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Will Jesus Return in 1994?

The Prognostications of Harold Camping

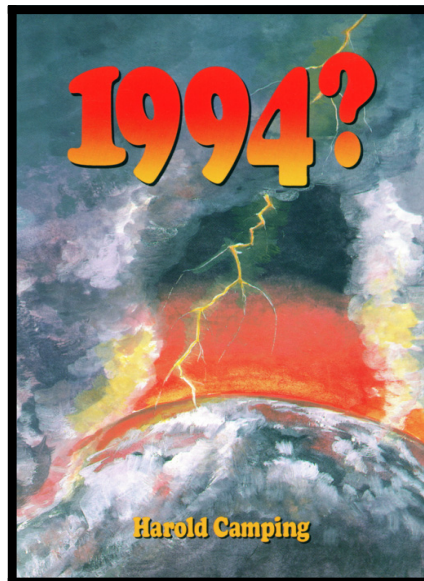
by G. Richard Fisher

"We, therefore, should be quite accurate in saying that the New Testament era of sending forth the Gospel officially came to an end on May 21, 1988. ... Thus, May 21 was also the day the 2300 days of the final tribulation were to begin" (1994? by Harold Camping, pp. 515-516).

The Rapture is post-tribulational, there will be no Millennium and the world will end in 1994, according to Harold Camping, president of Family Radio. His new, 550-page book titled **1994?** is a labyrinth of subjective speculation, private interpretation and numerical guesswork. It was published by Vantage Press, which will publish any manuscript for a fee.

He states his premise on page 533: "By God's mercy there are a few months left. However, if this study is accurate, and I believe with all my heart that it is, there will be no extensions in time. There will be no time for second-guessing. When Sept. 6, 1994 arrives, no one else can become saved. The end has come."

This book presents all of the strange views of Camping, who is orthodox in the essentials but dogmatizes on many peripheral and prophetic themes. In the book's foreword, he presents his only credential, that he is "a forty-year



student of the Bible." He claims to have discovered clues that establish a "timetable" for events leading up to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Up to this point, every such date-setter in history has been discredited, the two most recent being the Seoul, Korea-based group called Mission for the Coming Days and Edgar Whisenant, who wrote **88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988** (later renamed **88 Reasons Why The Rapture Could Be In 1988**) and **The Final Shout, Rapture 1989 Report**.

Now Camping takes his turn.

Camping's prophetic view could be loosely called a pessimistic quasi-post-trib/amillennial scheme. He suggests we are now in the Tribulation period, which could be 23 years long. He derives this view from the death date of King Josiah and the 23-year decline of Israel, and 23,000 dead mentioned in I Corinthians 10. And he throws in the 23 kings of Judah for good measure (pp. 222-225). Another "proof" is Acts 27 and its account of the storm and its 276 survivors, which is 12 times 23.

Then on page 444, he changes his mind, saying that the Tribulation will be cut to six years.

Some of Camping's calculations and conclusions defy understanding. Here are a few samples:

"And 8400 days equals $2 \times 42 \times 100$. Isn't that a startling piece of information? Surely God has interrelated the periods of three and a half days, forty-two months, twenty-three years, and seventy years by the common denominator forty-two" (pg. 237).

"We have learned that this terrible period was typified by the closing

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EDITORIALS

NEW YORK TO BE DESTROYED "BY FIRE"

David Wilkerson, founder of Teen Challenge and subject of the film, "The Cross and the Switchblade," now predicts that New York City will be destroyed by fire.

Wilkerson, who returned to preaching in New York after a stay in Texas, has always been "prophetic" in his preaching and has a fascination with Old Testament messages of doom and destruction. In his 1985 book, **Set a Trumpet to Thy Mouth**, he predicted the destruction of America, saying it is the "Babylon" of the Apostle John's Revelation.

Wilkerson wrote on page 3 of that book: "I believe modern Babylon is present-day America, including its corrupt society and its whorish church system. No other nation on earth fits the description in Revelation 18 but America, the world's biggest fornicator with the merchants of all nations."

He not only stated that America is Babylon, but that it would be destroyed by fire: "In one hour it will all be gone! The stock market will burn—with all the buildings, the investments. The skyscrapers will melt; the fire of divine vengeance will turn cities into polluted wildernesses" (pg. 6).

