
News Updates

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE ...

Several pieces of fine jewelry from the estate of the late healing evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman turned up on a Beverly Hills' auctioning block in early May. The jewelry was only a small part of Kuhlman's entire estate, which had been bequeathed to D.B. (Tink) Wilkerson and his wife, Sue.

In 1997, Wilkerson was contacted by B.C. Talbott, who is writing a biography on Kuhlman. After several meetings between the two, Wilkerson gave Kuhlman's belongings to the Dallas woman and her husband. Wilkerson stated, "I felt like they would do the right thing and that we would do what God wanted us to do — not use (the estate) to make money."

The Wilkersons only became active in Kuhlman's ministry during the last few months before the faith healer's death in February 1976. In December 1975, while in failing health, Kuhlman drafted a new will, which left the majority of her estate to the Wilkersons. Following her death, this new will raised the suspicion of longtime employees of the Kathryn Kuhlman Foundation. Kuhlman's early biographer, Jamie Buckingham, noted in his book *Daughter of Destiny*, "She evidently did a lot of things she would not have done had her body been functioning correctly."

Charisma magazine reported that the auctioned items were said to be distinguished "not only because Kuhlman was well-known, but also because the pieces are high-quality and hard-to-find." The magazine noted that the "most valuable" object was "a turn-of-the-century frog brooch containing green garnets that are brilliant in color and consistent in size."

Other personal items from Kuhlman's estate, but excluded from the auction, also were recently disclosed. These included a Louis Vuitton purse which contained false eyelashes, driver's license, keys, credit cards and a fake ID. Her marriage license, divorce papers and ordination certificate were also among the unveiled items. Talbott reportedly has received calls from both Benny Hinn and Roberts Liardon who have expressed an interest in buying the remaining estate items.

The magazine article also stated that Wilkerson said the proceeds from the auction are to go for the support of selected and worthwhile ministries.

—MKG

LOURDES AND FATIMA ENDORSED BY HINN

Faith healer Benny Hinn has spawned more confusion in the last decade than most preachers in recent history. Perhaps his insistence on advocating strange things stems from his own confusion or his desire to play to a larger constituency. Perhaps it is both.

Hinn appeared on the April 23 installment of *Larry King Live*. King challenged him as to why he doesn't go from "bed to bed" in hospitals with his healing power. Hinn indicated that he does visit hospitals and when he prayed for people, there were some who were healed but others who were not. He then offered King this explanation as to his mixed results: "But, you see, the gift does not work when you want it to work. The anointing must be there."

The driving force of his ministry then came to light as he told King: "In a crusade — in a meeting when I am ministering, the anointing of God comes on me and that's when things happen." Yet all of this begs the question: Why would the Holy Spirit limit Himself to work in power in only emotionally charged meetings? Hinn would have us believe that the anointing comes and goes but mostly comes in arenas and convention centers. Hinn's concept takes issue with Scripture as 1 John 2:27 states: "The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you."

Hinn then endorsed the reputed divine healing power of the Marian shrines at Lourdes and Fatima. He told King and the viewing audience: "Look, God has given us, Larry, many sources of healing. Look at Lourdes. People have been healed going to Lourdes and Fatima. There was a pool, even in the Bible, the pool of Bethesda, where the angels stirred the water — people were also healed. So God has given us many avenues of healing. He wants us to be healed."

It is disturbing to see Hinn put these two extrabiblical shrines in the same category as a biblical event. It must also be noted that in the incident in John 5, the man was healed by Jesus (John 5:12-13) and Bethesda is never mentioned again after this chapter. (It is a dry archaeological ruin today.) Further, no one is ever pointed back to it for help or healing. In Acts 3 the man is not pointed to the pool (which was nearby) but to Christ (Acts 3:6). Whatever temporary mercy God had shown at Bethesda ended with the person of Christ. But the point must be made that there is a universe of distance between what

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Christian ministry [was] established in Eugene, Oregon, in 1933" (emphasis added). One current member of the sect, in a letter to PFO, offered a similar opinion when he wrote: "I think one of the greatest abuses of the former WCG was the denial of the breadth of the body of Christ — that there were indeed Christians outside the WCG."

