

CANADA STRIPS MINISTRIES OF TAX EXEMPTION

The Canadian government is putting the squeeze on some charities. Officials have ordered MacGregor Ministries shut down as a charitable organization. This prominent apologetic and counter-cult ministry, based in British Columbia, has operated as a registered Canadian Charity for nearly three decades. MacGregor Ministries is one of about 2,500 charities which has had its charity status recently revoked.

"We have been (unjustly, we feel) accused of not fulfilling our original statement of purpose when we became a charity in 1980," according to Lorri MacGregor. The ministry has said that the Canadian government — despite freedom of speech guaranteed under the Charter in Canada — no longer allows critiques of other faiths, even if done fairly and documented thoroughly. "We are being accused of dispensing 'hate,'" MacGregor said.

Initially, the ministry moved to accommodate government regulations by agreeing to shift the analysis of cultic and aberrational groups found on its website and in its publications to a non-charitable entity, teaching only Christian doctrine under the charitable heading. This proposal has been rejected by the government. "We now cannot present Christianity as better than any other religion. We cannot be 'persuasive' when presenting Christianity," a ministry statement reported.

MacGregor Ministries, as a registered Canadian charity, will dissolve and its assets will need to be transferred to a government-approved charity or taxed by the government. The organization has been forced to restructure itself, starting from scratch, and now operates under MM Outreach, a ministry corporation that is no longer allowed to provide tax-deductible receipts for the support it receives.

—MKG

YOU CAN BE A PROPHET

Saying he wants to "comfort and strengthen his church after two years of traumas," Brady Boyd, pastor at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., is teaching his 10,000-member congregation "how to become modern prophets in their own lives."

Boyd replaced Ted Haggard, who resigned after a sex scandal in 2006. In December 2007, New Life was the

scene of a shooting that left two members — and the assailant — dead after a Sunday morning service.

In late April, Boyd told his flock, "I want all of us here tonight to hear God's voice. You've all been uniquely hard-wired to hear the voice of God," according to a news article in the *Denver Post*. What is being labeled as "comprehensive instruction on prophecy," Boyd wants all of his members to be able to "hear God and foresee their future plans." Boyd alleges that as pastor, prophecy is one of his chief abilities, but he desires his entire congregation to be able to operate with this spiritual gift rather than to depend upon him.

Boyd is enlisting the help of others from the New Life ministerial staff, as well as "prophetic ministers" from his former church in Texas, to promulgate his revelation precepts. Jeff Drott, another minister at New Life, explained that "God rarely speaks to people in an audible voice, often sending a thought, vision, dream, image or scriptural insight," the *Post* reported.

The direction in which Boyd is trying to take his congregation is not new as the membership of his megachurch has long been exposed to such unbiblical teaching. Haggard was part of the National School of the Prophets conference, where he and other leaders would "minister and release you into a new level of prophetic anointing" — all for just \$175. Haggard had also repeatedly claimed to have powerful visions from the Lord — many of which were vague or proven false.

—MKG

BYNUM APPEARS ON DIVORCE COURT

In 2003, Juanita Bynum allowed her million-dollar wedding to Bishop Thomas W. Weeks III to be televised, so it only seemed fitting that she likewise use the same media to discuss her pending divorce. On April 25-26, Bynum appeared in a two-part episode of "Divorce Court," a nationally syndicated reality program. During the broadcast, she confirmed that she is "done" with her marriage and spoke about domestic violence. "I said to myself, I love him, but I love me more," Bynum told "Divorce Court" Judge Lynn Toler during the interview.

Weeks was convicted of aggravated assault after attacking Bynum in August 2007 outside an Atlanta hotel. He was sentenced to three years probation, 200 hours of community service, and must undergo counseling.

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Bynum said during the interview that following her husband's abuse, she fought depression and even entertained the thought of suicide. Producers for the reality show invited Bynum for the express purpose of relating her own domestic-abuse survival and to be an adviser to Toler for a similar case. Her own divorce proceeding is not "on the docket" for the program. Weeks also was invited to be part of the broadcast, but declined.

Yet not all are sympathetic to Bynum's mission. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* observed that, "Bynum's decision to appear on 'Divorce Court' after the media blitz surrounding her domestic violence trial has some metro Atlantans wondering whether the Pentecostal 'prophetess' is trying to extend her stay in the limelight." Some even wonder if the attack by Weeks was a "staged incident" or "publicity stunt." Bynum insisted to Toler that it wasn't.

—MKG

THERE'S A NEW REVIVAL COMING?

"Holy Spirit" revivals appear to have come full-circle — at least geographically. Fifteen years ago, crowds packed the 10,000-seat Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Fla., to be intoxicated by "Holy Ghost bar-

tender" Rodney Howard-Browne. A year later, revival enthusiasts began barking, squealing, and braying at the Airport Vineyard church in Toronto. The following year, the phenomenon manifested itself in Pensacola, Fla., as followers were urged to get into the "river" of revival at the Brownsville Assembly of God church. Then, the next year saw the "Cornfield Revival," which took place in the rural Missouri community of Smithton before relocating to the Kansas City area. Now revivalists are once again heading back to Lakeland, this time for "The Florida Outpouring."

In early April, Stephen Strader, pastor of Ignited Church, invited revival leader Todd Bentley for five days of meetings. "On the second or third night, we just looked at each other and said, 'We've got to extend it another week,'" Strader told *The Tampa Tribune*. During the weeks that followed, the services outgrew both the Ignited Church and another larger church and were moved to the Lakeland Center. Estimates place nightly attendance between 4,000 and a capacity crowd of 7,000, with many coming from outside the Lakeland area.

Bentley is described as "a tattooed, body-pierced, T-shirt wearing evangelist from British Columbia." Operating under the banner of "Fresh Fire Ministries," Bentley claims to be responsible for "sparking revival fires and equipping the body in power evangelism and healing ministry." "It's electric. It's tangible. That's what people are coming for and also the notable miracles," Bentley told the *Tribune*.

—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.