque and monstrous offspring. Chaos followed and the world entered into God’s judgment.

God then sent a flood, called “Lucifer’s flood,” to annihilate the former world and we today walk on the graveyard of fossils from this former ruined creation. In Genesis 1:3, God began a new work or restoration of creation to substitute for the original one. So it would be generation in Genesis 1:1, then degeneration in verse 2, and regeneration in verse 3, and on. According to Hinn (and others who subscribe to this theory), the fossil evidence in the earth has no relationship with any creatures today as they are the remains of the pre-Adamic creation.

A NEW THEORY

Some, like Arthur Custance in his book, *Without Form and Void*, suggest that ancient sources support this gap. As already stated, it is referred to as the Ruin/Reconstruction theory. It has also been called the Ruin/Recreation theory. Studies of ancient Jewish and Christian sources reveal that in a very few cases some ancient writings may possibly refer to a time gap, *however, none suggest a pre-Adamic race, a Lucifer’s flood or another prior creation.*²⁹

The Ruin/Reconstruction theory is less than 200 years old. The impetus for the gap theory was Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), who proposed many, many floods before Genesis 1 to account for the fossil evidence. It presupposed a prior creation sometime before Genesis 1:1.

The person responsible for the gap theory as we know it today was Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847). Chalmers missed the implications, impact and effect of Noah’s flood as a way to account for geological deposits and wanted to harmonize Scripture and “science.” He took the theory of evolution far too seriously.

John Davis looks at the motive behind the gap theory:

“While the motive of gap theorists — the harmonization of the Bible with current geological

theory — is commendable, the validity of their argument is extremely doubtful.”³⁰

Weston W. Fields concludes:

“The Gap Theory was not generated by compelling exegetical considerations. On the contrary, it arose in recent times, and its popularity has been maintained for one and only one reason — the fixation of science-intimidated minds upon harmonizations, a practice not only futile if all the pronouncements of science are accepted uncritically, but something highly dangerous as well.”³¹

Bernard Ramm addresses the historical background of Chalmers and his advancement of the gap invention:

“*Creation-ruination-re-creation theory — or restitution theory, or gap theory.* ... its great popularity dates from the work of Chalmers. ... If it was Chalmers who first vigorously advocated it in modern times, it was the work of G.H. Pember (*Earth’s Earliest Ages*, first edition, 1876; frequently republished) which canonized it. The gap theory was adopted by Scofield in his *Reference Bible* and so accumulated to itself all the veneration and publicity of that edition of the Bible.”³²

Later editions of the Scofield Bible dropped the footnote to the gap theory. However, Finis Dake would then popularize the theory for the Pentecostal world.

There is a paucity of ancient sources that may be construed to believe in a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 and it must again be stated that these works would not have postulated any ruin, reconstruction and worldwide work of Satan ending in Lucifer’s flood. There are no real philosophical or historical roots for the Ruin/Reconstruction ideas. Its origins are in the 19th century.

The theory also has no linguistic support, as Fields points out:

“There does not seem to be one shred of evidence in favor of the

Gap Theory left remaining. Its fanciful cosmogony, Satanology, and allowance for billions of years, all, indeed, appeal to the imagination; but the facts of grammar have consigned the Gap Theory to the graveyard of exegetical misconceptions. We must forever rid ourselves of harmonizations with science which are based on its intimidating power. We must embrace a presuppositional method of apologetics which will deliver us from such an ever-present and powerful danger.”³³

After 222 pages of exhaustive investigation of the historical, biblical and linguistic deficiencies of this theory, Fields then concludes:

“It is our inescapable conclusion that the only interpretation of Genesis 1:1, 2, which accounts for all the facts of grammar and all the facts of analogous Scripture is one which makes 1:1 refer to *creatio ex nihilo* of the heavens and the earth on the first day of creation, 1:2 refer to the state of the earth as it was first created and as it existed on the first day; and the remainder of Genesis 1 refer to an original filling and forming of the heavens and the earth but a few thousand years ago.”³⁴

There are a number of Scriptures which clearly militate against Hinn’s view. For example, Exodus 20:11 declares: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day.” Exodus 31:17 repeats the above, showing that the creation of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1) is clearly connected with the seven-day creation, not separate from it.

SEVEN WEIGHTY OBJECTIONS

Creation apologist Henry Morris, in his book, *Studies in the Bible and Science*, provides a lengthy refutation of what he calls the “Ruin-and-Reconstruction Theory.” We summarize:

“1. It is explicitly contradicted by the explanatory clause of the

fourth Commandment: ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day’ (Exodus 20:11). ... 2. The Bible teaches plainly that sin and death entered this earth only as a result of Adam’s sin. (See I Corinthians 15:21; Romans 8:20-22; Romans 5:12.) ... 3. No worldwide geologic catastrophe such as the theory requires is found in the historical geology which the theory attempts to adopt. Many fossils, attributed by the theory to pre-Adamic ages, including human fossils, are practically identical with modern plants and animals. ... 4. No passage of Scripture anywhere plainly and unequivocally teaches the ruin theory. The few passages that have been offered as possibly implying a ruin and reconstruction of the earth before Adam can easily be shown to yield other and preferable interpretations. ... 5. None of the standard translations of Genesis 1:2 renders the verse as: ‘The earth became waste and void’ as the theory requires. ... 6. The Hebrew words for ‘create’ (*bara*) and for ‘make’ (*asah*) are very often used quite interchangeably in Scripture, at least when God is the one referred to as creating or making. ... Finally, the summary verse (Genesis 2:3) clearly says that *all* of God’s works, both of ‘creating’ and ‘making,’ were completed with the six days, after which God ‘rested.’ 7. The chief proof-text for the theory, Isaiah 45:18, which says that ‘God created the earth not in vain (Heb. *tohu*, same word as ‘without form’ in Genesis 1:2), can easily be understood without any reference to a hypothetical ruin of the primeval earth. ... God created the earth not without a purpose — to be forever empty and formless — but rather He formed it with the intent that it would be inhabited.”³⁵

FALSE DISTINCTIONS

Hinn and his fellow gap theorists also try to make an artificial distinc-

tion between the word “created” (*bara* in Hebrew — Genesis 1:1, “God created”) and the word “made” (*asa* or *asah* in Hebrew). The word “made” is used for God’s other creative acts on the other days of creation. However, this false distinction cannot be supported because the words *bara* and *asa* are synonymous and interchangeable.³⁶

John Davis also affirms that the Hebrew language allows for no gap in the first two verses of Genesis. He writes that “Hebrew grammar will not allow for a chronological gap between verses 1 and 2.”³⁷

IS “WAS” — WAS?

The gap theory is premised on translating Genesis 1:2 not as “the earth *was* without form and void” but as “the earth *became* without form and void.” Can the word *was* be properly changed and translated as *became*? After a painstaking search into the Hebrew text, Weston Fields states that it is a grotesque error to do so. He emphasizes: “We must conclude that the traditional translation of *hayeta* as ‘was’ is the *only* legitimate one.”³⁸

The respected Hebrew linguists, Keil and Delitzsch, arrive at essentially the same conclusion:

“‘And the earth *was* (not became) *waste and void*.’ The alliterative nouns *tohu vabohu*, the etymology of which is lost, signify waste and empty (barren), but not laying waste and desolating. ... The coming earth was at first waste and desolate, a formless, lifeless mass, ... the theosophic speculation of those who ‘make a gap between the first two verses, and fill it with a wild horde of evil spirits and their demoniacal works, is an arbitrary interpolation’ (Ziegler).”³⁹

John Davis concurs and says it is reckless exegesis to suggest that *was* can be translated *became*:

“The fact is, the verb is used as a simple copulative in circumstantial clauses: Jonah ‘went unto Nineveh. ... *Now* Nineveh *was* an exceeding great city. ...’ (Jonah 3:3); ‘He shewed me Joshua. ...

Now Joshua *was* clothed with filthy garments. ...’ (Zech. 3:1-3).”⁴⁰

So as Davis’ commentary indicates, Ninevah did not become a great city nor did Joshua’s clothes become filthy, but were already.

Hinn also makes a false case for the English word “replenish” in Genesis 1:28 (“Be fruitful and multiply and *replenish* the earth”). On the face of it, *replenish* would mean to “fill again” or to “supply again.” The problem is that the Hebrew word only meant to “fill.” Literally the command is to “fill” the earth. Again we refer to Davis:

“The argument based on the English rendering, ‘replenish the earth,’ is extremely weak. The Hebrew verb simply means ‘fill,’ not ‘refill.’ The gap theory postulates a pre-Adamic population that was violently destroyed, but this is neither described nor alluded to in the Bible. Such a theory lends itself too easily to uncontrolled subjectivism and imagination. Almost anything can be postulated for this mysterious gap of indefinite duration.”⁴¹

The Septuagint, as well as all other modern translations, translates Genesis 1:28 with the word “fill.”