Wilkerson relied on questionable exegesis in trying to prove that the Statue of Liberty would be destroyed. He writes: "Think of the 'Lady in the Harbor'—the Statue of Liberty. Isaiah warned of sudden destruction upon a proud lady" (pg. 8). Wilkerson then quotes Isaiah 47:7-11 to support his prophecy. The book also says that if a

Christian owns or watches television it is tantamount to idolatry.

In the foreword of **Set a Trumpet to Thy Mouth**, Leonard Ravenhill, a British-born evangelist and personal friend, writes: "I saw him on occasion stagger into my office, and his lips trembled as he spoke with tears in his eyes, saying, 'Len, I hardly dare put on paper and publish what the Lord has given to me.'"

Now seven years later, Wilkerson gives prophetic word concerning New York City in his Sept. 7, 1992 newsletter titled "Do You Really Want to Hear What God is Saying?" Wilkerson says God called him to give a "severe word" to New York. He continues, "Dear saint, this warning is not meant to scare anyone. It's meant only for you to take to the Lord and pray."

What does that mean? If it is a prophecy directly from the Lord, do we pray for it not to happen? Or do we pray to confirm it being from the Lord? To these questions Wilkerson is not clear. As to the utterance itself, Wilkerson is specific in his judgments but is vague on two major points.

"This is what I believe the Lord showed me." Notice the qualifier, "I believe." Did he or did he not receive this prophecy from the Lord? Biblical prophets had no doubt. They declared: "Thus saith the Lord." Wilkerson is not sure of the source, but of the particulars of the destruction he is certain:

"Thirty days of chastisement will fall on New York City such as the world has never seen. God is going to let down the walls! There will be unimaginable violence and looting—over a thousands fires will be burning at the same

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LATTER-DAY SAINT COMMITTEE ON DISSENTERS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gathers information on dissenting members and supplies it to local church leaders, an LDS spokesman has confirmed.

The disclosure was made at an August 6-9 meeting of liberal Mormons in Salt Lake City. LDS spokesman Don Lefevre then verified the existence of the council, known as the Strengthening Church Members Committee, to the Religious News Service.

Lefevre said that the goal of the group is to prevent LDS members from propagating unfavorable remarks that may interfere with the goals of the Mormon church. He further emphasized that the board does not make judgments on or discipline dissenting members. "Its purpose is implied by the committee's name: to strengthen members in the church who may have a problem or may need counseling," Lefevre said.

The committee gets the names of dissidents from fellow church members.

—MKG

RAPTURE DATE MISSED AGAIN

Just as the memory of Edgar Whisenant and his two missed predictions of the rapture had faded, a new craze appeared.

This one, a Seoul, Korea-based group called Mission for the Coming Days, distributed millions of pamphlets saying "God's Judgment Day Is Near, Are you Ready?" The pamphlet, a 98-page booklet and newspaper advertisements forecasted that the Rapture would occur at 10 a.m. EST on Oct. 28, 1992.

However, when the appointed time came and went, it was not Jesus' devoted followers who went flying through the air, but hymnals that were hurled by the angry devotees as they pulled the endtime preachers from their pulpits and beat them.

Thousands of Koreans who anticipated the Rapture gathered at nearly 200 churches to sing, pray and chant while they awaited Jesus' "coming in the air." When the event did not occur as promised, the Rev. Chang Manho told his flock: "Nothing has happened. Let's go home. Let's go back to a normal life."

Yet for many, following Manho's order will not be easy. Many sold their property, quit school and jobs, abandoned families and deserted military posts. The Associated Press reported also that some devotees even had abortions and

reported at least four suicides prior to the endtime date.

A wire service report in the Oct. 29 Newark Star-Ledger said church founder Lee Jang-rim was in jail on charges of swindling followers of up to \$4 million. It also was reported that he had purchased investment bonds that were due to mature this year, long after the Rapture was to have taken place.

Several of the pamphlets sought to explain away the biblical declaration that no man would know the day and hour of Christ's return by saying: "Some Christians falsely interpret verses such as Matthew 24:36 to say that no one can know when Jesus will come back. These verses, however, only apply to those who are asleep. Those of us who are awake know when He is coming. We also know that now is the time to repent, to follow Him as Lord and to embrace Him as our Savior."

