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# News Updates

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## BOOKSTORES PULL TENNEY BOOKS

LifeWay, the Southern Baptist Convention-owned bookstore chain, will no longer sell Tommy Tenney's *The God Chasers* or *The God Catchers*. The bookstore chain offered no official statement about the decision to drop the best-selling books, but *Charisma* magazine reported obtaining "a copy of a message sent by a LifeWay store manager to a customer who asked about the removal of *The God Chasers*." The manager's statement specified Tenney's "unbiblical theology," including the author's disparaging of Scripture and an emphasis on subjective experience.

Tenney alleges that "a misinterpretation of his beliefs" is the cause for the bookstores removing his publications. In two major articles appearing in this newsletter, PFO detailed Tenney's unbiblical theology noted in the LifeWay manager's observation, in addition to a bent toward pantheism.

Tenney's roots in the United Pentecostal Church has also cost him book sales within the Assemblies of God. The Radiant Book and Music Store in Springfield, Mo., has also pulled Tenney's works from its shelves. The store maintained that the books are not in doctrinal harmony with the Assemblies denomination. However, not all bookstores with AG ties have followed the lead of the Springfield store.

Tenney says he withdrew direct association with the UPC during the 1980s and claims to no longer hold the group's "views." His father still is a UPC superintendent. Tenney was quoted by *Charisma* as telling AG General Superintendent Thomas Trask, "I can't turn my back on my heritage," and that he has "friends on both sides, and I'm sticking with my friends."

—MKG

## SCHULLER'S CHURCH CUTS STAFF

The current ebb in the nation's economy seemingly has had a negative impact on "possibility thinker," the Rev. Robert Schuller and his Southern California church. The Crystal Cathedral announced in July that it cut the jobs of 37 of its staff in an effort to offset substantial financial deficits in recent months.

The layoffs represent six percent of the church's entire 600-member work force and affects both church staff and

employees at its popular television broadcast, "Hour of Power." The cutbacks have forced the closing of the church's infant care nursery and terminated 12 positions within its executive pastor's staff.

The mega-church, located in Garden Grove, averages 8,000 in attendance each Sunday, having grown from humble beginnings in the 1950s when the "self-esteem" minister began preaching from the roof of a drive-in theater's snack bar. The *Dictionary of Christianity in America* says Schuller "attempts to recast the gospel in a positive form that appeals to the human quest for a positive self-image."

—MKG

## SWAGGART ACCUSED OF PLAGIARISM

Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who once wrote that he owes his "Bible education" to Finis Jennings Dake, is now being accused of more than just gleaned teaching from the heretical Bible commentator. The evangelist and author, who was disgraced by a sex scandal in the late 1980s, has been sued by the heirs of Dake and their publishing company, Dake Publishing, Inc.

The lawsuit, filed in late May, charges Swaggart with copyright infringement and plagiarizing the late minister's writings and publishing them as his own. Also named in the lawsuit is Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, and religious groups associated with Swaggart in his hometown of Baton Rouge, La.

The suit charges that Swaggart and his publisher had "taken and used plaintiff's proprietary works for their own benefit and profit." Swaggart is said to have taken large portions of Dake's writings and, while at times he gave Dake credit, he neglected to receive permission to cite the extended passages. The Dake family seeks damages from Swaggart, including a share of the profits he made from the sales of his works containing the citations, along with an order to stop further use of Dake's writings. The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court in Nashville.

In 1987, following Dake's death, Swaggart wrote a tribute to Dake in his monthly magazine, *The Evangelist*. Swaggart described Dake as "a scholar unparalleled" and stated he "will forever be indebted to Finis Jennings Dake." He also wrote that to say "Dake was the greatest Bible scholar who ever lived" was not an exaggeration.