What is more appalling about Hinn’s gap theory teaching is that when one examines the preface of his book, *War in the Heavens*, it is claimed to be “direct revelations from God’s Word and great insight of the scriptures.”⁴² Hinn’s outdated, unbiblical borrowing from Dake and others is neither direct revelation nor great insight. Hinn is not skating on thin ice here but is unsuccessfully trying to walk on water.

On the TBN broadcast, Hinn proceeded step-by-step through his book, all to the amazement of the Crouches. So enthralled by Hinn’s marvelous scriptural insight, Jan asks, “Have you written a book on this?” Of course, the answer should be a resounding, “Yes!” But Hinn responds without missing a beat, “No, I never have

written a book.” Paul then bids: “You must write.” Hinn’s response to the Crouches and their viewing audience is patently a lie. It is mind-boggling to try to understand why Hinn answered as he did unless he is planning to reissue *War in the Heavens* to try to sell it as a new book.

Another reason for the untruth may possibly be that the 1984 volume includes some even more damaging statements. At that time Hinn wrote of his spiritistic practices. He reveals himself as an occult practitioner. He has never repented of these things.

CONFESSIONS OF OCCULTISM

Hinn’s regurgitation of his gap theory on TBN may do him more harm than good. For one thing, it will cause researchers and critics to revisit his *War in the Heavens*. The stumbling block occurs within the publication as Hinn boasts of practicing an occult art called astral projection or astral travel. Throughout Hinn’s prominence as a Charismatic superstar, his legacy includes claimed anointings at grave sites of dead faith healers and of visions of the dead. So his prior admission of astral travel is not surprising. The occult kingdom is on the move and Hinn is helping to advance it.

Hinn boasted in the book:

“...the most unusual thing happened. In an instant, I was out of my body. I assure you I was out of my body. ... I was out of my body. John says also ‘I was in the spirit’ which means he was out of the body. I came out of my body in a split moment. I know exactly what it feels like when you die. Believe me, you will feel nothing. ... Michael now looks at this angel and asks him to take care of me, and leaves the room. As he said that, I was straight back in my body. The Lord gave me that mighty experience. I was now back in my body, ... I had this experience, please believe me. I did not see the angels nor hear the angels until I was out of the body.”⁴³

On the *Praise the Lord* show, Hinn repeated the above with a few variations.

Kurt Koch describes this occultic practice:

"Astral Traveling (Astroprojection) Spiritists who practice the excursion of the soul send their souls on journeys around this world only. Strong mediums who have mastered astral traveling claim that they can send their soul to the moon or the planets to discover things there. Some are even so bold that they claim to have penetrated the sphere of God. This is completely absurd."⁴⁴

Craig Hawkins describes the tools of the trade for the occultists, which include out-of-body experiences:

"Irrespective of the view held of what magic is and how and why it works, magic is very important to many witches. In fact, the working of magic, diverse divination techniques, and other 'occultic technologies,' are part and parcel of their religion. *Altered states of consciousness* (e.g., *trance states*), astrology, *astral projection* (*out-of-body experiences*), divination, incantations, the making of potions, mediumship (channeling), necromancy, raising psychic power, sex magic, spell casting, and spiritism are all tools of their craft."⁴⁵

APOSTLE JOHN OR OCCULTIST JOHN?

It is one thing for Hinn to applaud himself for an occult pursuit. However, when he tries to justify his unbiblical behavior by attributing occult and demonic phenomena to the Apostle John, it becomes appalling. Does John's statement "I was in the Spirit" mean the Apostle John was out of his body as Hinn alleges? No careful exegete of God's Word would agree. How could "in the Spirit" equate to "out of the body"?

The verse from Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" is

straightforward. It has always been translated by commentators and exegetes as a term for spiritual ecstasy and is connected with divine revelation.⁴⁶ It is something the Scripture writers (given direct divine revelation) experienced *in their bodies*. It is a purification and elevation of the mind. We only experience this today in a faint, secondary and derivative way as we meditate on Scripture and are strengthened and blessed by its promises. It is not in any way even remotely related to an occultic experience.

John Walvoord gives us the meaning of the phrase, "in the Spirit":

"John's statement in verse 10 that he was in the Spirit refers to his experience of being carried beyond normal sense into a state where God could reveal supernaturally the contents of this book."⁴⁷

Linguist Gerhard Kittel explores the meaning of "in the Spirit" (Greek = *en pneumati*):

"The reference here is obviously to an extraordinary event: the state *en pneumati* is differentiated from the usual state, 1:10; ... The *pneuma* is the power which gives visions the ordinary man cannot have."⁴⁸

Nowhere does Kittel suggest in this state of direct divine revelation given to the Scripture writers that they left their body. Therefore, it is obvious that John did not go anywhere since he states that he heard behind him a loud voice (verse 10). His faculties were still working.

Paying careful attention to the language, William Henrikson offers this:

"He is in direct spiritual contact with his Saviour. He is alone ... with God! ... He is wide awake and every avenue of his soul is wide open to the direct communication coming from God."⁴⁹

Alexander Maclaren describes "in the Spirit" as "a state of elevated consciousness and communion."⁵⁰

A BETTER MOUSETRAP? MAYBE NOT!

Hinn may have thought himself on more solid biblical ground when he appealed to Paul's experience of being caught up into heaven in 2 Corinthians 12. However, his citation is no better for the following reasons:

1. Hinn is not Paul. Paul was the recipient of unique and solitary visions, revelations and experiences as he affirms in 2 Corinthians 12:1. Being knocked off a horse at conversion, blinded and later encountering a serpent without harm were other unique events that made Paul one of a kind. Paul called us to emulate his *faith*, not his exploits (2 Timothy 3:10-11), to follow his ways, not his wonders (Philippians 4:9).

2. This dramatic, unique vision and revelation of heaven as told by Paul to the Corinthians was not to be discussed in detail, nor rejoiced in (2 Corinthians 12:5). It had no informational value as far as details.

3. The purpose of this one time experience of a heavenly visit was to further verify Paul as an *apostle* (2 Corinthians 12:11-12). Though Hinn may try to claim he does what the apostles did, he has not claimed to be an apostle — yet.

4. Paul minimized the heavenly experience and told his hearers that it was dangerous in that it could engender pride (2 Corinthians 12:7). It was more negative than positive.

5. Paul talked of the extreme value of suffering over even a heavenly experience (2 Corinthians 12:10), truth which Hinn would deny.

6. Since God was the direct author of this experience for purposes of divine revelation, it is totally unlike anything Satan would do either in quality or intent.

7. The self-serving nature of Hinn's claim to astral projection is obvious. He is "super-healer," a cut above the rest, one who can go out of his body and interact with angels.

8. Though we will never know for sure and cannot be dogmatic, it is possible that Paul actually died and

that the 2 Corinthians 12 experience is connected to a real death experience (possibly in Acts 14:19). Paradise mentioned in 2 Corinthians 12:4 is shown in Luke 23:43 to be a place where the righteous dead go. If this is true and the suggestion correct, Paul would have had an experience similar to Lazarus or others who were raised from the dead.

In any event, Paul's experience cannot be connected to anything demonic nor could it be used to justify claims of astral projection. Astral projection in the end may only be in the mind and imagination of the practitioner or a demonic hoax. Historically, it has been connected with Gnosticism, Shamanism, Theosophy and Witchcraft.⁵¹

CONCLUSIONS

It is the view of PFO that Hinn made up the space travel story and fabricated his out-of-body experience as he has so many other stories, not even realizing he has implicated himself in spiritism. As has become his legacy, it was all for effect and drama because Hinn always combines religion and show biz. It is well-documented that Hinn, from a youth, loved to perform and has even referred to himself as an "artist."⁵²

The Skate fiasco was religion, politics and theatrics in a comic opera. Hinn was loathe to admit to writing *War in the Heavens*, perhaps because of its occult teaching or for the sake of a reissue and new profits under the pretense of a new book and a new title.

Because of the Skate debacle in New Guinea, the constant lying, the promotion of an outdated, defunct theory as "revelation," contradictory conversion stories and the promotion of occultism (and now denial of the book, not repentance), Benny Hinn's world is not only confusing but it is a disastrous world as well. It is a dark world, filled with untruth and make-believe. It is sad that so many gullible people hang on the words of such a confused man.

Endnotes:

1. P.J. Kavanagh, *A G.K. Chesterton Anthology*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986,

pg. 282.

2. Trinity Broadcasting Network, *Praise the Lord* show, May 12, 1999. Tape on file.

3. Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*. Seattle: Youth With a Mission, 1993, pp. 438-441. See also *The NIV Study Bible*, Map 12: Christianity in the World Today, which indicates the Christian population of Papua New Guinea in 1982 as "Over 90%."

4. *Praise the Lord* show, op. cit.

5. *Post-Courier* (Papua New Guinea), "Hinn's crusade gets Catholic rebuff," April 29, 1999.