The large ads which appeared in various newspapers publicizing the Rapture date promoted books by Benny Hinn, Mary Relfe, Ernest Angley and others.

—MKG

CHO ADOPTS NEW NAME

Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, recently announced that he had changed his name to David Yonggi Cho. In an interview with C. Peter Wagner, appearing in the November 1992 issue of **Charisma & Christian Life** magazine, the 56-year-old Cho cited the reasons for the "radical decision" to alter his name.

In the interview Cho recounts difficulties spanning nearly two decades with Presbyterians, Methodists and the Assemblies of God denominations. Cho's expulsion from the latter denomination caused him to establish an affiliation known as the Jesus Assemblies of God. During the past few years, Cho claims to have been leading his people to pray for the reunification of Korea. However, Cho maintains God spoke to him and told him that his prayers for the reunification of Korea would not be answered until he first prayed for the reunification of the Korean Assemblies of God.

Cho's brother and father refused to cooperate with his efforts to reunite the Korean Assemblies. Cho claims their refusal left him with a "tragic choice." "Was he to follow God or his family?", Cho stated. After a great deal of prayer, Cho alleged that "God showed me that Paul Cho had to die."

"Paul Cho was the pastor of the world's largest church. People around the world knew Paul Cho. Paul Cho's

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HAVE THEY REALLY FOUND *The Ark of the Covenant?*

by G. Richard Fisher

The Hebrew word for ark means, chest, box or container. In the Scriptures a coffin was called an ark (Genesis 50:26). However when we are speaking of the "Ark of the Covenant" we are talking about a specific box or container made by skilled Israelites at the command of God (Exodus 31:6-7, 36:8, 37:1-9). The Ark contained the stone tablets called the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, manna in a jar and Aaron's rod (**The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible**, Vol. 1, pp. 305-310).

The wooden box, called the Ark, was overlaid with gold (size approximate three and three quarters feet long by two and a quarter feet wide) and was housed in the tabernacle at Shiloh during Samuel's time. It had two angels constructed over it's top and could only be seen by the high priest once a year when the blood of atonement was taken into the inner holy of holies and sprinkled on it. God promised that His presence would dwell on the top of the Ark which was called the mercy seat.

The Philistines captured it briefly (1 Samuel 4) but after a plague sent it back to reside in Kiriath-Jearim where it stayed for 20 years. David finally brought the Ark to Jerusalem and it was afterward housed permanently in Solomon's Temple. The Ark disappeared at the time of the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians (586 B.C.) and **anything beyond that time regarding the ark is pure speculation.**

Jeremiah 3:16 predicted the loss of the Ark of the Covenant. The language that Jeremiah uses indicates permanent loss. The Bible does not tell us what happened to the Ark nor does it indicate that it should be a concern. There is no prophecy in Scripture of

its future restoration and no hint that we should search for it for any reason. It may have been taken to Babylon but **no one knows for sure.**

Evidence from Josephus and the Mishna indicates that the Ark was not in the rebuilt temple in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. It seems that it was lost forever.

In a new book, **The Sign and the Seal**, Author Graham Hancock claims that the Ark is in Ethiopia. None of the Ethiopian Jews that have poured into Israel have ever made that claim. Hancock was featured on CNN on May 8, 1992 along with a Hebrew scholar who disputed his findings. Hancock's theory is based on a number of Ethiopian myths and legends and is not given any credence in the academic world. Hancock's idea is a traditional teaching in the Christian Ethiopian Church. Although Hancock would say his claim is based on circumstantial evidence, Jewish scholars would say it is more like wishful thinking and that there is no real evidence at all.

On the same day that Hancock appeared on CNN, Vendyl Jones (Texas-based explorer sometimes called Indiana Jones), announced in Israel that he was certain that the Ark would be discovered soon in southern Israel near Qumran and he expected to find it in a cave. Hancock's scenario is filled with great gaps of time. He spins a tale of Jewish settlers in Elephantine, Egypt in 650 B.C. who, he purports, were preserving the Ark in a special Temple. We do know that there was a Jewish military colony in Elephantine permitted by the Persians in approximate 425 B.C.