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Based on the film's climactic concluding dialogue, could we not draw from this Hollywood motion picture a supernatural forecast? Why couldn't one suppose this a prophetic word and that the exaggerated claims of divine impartation, spurious signs and wonders, and financially motivated and humanly orchestrated revival aptly demonstrated by the Nightengale character would literally and actually locate in Pensacola? After all, less than three years after Martin's role hit the big screen, the so-called "Pensacola Outpouring" began at the Brownsville Assembly of God with, like Nightengale, grandiose claims of God's miracles and wonders. It all fits so well — nearly perfectly.

You see, like the quatrains of Nostradamus, we can see whatever we want in interpreting a personal dream, a major sporting event, or a dramatic scene from a feature motion picture. However, we have a Bible that lays such teaching and insight all out clearly and perfectly for us. We have no need to look for truth in such ambiguous places as a College Bowl game, World Series games, NASCAR, Stanley Cup playoffs, or Hollywood. Peter's second epistle assures us that all we need for life and godliness is found in Scripture. Some biblical writers may have gotten good illustrations from first century sports, but never omens and prophecies. Theater and Greek sports were ignored, if not condemned, by the early Jews as well as Hebrew Christians.

Subjectively creating after-the-fact prophecies and meanings — all just derived from an overactive imagination — is not much different than the ancient pagan societies' obsession with divination from arrows and entrails of animals. When the Word of God is ignored, people become crazed with their own imaginations and imaginary meanings in things. Any guessed meaning could have any other number of unlimited possibilities or interpretations.

In his classic, *Biblical Demonology*, Merrill F. Unger discusses occult practices that began in Babylon, passed into Greece and Rome, and are still fashionable today in parts of Africa, Burma (Myanmar), and Borneo among pagan tribes. Meaning is imagined and interpreted from looking into various parts of an animal's liver for divine revelation and the will of the gods.

Unger says further: "Belomancy, or divination by arrows is represented by Ezekiel as being practiced in Babylon. ... (Ezek. 21:21). ...augury was deduced by the way they fell to the earth" (pg. 132).

A neater, cleaner, more sanitized version of augury is practiced by today's "prophets." It is not as disgusting as poking around in the bloody entrails of a dead animal and certainly sports themes sell well with the sports crazed American public. But what is the real difference? It is still fallen subjective imagination hard at work. On what basis could we be sure that the imaginings and interpretations are not given by demonic suggestion? After all, they are never brought to the Word of God for verification. Certainly our minds could be better used in a study of God's Word.

Christians need to retreat from the foolishness of such mysticism, paganism, Gnosticism, and subjectivism and get back to the objective Word of God. It has been said many times before, but bears repeating: "The Bible: Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else."

"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).

The Bible is sufficient. We need not look for supernatural messages from the mundane or the bizarre.

—MKG

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## NEWS UPDATES

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Dake first published his *Dake Annotated Reference Bible* in 1963. The Bible contains the authorized King James text with extensive notes and commentary written by Dake. It has been hailed as "The Pentecostal Study Bible," but critics, including PFO, have labeled the work dangerous. The volume's explanatory notes are seedbeds for all types of heretical teaching, including an unscriptural view of God, open theism (or finite theism), a distorted Christology, corrupt views of salvation and faith, racism, and foundations for Word-Faith teaching. Some of faith healer Benny Hinn's most provocative theological declarations have been derived from Dake's writings.

Other prominent Charismatic and Word-Faith proponents have likewise expressed praise for the Dake Bible. Joyce Meyer said the Dake Bible "has made it easier for [her] to teach God's Word," and Pastor Rod Parsley calls the work "one of the greatest literary works ever made for Pentecostal and Charismatic believers." Similar acclaim for the Dake Bible comes from Creflo Dollar, Marilyn Hickey, and Ralph Wilkerson.

Following several significant criticisms of the Dake Bible in the 1990s, the publishing firm began quietly changing the Bible's commentary thereby modifying the very notes which were cited in the critiques as unorthodox, but claimed by Dake Publishing as within the realm of orthodoxy.

—MKG

## CATHOLICS DISAVOW LDS BAPTISM

The Vatican has announced that Roman Catholics will no longer accept as valid, baptisms performed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to a news report posted on the Eternal Word Television