6. See G. Richard Fisher's article, "Words of Knowledge: Mystical or Statistical? — The Truth Behind the Sham," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pg. 4.

7. Peter Symonds, "Australian connection in PNG corruption scandal," *Workers News Online, International News*, December 17, 1997 - January 28, 1998. Available online at: <http://www.workersnews.flex.com.au/wn/wn171297/png.html>.

8. *Praise the Lord* show, op. cit.

9. *Post-Courier*, "Bishop: Government must go," Jan. 4, 1999.

10. Benny Hinn Ministries web site, "Papua New Guinea Crusade exceeds all expectations," <http://www.bennyhinn.org/pngnews.asp>.

11. Personal correspondence to G. Richard Fisher from a Pacific news reporter. Quoted by permission.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Pacific Islands Report, "Call for PNG not to grant US televangelist broadcast license," radio news item, June 4, 1999.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Comedy Central, *The Daily Show*, "God Stuff" segment for June 21, 1999. Tape on file.

16. See further, G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*. Saint Louis: Personal Freedom Outreach, 1995, pp. 65-66.

17. Benny Hinn, *War in the Heavens*. Orlando, Fla.: Orlando Christian Center, 1984, pp. 115-117.

18. Benny Hinn, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pp. 173-175 (also see pp. 46-47).

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Praise the Lord* show, op. cit.

21. Steve Chambers, "Preacher inspires many followers, and skeptics," *The Star Ledger* (Newark, N.J.), July 21, 1999, pg. 12.

22. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language*. Cleveland: Simon and Schuster, 1984, "truth," pg. 1528.

23. W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Westwood, N.J.: Fleming Revell, 1966, pg. 158.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,

1952, Vol. 2, "The Pastoral Epistles in the Greek New Testament," pg. 158.

26. Craig Hawkins, *Witchcraft*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1996, pg. 15.

27. *Praise the Lord* show, op. cit., emphasis added.

28. Finis Dake, *Dake Annotated Study Bible*. Lawrenceville, Ga.: Dake Bible Sales, 1963, pp. 1, 54.

29. See further, Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled — The Gap Theory*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1978, pp. 5-47.

30. John David, *Paradise to Prison — Studies in Genesis*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1982, pg. 44.

31. *Unformed and Unfilled*, op. cit., pg. 45.

32. Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and the Scriptures*. London: Pater-noster Press, 1965, pp. 134-135.

33. *Unformed and Unfilled*, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

34. *Ibid.*, pg. 222.

35. Henry Morris, *Studies in the Bible and Science*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1966, pg. 31-33.

36. See W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985, pp. 51-52.

37. *Paradise to Prison — Studies in Genesis*, op. cit., pg. 44.

38. *Unformed and Unfilled*, op. cit., pg. 112.

39. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985, Vol. 1, pp. 48-49.

40. *Paradise to Prison — Studies in Genesis*, op. cit., pg. 45.

41. *Ibid.*, pg. 46.

42. *War in the Heavens*, op. cit., pg. ii.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

44. Kurt Koch, *Occult ABC*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregal Publications, 1993, pg. 222.

45. *Witchcraft*, op. cit., pg. 75, emphasis added.

46. See, for example, *The Ryrie Study Bible*, New Testament, Revelation 1:10, pg. 1895.


47. John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, pg. 42.

48. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968, Vol. 6, pg. 449.

49. William Henrikson, *More Than Conquerors*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983, pp. 55-56.

50. Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984, pg. 145.

51. See further, Leonard George, *Alternative Realities*. New York: Facts On File, 1995, pp. 204-208.

52. *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, op. cit., pg. 49. 

Hogan bills himself as a “missionary” to Mexico. He says that he goes out to 20 tribes of “injuns.” He claims to be an “ultra-committalist” and a “martyr.” Hogan says he is a disciple of T.L. Osborn, whose inspiration was William Branham. He appears regularly in Assembly of God churches after having been spotlighted by the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla., at its School of Ministry headed by Michael Brown. Hogan’s claims at the Brownsville School have been recorded and are available from Brown’s ministry. It’s seven hours of video, on a four-tape set, which currently sells for \$48.00.¹

On the video series, Brown introduces Hogan as one who has been “driving out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead.” However, no dead people were raised at Brownsville. All Hogan appears to have raised is controversy and disappointment in some.

One person went so far as to bring a dead baby in an ice chest to one of the Pensacola services. The Brownsville leadership could not resuscitate the baby and it was laid to rest with no criminal charges against the church or father, the local newspaper reported in a front-page story.²

BACKGROUND

Hogan, who calls himself a “warlord,” is the son of the late Rev. O.W. Hogan Sr. of West Monroe, La. Hogan’s mother, who lives with his brother in West Monroe, refused an interview with PFO. She admitted she had never seen these purported miracles but said she believed every word David said.

Hogan was born and reared in Bastrop, 20 miles from West Monroe. He is the director of Freedom Ministries, based on Freedom Ranch just outside of Tempoal, Mexico. (Tempoal is off Highway 105, about 160 km. southwest of the coastal city of Tampico, Mexico.)

By his own admission, Hogan has no training in any Bible school or seminary. He was formally recognized by the Assemblies of God in Baytown, Texas, at least on a district level, in December 1998.

The *Renewal Journal* of Brisbane, Australia, a pro-Pentecostal newsletter, featured a message that Hogan delivered in November 1996 at the Christian Outreach Center in Brisbane. Hogan reported: “We’ve had over 200 people raised from the dead in our work. ... I’ve personally been in on 19 dead raisings and I know.”³

Christian Research Institute panned Hogan in its *Christian Research Journal*, saying:

“...leaders at the Brownsville revival in Pensacola have begun

ongoing revival is being touted as perhaps the greatest in the history of humanity.”⁴

Last August, when Hogan appeared in Cortez, Colo., no one was raised from the dead. He did bring an 8-year-old Aztec child whom he claims he brought back from the dead. However, while in Cortez, Hogan visited no morgues, funeral parlors or cemeteries. Apparently, he prefers the sterile environment of a church where people can have safe frenzies, anxious expectations and can be worked into altered states of consciousness. Here, too, he is able to filter reality as they hear him present himself as a super-missionary who is not afraid of the devil.

One person attending the Cortez meetings said that Hogan claimed

“David Hogan is gone and to my knowledge, all the ‘demon illnesses’ that were here when he came are here when he left.”

citing resurrections from the dead. For \$75 the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry will sell you a video series titled *Faith to Raise the Dead*. Brownsville leaders are claiming that evangelist David Hogan and his associate missionaries in Mexico have seen more than 200 raised from the dead. The expectations of people have reached such a fever pitch that some time ago a parent who lost a child put his baby on ice and drove 350 miles to the Brownsville Assembly of God to have the baby raised from the dead. To some, this father’s actions may appear foolish. Yet, if God is indeed raising hundreds from the dead in Mexico, it would be perfectly logical to think that He would also raise the dead in the church whose

supernatural transport from place to place. The eyewitness told PFO, “David Hogan is gone and to my knowledge, all the ‘demon illnesses’ that were here when he came are here when he left. ... He also seemed to avoid the people in the wheelchairs and there were a lot of them.”⁵

THE GREATEST

Watching Hogan on nearly seven hours of video is an exercise in perseverance and overload. He claims to have been a “gang member” who was told by other Christians to “calm down a little bit” for being “too zelyous” [sic]. He has strange stage mannerisms and rambles around the platform, hyperactively alternating from bouncing on his toes, growling, talking — hands on top of his head, breaking into screaming, “Jesus — Jesus — Jesus — Jesus — Jesus,” then

chuckling to himself and screeching “woweeeeeee.”

Hogan, in the first session at the Brownsville School, told students he had personally been where 21 people have been raised from the dead. One might ask what service would have a collection of 21 dead bodies but logic is suspended here. Hogan suggested from Mark 3 that he was ordained just like the apostles (by Jesus) and apparently makes no qualitative difference between himself and the Twelve.

Also in that first session he made this claim:

“I may be the most simple man you’ve ever met but you ain’t never run into anybody in our generation that has touched as many dead men and let ‘em get up as I have. How does that feel?”

Hogan, on the Brownsville video, goes through verbal and physical antics describing his powers and comes across as confrontational, pushy, crude and arrogant. More disturbing is that there is none of the gentleness and humility prescribed by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 for godly teachers. There is none of the meekness and fear (respect) mentioned in 1 Peter 3:15 (see also Colossians 3:12). He rails on demons and rails on the people.

Hogan’s style has him coming across as a know-it-all. Confronting the “enemy” may be one thing but Paul says of his approach to God’s children: “We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children” (1 Thessalonians 2:7). Hogan batters his audiences at times.

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

In the first session, Hogan tells of being born into the home of a Southern Baptist pastor. He constantly tells of how misunderstood he has been and continues to be. He credits this to his high level of spirituality, boldness and faith. He does not skip a beat as he tells of rotting corpses and bodies in other states of mortification routinely raised back to life. He is the

“demon buster” who withstands warlocks and witch doctors. It is high drama — a gripping and fantastic tale — with Hogan as the star.