Thus, in this member's view, what looms large is not the doctrinal transformation, but a move from the exclusivist attitude of the church to a realization that there are members of Christ's body *in addition* to the Worldwide Church of God.

All of this then begs the question: If the church has made such a transformation by the grace of God, why have there been such concerted efforts to adopt a revisionist position as to its founder and history and maintain a "Christian" heritage?

Yet, despite all the above, the most important reason for caution is Matthew 7:15-20. Jesus identified cultic and aberrational groups as "false prophets." He said we would know them by their fruit (v. 16) and that a rotten tree does not produce good fruit (v. 18). Yet the leadership today is telling us that the Worldwide Church of God is capable of producing good fruit. It has had to rework and relegate its "bad tree" history into a "good tree" image which just needs a little care and some pruning and fertilizer. Yet Jesus said, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (v. 19). He did not tell us to coddle, prune and nurture it.

If for no other reason, the words of Christ require that Christians do not uncritically accept this church's image transformation. Nevertheless, PFO rejoices and thanks God for the individuals who are being set free from the bondage of false doctrine and spiritual abuse — not because of this sect's claim of the "plain truth," but because of the atoning work of the Savior on Calvary's cross.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

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Lourdes and Fatima are promoting and the Jewish pool of John 5. At the Pool of Bethesda, no one was being encouraged to hold to teachings contrary to God's Word.

The message of both Lourdes and Fatima are messages supposedly from the Virgin Mary promoting veneration and prayers to her.

The Catholic Almanac under "Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary" tells us that in Fatima, Portugal, "Mary appeared six times between May 13 and Oct. 13, 1917, to three children in a field called Cova da Iria near Fatima, north of Lisbon. She recommended frequent recitation of the Rosary."

Most are not aware that in the Rosary one prays to Mary these words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." There is only one Mediator for sinners (1 Timothy 2:5) and only one who can deal with our sins, that is the Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The *Almanac* goes on saying that Mary urged "works of mortification for the conversion of sinners; called for devotion to herself under the title of the Immaculate Heart." Can our works of mortification convert sinners? Did not Christ command us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:19)? It is not our suffering and sacrifice that brings conversion to others but the preaching of His suffering and sacrifice and a sinners' hearty response to the Savior. It may cost us in time and effort to evangelize the lost but ultimately it is the Gospel that is the "power of God unto Salvation." Fatima's message is a total contradiction of the Gospel.

Fatima also calls for making holy communion on the first Saturday of every month and the *Almanac* informs us that: "Fatima, with its sanctuary and basilica, ranks with Lourdes as the greatest of Marian shrines."

So what about Lourdes? Hinn evidently approves of it. Lourdes is just the French version of Fatima. The *Almanac* gives its history: "Mary, identifying herself as the Immaculate Conception appeared 18 times between Feb. 11 and July 16, 1858, to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous at the grotto of Massabielle near Lourdes in southern France. Her message concerned the necessity of prayer and penance for the conversion of men."

It has been a longstanding controversy as to what, if anything, is really happening at these Marian shrines. Certainly there can be improvement of psychosomatic illness just through expectations. Because of the false beliefs being promoted so blatantly at both of these shrines, we cannot even rule out the demonic and the occultic (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

Hinn has admittedly slid into spiritism and necromancy so it should not be surprising that he is spiraling down into one error after the other. We can only wonder what will be next.

—GRF

BOOKS IN REVIEW

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questions the prescripts of some noted, modern-day celebrities of the Christian faith. This book may unsettle some as it goes against the grain of the traditionally accepted views of guidance, but it's a call to return to believing that Scripture many learned as a child: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

—MKG