Hogan also says on the video that he had a vision that was like a “movie” in which he saw a bull in a field trying to open a nicely wrapped present. The ferocious bull was unable to get into that present despite his strength. Then a baby about a year old opened the package with no effort. Hogan then asserts: “I said to Jesus, ‘You make me that baby or I ain’t gonna preach.’”

He then says: “And so I decided that I was going to seek heaven until the day came that I could walk up to a dead person and touch him and watch him fly up from the dead.”

Believers can never tell Jesus what He is to do and set conditions for obedience. Isaiah cried, “Woe is me” and pleaded with the Lord to be sent (Isaiah 6). John fell at the feet of Jesus as one dead (Revelation 1:17). Job was asked, “shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God let him answer it” (Job 40:2). Hogan needs to consider Job 40 and 41 and repent of his incredible pride and arrogance. However, he can weave through a show of humility that turns into pomposity.

RARE OCCURRENCES

Even the disputed passage in Mark 16:15-18 quoted by many Charismatics does not mention ability to raise the dead. In the approximately 900 years from Elijah to the apostles, there are only nine specific and clear miracles of this type mentioned. Averaged out, this would be one every 100 years. It does not seem that raising the dead was normative or expected but was dramatic and infrequent. The biblical pattern for people rising from the dead is infrequent and the ability to do it is clear and only connected to people unquestionably empowered by God for this act.

The overwhelming majority of God’s people during Bible times were not used in this way. John the Baptist was called the greatest of the proph-

ets and he “did no miracle” (Luke 7:28 and John 10:41). No one in the Reformation claimed this, nor was it a claim in any of the great revivals.

Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Job, Jeremiah and other heroes of faith did not raise anyone from the dead. The Old Testament records three raisings. Elijah performed one (1 Kings 17:17), then with his double portion anointing, Elisha, his successor, performed two (2 Kings 4:32; 13:21). These obviously were to stir resurrection hope and a longing for the eternal kingdom. It also was during a time of great unbelief, apostasy and crisis when Baal worship had taken over Israel and the miraculous was much needed.

In the New Testament, Jesus performed three raisings (Jairus’ daughter in Mark 5:35, the widow’s son in Luke 7:11, and Lazarus in John 11:11). We could add Jesus’ own resurrection as a fourth. The mysterious and sparsely described event that coincided with the death of Christ (Matthew 27:52-53) with an undetermined number coming out of the grave, like Lazarus, is an obvious attempt to show us that Jesus is the Messiah with the power of life and death and that the final victory awaits our resurrection and glorification (1 Corinthians 15). Acts 9:37-42 speaks of Peter and the raising of Dorcas. Acts 20:9-10 describes the last one, although some dispute if it is a raising.

The Epistles nowhere hint that we should pursue attempts at raising the dead or expect it but rather those dramatic divine interventions in Scripture picture resurrection and glorification as connected to the future Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia* makes the point:

“Since all these raisings were only signs of Jesus’ resurrection power, they meant only a return to this mortal life; the final victory over death waits until the End.”⁶

Do we believe that God can raise the dead? Absolutely! The big ques-

tion is "When?" The Scriptures are clear in Romans 8:23: "waiting for ... the redemption of our bodies." Resurrection is connected to our glorification at Christ's coming as is made abundantly clear in 1 Corinthians 15.

Hogan with his hype and claims of more than 200 raisings would have us believe that he is greater than all the prophets and apostles, and even Jesus Himself. There are fewer than a dozen pronounced raisings in the Bible. Hogan outdoes them all and his miracles are almost commonplace, if we believe his claims.

The Apostle Paul testified: "My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify" (Acts 26:4-5). Connie Horn notes:

"The above statement is taken from Paul's testimony before King Agrippa. In his case, Paul employed evidence that could be confirmed by witnesses, if they were called upon to testify."⁷

As has been established, the raisings of the dead in biblical history are rare occurrences. People who have no historical perspective do not realize this nor do they realize that modern claims of raising the dead go back only a little more than 50 years. *None* of the modern claims has ever been documented. Faith healers such as Oral Roberts and Benny Hinn have had to disavow such boisterous assertions. No proof with death certificates, doctors' verifications or film exists anywhere. PFO has dealt with the likes of Smith Wigglesworth and others in past *Journals*.

Some of the modern claims are downright silly, as John MacArthur shows:

"Jan Crouch, who with her husband, Paul, leads Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), told a live audience in Costa Rica that 'God answered the prayers of two little 12-year-old girls to raise our pet Chicken from the

dead!' Mrs. Crouch has recounted that same tale on TBN broadcasts that air coast to coast and around the world."⁸

The uniform history of the early Church was circulated by the fourth century apologist and defender of the deity of Christ, Athanasius. In a volume he distributed called *Vita S. Antoni* (The Life of St. Anthony), it is stated: "For the working of signs is not ours but the Saviour's work."⁹

HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT!

Hogan is part of a growing number of men who are in the line of Latter Rain heresies that began to develop in the 1940s. In short, they teach that we can have heavenly glorification now. It is called by various titles, including "Kingdom Now," "Joel's Army," "Restorationism," "End Time Prophets," "End Time Restorationism" and "Manifest Sons of God." It teaches that a group of end-time super-apostles and prophets will have more power than all the biblical prophets and apostles. They will control death, disease, wealth, the world and be "little Christs." Do they believe their own hype or just get others to believe? Hogan has his own twists and turns but in philosophy and teaching, he is in the camp of the Kingdom Now advocates.

Some of the Kingdom Now teachers play it very coy and very smart by only saying we are on the verge of this great miracle period. "Any day now" is their anthem. We are just around the corner from emptying out the hospitals, raising the dead, creative miracles and holding miracle crusades where everyone is healed. Just keep your cash coming their way and miracles are bound to break out. Benny Hinn has been promising universal healing since 1979.

Kingdom Now is a delusion and a self-centered mania. It was described back in 1982 by Pastor Wayne Benson of First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids as "Charismatic humanism."¹⁰ Unfortunately, Benson has jumped into the "Brownsville river" and ignored his own warnings. That river is

full of aberrant whirlpools and heretical alligators.

Whether the proponents of Kingdom Now all believe it or just use it for personal advantage and gain is beside the point. What ought to concern believers is its unbiblical premise and the demeaning of the biblical prophets and apostles. The confusion of biblical categories and confusing of sanctification and glorification is to be deplored.

Apologist Robert Liichow of the Inner City Christian Discernment Ministry says:

"Hogan's beliefs parallel those of the fringe revivalist Franklin Hall regarding raising the dead, levitation, etc. ... Hogan seems to be spouting the old 'Manifest Sons of God' offshoot doctrines of the New Order of the Latter Rain in the 1950s."¹¹

In speaking with an associate of Hogan's ministry by phone in the fall of 1998, the subject of Hogan's claim to levitate was brought up. PFO was informed that "David used to think and teach that Jesus levitated him but now believes that the devil is messing with him" (though the co-worker had not ever seen this and had only been told by Hogan that it happened). If indeed the devil is levitating Hogan, he has a lot in common with the witch doctors he claims to oppose.

ANYTHING YOU WANT

In the second session at the Brownsville school, Hogan leads off with Matthew 21:22: "All things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it." Although Hogan intends it to mean that we can have whatever we pray for, he tells stories that make it clear that he does not always get what he wants.

No one would suggest that Matthew 21:22 gives a believer *carte blanche* on any request. All the rest of Scripture must be taken into account. *The Geneva Bible* in its note on Matthew 21:22 points out that:

"...the emphasis is on not doubting. Freedom from doubt arises

from an awareness that something is truly God's will. True faith receives what it asks for; trust in God is not presumptive arrogance but submission to His will."¹²

Neither Hogan nor anyone else would suggest in the end that we can have absolutely anything for which we believe. Thus no one, not even Charismatic extremists, would see Matthew 21:22 as absolute. As Dr. Harry Ironside says:

"This is not to be understood as an assurance that God will grant every request we make, or give us whatever we ask. To pray believingly implies that we pray in accordance with the revealed will of God, and that we do not regard iniquity in our hearts. But where one is right with God Himself, and his prayer is in faith because in accord with the known will of God, the divine response is sure."¹³

FLY THROUGH THE AIR WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE

In the same session, Hogan claims his family fasts every other day of their lives and his wife, when in Mexico, fasts 21 days a month. Bragging about fasting seems to violate Matthew 6:16-19 and the whole tenor of that chapter in terms of public displays or public boasting about religious deeds.

Hogan goes on to tell of his 8-year-old "son" whom he got out of "the trash" in Guatemala. He claims that when his son shouts "*fuego*" (fire) and waves his little hanky at people, "you are flying through the air like you were shot with a gun — an 8-year-old boy — it's amazing." Hogan spins these tales with a straight face. The Apostle Peter warned us about those who "speak great swelling words of emptiness" (2 Peter 2:18). Hogan has to be either lying, hallucinating or admitting to demonic activity here. There are no other choices.

EVERYONE MUST DO IT

Hogan goes on to preach from Matthew 10:7-8, albeit totally out-

of-context. The passage mentions healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and casting out demons. Hogan fails to point out some other things mentioned in the passage around verses 7 and 8 that cast a different light on those activities.

Hogan tells his listeners that it was God's will for all believers to raise the dead since it was commanded. But is it? Hogan claims that thousands of people have been healed in his ministry and that "every part of the human body healed or recreated." While he talks of his re-creative powers, Michael Brown sits peering at him through thick glasses and no one sees the discrepancy, even though Hogan later that week talked about "eyes popping in heads."

Hogan fails to tell his audience that Matthew 10:5 says, "go not into the way of the Gentiles" (or Samaritans). Using Hogan's logic, we could only raise Jews from the dead. Then Jesus says, "take no wallet" and no money or extra coat and shoes. Does Hogan really obey Jesus? Are we to go totally without resources?

This obviously was a *brief, limited, very circumscribed* mission to *Jewish* villages in which the *apostles* were given supernatural powers to immediately pave the way for Jesus with messianic signs. Charles Erdman says:

"It is evident that these injunctions were intended only for the days when the apostles were preparing the way for the earthly labors of their Lord. Many of these directions were purely temporary. Jesus wished to impress upon them the fact that the time of his ministry would be brief."¹⁴

The Kingdom of Heaven at hand (verse 7) was embodied in Jesus the King, yet Hogan has the audacity to share that he told a severely crippled woman that when she looked at him she was looking at the Kingdom of God.

HIGH NOON

Hogan goes on with more outlandish stories. He recounts a demonic

encounter by his then 4-year-old son. He heard his son screaming in pain and upon pulling up the boy's shirt, saw a hand print on the son's side as the demon worked at pulling out the boy's intestines. Hogan says he prayed out in tongues and called out the name of Jesus as the demon tortured the young boy. Nothing seemed to work as the demon then tried to rip off the boy's face. Hogan says he did not realize that he had "stirred up some of the bigger demons that surround the world."

The physical attack stopped but resumed later causing the boy to go deaf. Hogan then says he shut himself away in his room for five days and fasted. He said he was determined to find out what was going on. Then "Jesus spoke" and told him there was a warlock living nearby.

Hogan says he charged out of the house only to confront the "demon" out on the street and like an old western movie, the "demon" was waiting for a showdown right there. The strains of the *High Noon* theme came to mind as I listened to Hogan tell of his cursing the warlock "by the blood and power of the cross." Hogan triumphantly reported that the warlock fled and the boy's ears were "instantly opened."

Of course, there is not one verse in the Scriptures that would indicate that demons can leave burning hand prints, rip out intestines, rip off a face or limbs, and so on. Hogan's assertions are more fiction than Bible.¹⁵ The spiritual warfare chapter in Ephesians 6 teaches nothing like Hogan is suggesting and identify the foe as "not flesh and blood" but as spirit entities (verse 12). These enemies can be withstood with the armor of God, we are told.

Addressing the fact that demons are pure spirit and have no physicality (no flesh, bones, hands, feet, that is, they are non-corporeal), Dr. Merrill Unger, in his classic text *Biblical Demonology*, affirms:

"The Gospels prove conclusively that demons are purely spiritual beings, ... The spiritual nature of

both Satan and his demon hosts is graphically set forth by the Apostle Paul when he emphatically says the believer's intense warfare 'is not against flesh and blood,' but against the non-material, the incorporeal, ... In like manner the Apostle John bears witness to the incorporeality of the demons ... Demons, hence, are scripturally presented as purely spiritual beings. ... The specific attribute of 'spirit' is then immateriality, incorporeality."¹⁶

If and when demons possess the unsaved, their works may be seen operating through a person but their nature and essence cannot be seen. As pure spirits they have no body parts.

It should be noted that rabbinic superstition is responsible for the kind of mindset perpetuated by Hogan. Merrill Unger again enlightens us on this point:

"... the Rabbis divided demons into two classes: one composed of purely spiritual beings, the other of half-spirits ('halbgeister'). The latter, as semi-sensuous beings, possessing a psycho-sarcous constitution, involving them in physical needs and functions, could, under certain conditions be seen, and were the source of endless superstition. Scriptural truth, however, at once disposes of the notion of 'half-spirits,' and with it the greater part of rabbinic and ethnic demonology, where the essential characteristic of spirit is violated. Presenting demons, then, as purely spiritual beings, Scripture uniformly views them as above the operation of natural law, and not subject to human visibility, or other sensory perception."¹⁷

In the tragic Salem witch trials of the 17th century, so-called spectral evidence was presented by those with overactive imaginations and evil agendas.¹⁸ Bible-believing Christians believe in Satan and demons but not in the caricatures of Hogan and others.

ANGELS OF LIGHT

Charismatic teachers sometimes claim to see demons but their descriptions are usually cartoonish, grotesque and quite often contradictory to others who report seeing the same thing. Though angels, with God's direction and permission, can take on the form and appearance of men temporarily, there is no biblical warrant for believing God has or will allow demons to do so. Hogan is attributing far too much to demons and "sees" them everywhere.

Even 2 Corinthians 11:14 does not help those who push the unbiblical notion of demons being seen or taking on physical appearances. Satan can disguise himself as an "angel of light" which would be attractive, not frightening at all. The context (Satan's servants disguised as servants of righteousness) is clearly teaching that Satan and demons motivate and energize false teachers. They do not literally become the teachers but operate through them.

DEM BONES, DEM BONES

As Hogan goes on, he tells of a woman who shattered her wrist and arm and had bones sticking out every which way. He says his touch and prayer brought the bones all back together, closed the skin up and effected a perfect healing. There is applause. However, if this were true, we could send Hogan and his entourage to the trauma centers and emergency rooms of hospitals and send the doctors home.

Hogan just plows on with one story after another. The miraculous becomes mundane. He says that in Wawaco, Mexico, a woman was given a new heart and her physical blindness was taken away. In another village of the Aztecs he says he encountered a smelly, rotting leper with no nose, ears, fingers or toes. Hogan says: "It was a human man with leprosy" and he told the man, "You have a devil." He goes on to say that: "I lost my hand in the goo."

Then Hogan reports: "We decided that it was alright to cleanse the leper even though it was a little out-of-context." For some reason Hogan left the village with the job unfinished but returned a few weeks later to find "a nice looking fella — pretty." Hogan receives a standing ovation. He resumes the story, telling them he grabbed the man's 2-week-old nose and the two brand new ears, saying that God had created new fingers and toes and new skin. "Oops," he comments, "I'm not making it very far with this stuff" and then breaks out in a whistle.

A woman then wanders forward to the front of the auditorium where Hogan was speaking and he, after hearing her request, limply and repeatedly hit her on the head with his handkerchief saying, "Fire of God, Fire of Heaven." Then the claims continue. He tells how he watched a man grow new legs and feet from the knees down and there's a story about a girl who had no bones from the hips down. The girl grew new bones in her legs, Hogan asserts.

ALL IN THE MIND?

In Hogan's third session at Brownsville he tells his audience something that is very telling and very troubling: "Take your wildest imagination. ... 'cause my Bible says that whatever things I can think about, Jesus is going to do greater."

That truly is an amazing statement and an amazing lie. No one's Bible says that anywhere.

We have heard of "name it and claim it" theology that is prevalent in Charismatic camps but Hogan goes further with "imagine it and claim it." Our imaginations are fallen and tainted with sin. Almost every reference in Scripture to the imagination or the word "imagine" is negative (cf., Genesis 6:5; 8:21). Is this, after all, what it might really be all about, Hogan's "wildest imagination"?

Then Hogan says, "*And I have a pretty serious imagination.*" And he goes on to say that he sits and thinks of Jesus taking over countries and every-

one getting saved and everybody getting healed. Could it be in the end that most of the dramatic and miraculous parts of Hogan's stories are just part of his "serious imagination"?

The stories go on and on. They include the raising of two dead sisters covered with lime and rotting for three days, which gets him wild applause. Though the raisings were reported to have been done by elders, the mother of the girls kneeled at Hogan's feet and thanked him. Hogan told the people at the Christian Outreach Center in Brisbane: "They loved it when they got up, spitting that lime out of their mouths."¹⁹

THE NEVER ENDING STORIES

Also in the third session, he tells a tale of multiplying food. Hogan says he prayed and the beans, rice and tortillas in the pots fed thousands. Then he adds: "All the food that we fed when we went back to the pots was still in the pot. ... Woooooo. ... Today, this day, it is fulfilled in your ears."

Hogan then informs the audience that he will not reveal the name of the village for his next story. He says that 25 henchmen were sent to kill him and his workers. Somehow Hogan and the group must have turned invisible: "We walked right by 'em. They never saw us. And I am not a quiet individual ... Yahoooo." He then relapses into a surly mode and accuses the students there of "decadency" and "apathy" and verbally beats them up for a time.

Then he is ready again for another story: "Let's see what you can handle — are you ready?" he teases. "Let's see if you can handle the real me. Most demons in humans can't," he boasts.

The next shocker unfolds: "We went into the house of a *principality* and *decapitated* him [he laughs] and it's pretty rough." Hogan turns to Michael Brown and asks: "But that's okay — can we get gross with it? Tell it like it happened?" Brown nods approval.

Hogan then ominously informs his hearers: "But I can promise you this, I'm a great friend but I make a lot better enemy. Just remember that your whole life." Hogan obviously meant demons as enemies but what is frightening and confusing is that throughout his presentation he refers to sins as "demons," sickness as "demons" and *some people as "demons."* Where does that leave one when they have a falling out with Hogan or disagree with him? The answer is obvious. This kind of blurring of categories is divisive and unhealthy.

So Hogan says he took on "demonic royalty" and was able to "hold a demon prince at bay." He did it through the "blood protection of the Holy Ghost" and then asserted: "'Cause my Bible says the Holy Ghost shed his blood — in Acts it says that." It does not say it in Acts and this is total confusion and a torturing of Scripture. Jesus Himself said, "a spirit does not have flesh and *blood*" (Luke 24:39). Here we see again Hogan's utter confusion in giving a spirit corporeality.

The essence of the story is that two magic "warlocks" come on the scene and Hogan stood "nose to nose" with those demons. Declaring the blood of Christ and doing a jig on the stage for a while, Hogan tells of a woman at the scene with dripping sores and "horns" attached to her vertebrae and sticking out of her back. He demonstrated how he tugged on the horns to make sure they were attached. He looked at the "devils" and shouted: "You shouldn'ta, oughta had done that." The whole team ran outside into a field to face a huge invisible "giant" demon who could see them but they couldn't see it. After praying and chanting the blood of Jesus at it, "the thing" exploded into a ball of fire and flew over the mountain. A few days later, Hogan met the "horn" lady and she was perfectly whole.

In that third session, Hogan mentioned being offered millions of dollars but said he could not be bought. At the end of the session, Michael Brown indicated that the offer of

money was from major networks wanting to film the miracles but Hogan would not take the offer of money. Why not just let them film and document it all for nothing? Why is it that reporters in and around his home town have never heard of him?

HOLY GHOST CARWASH

In the fourth session at Brownsville School, Hogan gets even more bizarre. He claims to have prayed a basketball-sized tumor from the body of a woman.

He tells his audience that he has "two submarine trucks" that go underwater even though "mechanically it is not possible." His parallel is Moses at the Red Sea and Joshua at the Jordan. In both of these biblical instances, the water was stopped in some miraculous way but Hogan presses on, undeterred by details. He drives down into the deep riverbed as the water covers over the entire truck, he says. He tells that as he drove under water, it was so dark he turned the lights on and continued for a time, as the Brownsville students laugh with enjoyment. "Great wash job, Holy Ghost," he proclaims to the applause of his gullible and accepting audience.

THE SHINING

Hogan goes on to ridicule the Brownsville lot for their "little river party." He then promised to "escalate a little bit." He spoke of himself as a train and told his audience to get on or be run over. Hogan was agitated and suggested there was resistance with some there.

Coming off the Moses story and the shining of Moses' face, Hogan insisted that his face "a time and again has lit up really like a light bulb." Again, this could be very easily captured on video.

He went on to claim that he fasted for nine months and went into seclusion and witnessed an appearance of Jesus. His description is frightening:

"I am ripped off of that bed and slammed into the wall. It was not a demon, it was the Holy Ghost. Revelation knowledge like I have

never known in my life began to unfold in my mind. ... [I began] writing down pages and pages of revelation knowledge from heaven. ... This is the big one!"

Perhaps Hogan has been in a pagan and occult culture so long he has gone native. What he is explaining is a form of automatic writing and is clearly a form of divination. The practice of automatic writing is commonly done among spiritists and mediums. Josh McDowell and Don Stewart explain automatic writing in their *Handbook of Today's Religions*:

"Automatic writing consists of producing written material by a medium who is not in control of his conscious self. The subject matter is said to be beyond any training, experience or knowledge of the medium."²⁰

Automatic writing is a weak but demonic counterfeit of the real inspiration of the Scriptures. This kind of activity, even if claimed as "revelation knowledge," is forbidden by Revelation 22:18-19.

Hogan then tells them: "Now I'm fixing to tell you something that you're gonna have a hard time with." He says there is no part of the human anatomy that he has not seen healed: "new brains, new hearts, new livers, ... dead raising." He tells them of a baby whose head was split open when its head was dashed on a rock. They left the brains on the rock and brought the brainless baby to the church. After four hours of prayer, the baby came back to life and "brains were still on the rock but he got some more now," Hogan says.

Then Hogan related that in October 1995, the *shekinah* glory cloud knocked out hundreds of people for hours at a church service. It was followed by "open-eyed visions of King Jesus." Some people flew like someone shot them, Hogan says.

According to the *Renewal Journal*, Hogan offered in November 1996 this version of the same October 27, 1995, meeting:

"I was trying to help, but I couldn't help. People were just flying everywhere. And these were ministers. ... I didn't know that they had been pinned down by the Holy Spirit all night long, all over the place, stuck to the ground. Some of them had fallen on ant beds, but not one ant bit them. ... When some people tried to get up, they would go flying. It was awesome. ... The three of us were inside something like a force field of energy. Anybody who tried to come into it was knocked out. It was scary" [sic].²¹

Jesus then appears at the October meeting and starts to read from a list:

"I was looking around, and as he was reading from the list people went flying through the air, getting healed and delivered. It was phenomenal, what God was doing. And he's done it in every service in our work that I've been in since then. It's been over a year. It's amazing. Wonderful."²²

Then he tells the crowd at Brownsville that he is asking Jesus to do that right there for them. He tells them he is "exploding with fire." People began to scream, cry and wail. Hogan tells them, "You all are easy targets" and begins to scream: "Fire! Fire! Fire!" as the Brownsville students surged forward. Hogan ordered his men: "Get 'em" as the "impartations" are eagerly anticipated. As the session concludes there is no smoke, no clouds, not even a mist, just a lot of people in a frenzy and wailing. Mercifully, the tape fades to snow and finally ends.

WHO IS THE REAL DAVID HOGAN?

Folks in and around the quaint Louisiana town of West Monroe (Hogan's hometown) who know him are unwilling to speak about him. Hogan returns to the city from time to time. His brother, O.W. Hogan Jr., pastors the Freedom Church,

described by one as a "river church in the flavor of Rodney Howard-Browne."

Some in West Monroe express that speaking about Hogan could be a potentially explosive issue in the community with families taking sides. Few want to risk such adversity by openly disagreeing with him.

Then others express a reluctance to speak negatively about a minister, even if there are negatives. So there are many reasons for the jitters when it comes to Hogan.

Yet, there are exceptions. Rev. Dale Walker of the Pinegrove Church enthusiastically supports Hogan and has even sent one couple from his church to Mexico to work there as missionaries at Freedom Ranch. That couple has been with Hogan's missionary efforts for nine years. However, Walker cannot confirm if the couple has witnessed the surfeit of "miracles" or not. Walker told PFO, "I believe God called David in an apostolic work."²³

Walker has visited Freedom Ranch briefly, but admitted he had never seen the healing or creative miracles personally. Walker says he prays for the day he'll do them, too. He expressed the sentiment that people will have to make up their mind on the unusual claims based on the man (Hogan) and not necessarily seeing it for themselves. He indicated that Hogan is a no-nonsense kind of a guy who runs the ranch very tightly, which disillusiones some people who had gone there to work. He also mentioned a former "disgruntled volunteer" who in the past had been saying negative things about Hogan. Walker says in the end, the question is, "Do we have faith in Hogan or not?"

It seems with David Hogan that people who know him either love him or strongly dislike him — and some even fear him. Some see him as a good man who does harmful things to others on occasion, namely being over-controlling, while others see him as a bad man who does good to stay in control of others.

There is talk in West Monroe by some of the "short-termers" that there is absolute control on the compound in Mexico. There are also whisperings about "survivors" who are "healing." There are undertones of families being hurt and destroyed by the excessive control. Some even reluctantly tell that a falling out with Hogan leaves them vulnerable to being called "demons" or "devils." One family took five years to recover from serving at Hogan's compound. Some phone calls by PFO for facts never were returned and it is obvious people are reluctant to speak.

Even those who are willing to divulge some of the frightening details do not want to be quoted by name because of fear.

THE AWFUL TRUTH

However, there are exceptions to those reluctant to speak out. One such person is career missionary Alvin LaVaughn Landry, who is currently with the Oasis World Mission in Perote, Mexico. Landry was a lifelong friend of Hogan's and served in Hogan's mission from 1983-1993. Few have been closer. He tells a chilling story.

Landry openly disclosed that "David's problems go way back and he has been telling tall tales his whole life. I have caught him in so many lies that I have lost track."²⁴ When asked if he thought Hogan was a pathological liar, Landry said, "Yes" without hesitation.

Landry then offered:

"David picks up people to work for him that are insecure or with troubled backgrounds or in a crisis. His main thing is control. He controls like a gang leader. ... He uses all kinds of profanity and covers it by saying that you should say all that is in your heart. He has expressed very immoral and vulgar things about women using the rationale that if you say it out, you won't do it. ... He treats women like mules. ... His authority can't be challenged.

... Somebody needs to stand up. ... He has serious mental problems."²⁵

Landry shared the history regarding the expulsion of most missionaries from Mexico in 1987 (until 1991). Hogan was expelled because he refused to obey the government regarding areas which were off limits and went into Guatemala. Landry was able to keep Hogan's work going for over three years. Hogan returned in 1991 and Landry laid out a plan for a center in Tempoal, which Hogan said he wanted to shelve. Two months later, Hogan told everyone he had a "vision from God" and unveiled the Landry plan as his own.

Landry's comments became more ominous:

"No workers at Freedom Ranch have assets. He and his wife are the board and own everything. The board of reference is only on paper and knows little. David has huge assets in his over 200-acre ranch. ... When you tell one lie after another like David does, you get hardened. David has no conscience and does not know where the beginning and end is of all the lies. If one person, just one, were raised from the dead, it would be all over the Mexico newspapers. Most people in Mexico have never heard of David Hogan. They only know of him in America and down there no one would believe any of the reports. Sooner or later, believe me, you will see buildings burning in Tempoal just like Waco. David is paranoid and anti-government and he sees his compound as an end time place of survival. With his personal slaves and hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank he knows he will survive. He has huge investments."²⁶

When asked if Freedom Ranch had any parallels to Jonestown, and Hogan to Jim Jones, he replied: "Most definitely."

Hogan has mixed reviews as far as people are concerned. But the way in which he distorts the Bible and then makes grandiose and unproven claims is enough to reject his ministry. The people of West Monroe may continue to take sides and debate about why Hogan does what he does or if he even does what he says he does. But the issue for Christians should be settled on biblical grounds and his unproven and undocumented imaginings rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

David Hogan has the perfect ploy. The miraculous events are always left in his wake; they always happen elsewhere and he has no eyewitnesses to verify it. Even the inspired writer, Luke, in talking of the certainty of his report, said it was because of the number of "eyewitnesses" that we could believe his account (Luke 1:1-4). Paul spoke of over 500 witnesses of Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6). Our faith is to be in God and His Word, not a man. Hogan offers absolutely no documentation of any claims.

Hogan has not seen or experienced in reality what he says he has. While he may believe them, we have no reason to believe him because he does not have one shred of documented evidence or proof of his extreme claims. In his United States meetings, where all the drama is being trumpeted, he never raises the dead, multiplies food, grows limbs on others, or flies. He does not visit a morgue or empty wheelchairs. There are no creative miracles or miraculous transports to his cities of destination. There is no smoke, just smoke and mirrors. According to his secretary, they have only heard the stories of the submarine truck but have never seen it happen.

Hogan can make all the boastful claims he wants but the Church must stand up and say, "Prove it!" The Apostle Paul commands us to "examine everything carefully" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Hogan claims to be a minister of righteousness and admits

to a serious imagination. He is so far outside the realm of the Bible in his teachings and interpretations that he demonstrates he is only disguised as an apostle of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13). There were 12 apostles and Hogan is not one of them.

In this writer's opinion, there are three basic things that fuel the phenomenon of David Hogan. He boasts of two of them.

1. *That he has a "serious imagination."* What augments and triggers that may be extensive sleep loss,²⁷ and lack of nourishment if Hogan fasts as much and sleeps as little as he says he does. His imagination is so extreme, he may be tapping into the occult because some of his professed proclivities and practices are clearly spiritistic. It is also possible that he has a form of autism which is defined as: "a state of mind characterized by daydreaming, hallucinations, and disregard of external reality."²⁸ Only his mother and doctor would know.

Hogan is also immersed in the Aztec culture, which is superstitious and whose people see all kinds of things in dreams and omens.²⁹ One can only wonder how much Hogan is tainted by that. We agree that he has a serious and wild imagination. Hogan is so jaded he believes that one can say whatever comes to mind in spite of commands in God's Word to the contrary (Ephesians 4:29-32; 5:11-12). It seems that Hogan is a law to himself with a seared conscience.

2. *That he makes a better enemy than a friend.* Some people are afraid of him and just stay out of his way. This gives him momentum. No one wants to be labeled "a demon." Intimidation, intentional or unintentional, paves his way. Calling your opposition a demon is clearly an attempt at control and intimidation. For Hogan, it works. Alvin Landry, Hogan's lifetime friend, has been demonized and labeled a "devil." PFO and this author are sure to be branded by Hogan with a big "D."

3. *Some people want Hogan to be real.* They have been primed by teachers

with Latter Rain heresies and promises that God will speak to them. Their confidence in the Word as adequate has been undermined. Some people want the stories and the sensationalism to be true more than anything. They want phenomenon no matter what. Some have gone to Freedom Ranch and have been disillusioned *not because they are deficient*, but because they recognized the above. They are the truly discerning Bereans who now struggle and grieve. I pray for their "healing" and my heart really goes out to them.

My last word to David Hogan is — bring me to Mexico and show me:

- people being raised from the dead,
- people growing limbs,
- people shot through the air from a hanky,
- take me for a ride in the submarine truck underwater,
- levitate before my eyes,
- fill a room with clouds,
- let me fly around a room,
- provide brains for the brainless,
- all the other things you boast of.

Or better yet, just come here and do them — and PFO will publicly retract its conclusions and withdraw this article. Yes, PFO does believe that God can and does heal in answer to the prayers of His people. Men's claims or "serious imaginations" are another story.

Endnotes:

1. David Hogan, *Faith to Raise the Dead*. Pensacola, Fla.: Brownsville Revival School of Ministry, four videotape set, #S-7, 1998. The tape set originally sold for \$69.95.
2. John W. Allman, "Revival prays to raise an infant from the dead," *Pensacola News Journal*, Sept. 20, 1998, pg. 1A.
3. *Renewal Journal*, Issue #9: Mission (1997:1), "Renewal: Brisbane." This entire article is available on the worldwide web at <http://www.pastornet.net.au/renewal/journal9/9g-hogan.html>.
4. Hank Hanegraaff, "The Counterfeit Revival Revisited," *Christian Research Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pg. 54.
5. Personal letter to author on file.

6. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1975, Vol. 5, pg. 73.
7. Connie Hicks, *Days of Praise*, June-August 1999, entry for August 24.
8. John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1992, pg. 16.
9. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d., Vol. 4, pg. 206.
10. Wayne Benson, "You Can be Conned by the Cults," sermon from First Assembly of God, Grand Rapids, Mich., Aug. 15, 1982, tape #819, tape on file.
11. Personal e-mail to author from Rev. Robert S. Liichow, 8/20/99.
12. *The Geneva Bible*, note on Matthew 21:22, pg. 1541.
13. Harry Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Matthew*. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948, pg. 272.
14. Charles Erdman, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948, pg. 82.
15. See, for example, "The Devil in the Disco," Jan Harold Brunvand, *Too Good to Be True - The Colossal Book of Urban Legends*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999, pp. 247-248.
16. Merrill Unger, *Biblical Demonology*. Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1952, pp. 62-63.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
18. See further, Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed - The Social Origins of Witchcraft* and David Brown, *A Guide to the Salem Witchcraft Hysteria*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
19. *Renewal Journal*, op. cit.
20. Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions*. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1983, pg. 249.
21. *Renewal Journal*, op. cit.
22. *Renewal Journal*, op. cit.
23. Phone conversation with the Rev. Dale Walker and the author, Aug. 30, 1999.
24. Phone conversation with the Rev. Alvin LaVaughn Landry and the author, Sept. 9, 1999.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. See Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973, pp. 384-390.
28. Davis Guralnik, Editor, *New World Dictionary*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984, "Autism," pg. 94.
29. See: <http://northcoast.com/~spdtom/a-omen.html>.

public records to get at the truth." After PFO's investigation of Brown, colleagues in the countercult network exposed Stratford and Warnke, among others.

PFO also has played a key role in scrutinizing the doctrine and practices of faith healer Benny Hinn. From his perpetual "revelation knowledge" to his "There are nine of them" statement about the personages in the Godhead to his claims of his father being mayor of Jaffa, Israel, to his wife Suzanne's "Holy Ghost enema," PFO has taken a careful look at this Charismatic "superstar." Even under threats of lawsuits by Hinn's attorneys, PFO has stayed the course.

Years of primary research have gone into its various reports on Hinn. Many of these reports have been compiled into the book, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*. Hinn and his organization have yet to respond to the book in any credible way. One reader said, "Wow... It's about time someone writes a book on one of the Pied Pipers out there. [PFO does] a great job of telling just where Hinn's bizarre teachings fly in the face of Christianity and the Gospel. [It's] a book that every Benny Hinn fan needs to read."

Despite the difficult task of evaluating cultic, heretical and aberrational doctrine in its journals, PFO has always strived to not just tell Christians what's wrong — but to be workmen unashamed who rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to attempt to educate believers in a proper and basic understanding of the Scriptures and the "Apostles' doctrine." False teachers and their unchecked false doctrine often bring devastation into the lives of their devotees. PFO and its staff have been used repeatedly to help pick up the pieces of the battered, confused and damaged lives of those vandalized by false teachers — both inside and outside the Church.

Finally, 2000 marks my 15th anniversary of full-time work in PFO's ministry. In the early 1980s, PFO had decidedly grown and with its growth came increased demands on my time and energy. After years of struggling with leaving a full time job in the secular marketplace, a young pastor and friend encouraged me to step out in faith and move into full time ministry work. It was a decision that has never been regretted.

In all of these milestones, it pleases us that God has been able to work through PFO in ways that are evident (Ephesians 2:10). And I am personally thankful to God for the spirituality, integrity and other life characteristics of those who serve with me in this ministry. At times, I know their tasks seem like a thankless job, but the impact of their dedication and hard work has influenced and changed lives across the world. I thank God for His wonderful grace and for the milestones of this ministry.

I am also extremely grateful for all those who have stood by us with prayers, contributions, moral support, encouragements and practical help over the years. Truly, this is a team effort.

Our greatest testimony and gratitude comes not from any successes God has given us but for a Savior who is gracious and faithful and whose grace is all sufficient. His grace has brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

the Governing Body since Nov. 28, 1974, when eight new members were appointed.

The Governing Body's new members were announced last October at the Watchtower's annual meeting in Pittsburgh. They are Samuel Herd, the body's first African-American member; Guy Pierce; Steve Lett; and David Splane.

One possible factor contributing to the Watchtower's delay in appointments is the society's requirement that members belong to the "anointed class," those 144,000 believers who will live in heaven. The society teaches that all other believers — the great crowd — will spend eternity on earth.

The Watchtower Society claims the 144,000 reached its total number in 1935. Today, the sect's membership stands near 5.6 million. Fewer than 8,800 members of the "anointed remnant" are alive today, according to the Watchtower. Jehovah's Witnesses born or baptized after 1935 have been taught that their only hope in the next life is as part of the earthly "great crowd."

Faced with a shrinking pool of "anointed" people from which to draw members of the Governing Body — and the fact that the body's new members all are too young to have been baptized in or before 1935 — the society says these four attained "anointed" status when a previously "anointed" follower proved unfaithful, lost his (or her) heavenly calling and forfeited the position.

Another factor may be younger leadership devising new strategy. According to David Reed, a former Jehovah's Witness who is now a Christian writer, these people could take the Watchtower Society in a new direction. "What the organization is doing now is turning in the direction of mainstreaming," Reed said in a recent lecture at the annual Witnesses Now for Jesus Convention in Pennsylvania. Reed cited The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a prime example of how a sect that denies biblical truth can present itself as another "Christian church" down the street.

—MKG

BUILDING PERMIT GRANTED FOR NAUVOO TEMPLE

Six months after the surprise announcement that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would rebuild its temple in Nauvoo, Ill., the church was issued a building permit. In October, after many hours of deliberation and negotiations, the City of Nauvoo finally struck "a bargain with the church," according to a report from the *Hancock County Journal-Pilot*.

Under the agreement, "the church offered them \$471,440.37 up front and a city planner for two years." According to City Alderman Gene Taylor, "I think it's a great agreement." The newspaper said, "The money is to alleviate the stress and possible negative impacts on the city's resources. The planner will be hired by the church on the city's behalf and will handle any problems that arise." The City Council voted 5-1 to approve the permit.

During public meetings, Nauvoo residents expressed concerns about and objections to the increase in weekly visitors that the temple would attract to the town of 1,200. Some estimated the temple could draw up to 10,000 visitors each week, an increase of nearly 40 percent over Nauvoo's current tourist traffic. Other concerns were traffic flow, road and street upkeep, parking, and utilities including water and sewer. About

20 percent of the money from the church is designated for utility problems, while the rest will be used to underwrite traffic, police, fire and other emergency needs.

Supporters say the growth in tourism will bring an increase in retail sales and tax revenue. However, some are skeptical. "When the Mormons come, they don't spend money. They go do all the free stuff. They don't buy knick-knacks, or anything really," a Nauvoo resident told the newspaper.

Another resident, Karen Ihrig, told the *Journal-Pilot*, "I'm very concerned. I don't want the burden of supporting a church's message on my taxes. There has to be a civil way to deal with this, but the Mormon culture is going to influence every aspect of our life. I think people's real fear in this is a bigger, more powerful corporate church presence than they're comfortable with. And that's overwhelming."

The LDS church's corporate identity, Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., owns more than 35 percent of the land in the city, while paying only about 11 percent of the taxes because of its non-profit status.

Construction of the original temple in Nauvoo began in 1841 under the leadership of Joseph Smith Jr. In 1848, it was destroyed by fire. A ground breaking ceremony for the new temple was held last Oct. 24. The structure is slated to be the church's 109th temple.

—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

STEP BY STEP

Divine Guidance for Ordinary Christians

by James C. Petty

P&R Publishing, 279 pages, \$14.99

Every Christian has wrestled with the sobering question, "How can I know the will of God?" James Petty's new book helps in that struggle. It is a volume on a critical subject that is truly needed by an undiscerning Church.

In these days of "feeling" orientation and excessive emotionalism, this book is a welcome relief. Petty examines from a biblical perspective three current and popular views of guidance. The book has a wide scope and offers numerous applications for apologists because so many cult followers look for God's guidance in the wrong places.

Petty looks at guidance and the individual will of God, as well as guidance and Christian liberty. He also gives seven elements of biblical decision-making. Petty uses case studies and examples. He packs his book with Scripture and solid biblical interpretation, demonstrating that God's Word truly does contain all we need "for life and godliness." He concludes each chapter with "Review and Reflection" statements and questions, helping re-emphasize the pivotal issues.

The volume's appendix has an "Assessing My Priorities (AMP) Worksheet." The dynamic of this item points out that understanding God's will for an individual's life is something that need not be monumental, mysterious or mystical. The worksheet alone makes this book very practical and very helpful.

One popular book currently in the Christian marketplace purports to establish biblical guidelines for "knowing and doing the will of God." However, this perennially best-selling volume is hopelessly flawed with feelings and mysticism. Therefore, *Step By Step* is even more a needed book. It is a step-by-step examination of what the Bible really says about knowing the will of God. Don't miss it.

—GRF

THE FORGOTTEN TRINITY

by James R. White

Bethany House Publishers, 224 pages, \$10.99

Ignorance breeds heresy. Most Christians — even those who have faithfully attended Sunday school for decades — are more likely, when pressed, to describe the triune nature of the Godhead in a way more resembling tritheism or modalism than orthodoxy. Moreover, believers seem more satisfied with their error or just passing over God's revelation of Himself by labeling it a "mystery" than with a desire to study and enlighten their minds.

Apologist and scholar James R. White clearly understands this shortcoming. In the opening chapter of his latest volume, *The Forgotten Trinity*, he writes just how important the theology of God's nature is to the believer and notes "the doctrine is *misunderstood* as well as *ignored*. It is so misunderstood that a majority of Christians, when asked, give *incorrect* and at times downright *heretical* definitions of the Trinity."

White emphasizes that his book is written for believers to help them to gain a "deeper, higher, more intense love" of the Trinity. Although White does periodically refer to the Jehovah's Witnesses and their theology, he does not use this book to respond directly to arguments of anti-trinitarian sects such as the Watchtower or United Pentecostals. Nevertheless, his efforts can and will achieve just such a goal, as truth always dispels error.

White starts readers with the basics — a simple, yet fundamental, definition of the Trinity. From there he builds to a thorough examination of the person of Jesus Christ through the opening verses of John's Gospel and other crucial scriptural statements that attribute deity to the Son of God. Next, he moves forward to a discussion of the person and deity of the Holy Spirit. He also goes briefly outside the confines of Scripture by inspecting Church history through the statements of Clement, Ignatius and others. He brings the book to a conclusion by asking (and answering), "Does it really matter?"

The volume is furnished with extensive endnotes and its exhaustive index helps make for easy retrieval of key information. It is a welcome reminder to us of the importance of this cardinal tenet of the Faith. One which, because of our ignorance, is often so successfully assailed.

—MKG

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