However, scholars agree that nothing at Elephantine can be dated earlier than the fifth century before Christ.

Yes, the Jewish community had a memorial Temple patterned after the one in Jerusalem but there is absolutely no suggestion or evidence that they had the Ark of the Covenant there. (See further: Jack Finegan, **Light from the Ancient Past**, pp. 201-202; also **Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology**, pg. 177, "Elephantine" and "Elephantine Papyri" and **The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land**, pg. 127 "Elephantine".)

Religious documents found at Elephantine show how the settlers there accommodated the local gods and had a religion of syncretism but there is absolutely no mention of the Ark. How the Ark would have gotten from Elephantine to Ethiopia is another mystery. Hancock has been pressed as to why the Ethiopian Church will not show the Ark. His answers are less than convincing. Even if one happened to see an Ark in Ethiopia and film it how could one be sure it was not a copy? Short of scientific validation all of Hancock's ideas are pure speculation.

Claims of this type are not new and have been cropping up regarding other sites for the last 60 years or so. In 1931 Antonia Futterer suggested that the Ark was in Mount Nebo in Jordan. Certainly a claim like this could be verified very quickly. With news services around the world information of this nature is released world wide almost immediately if true. During the Gulf War we were following the scuds as they were fired! The news of the "Jesus boat" (first century fishing boat discovered in the bed of the Sea of Galilee) spread world wide within weeks. News of a store of incense from Herod's temple hit the news services before it was 100% verified (**Jerusalem Post International Edi-**

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Benny Hinn: Mr. Confusion

The Demystification of the Miracle Man

by G. Richard Fisher, Paul R. Blizard and M. Kurt Goedelman

Christians have a right to expect clear, consistent testimony from a man who says that his salvation experience was foretold in an angelic vision and that he regularly hears revelation knowledge directly from God.

Yet confusion abounds in the statements and stories of preacher Benny Hinn, dubbed "The Miracle Man" by some. Hinn claims God's "anointing" on himself and says this "anointing" gives him the power to knock people down, or slay them in the Spirit, by touching, waving or blowing on them.

So serious is Hinn about this anointing that he warns his critics:

"You'll never go unpunished touching the anointing. You can mock Benny Hinn's hair, clothes, eyes and shoes, and socks, I'll let you. Go ahead. I will laugh with you. You can mock the way I talk, you can mock anything you want, I'll probably laugh with you. Never mock the anointing. 'Cause the day you do, I won't have to do a thing about it. I'll just say, "Lord, take care of them."¹

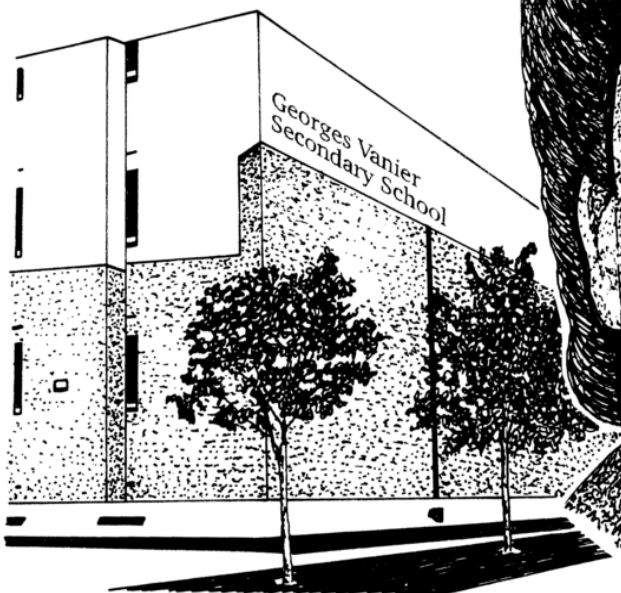
Speaking at a recent World Charismatic Conference, Hinn scoured his critics, particularly Christian Research Institute, saying:

"Be careful! Your little ones may suffer because of your stupidity. Now I'm pointing my finger today, with the mighty power of God on me, and I speak. You hear this, there are men and women in Southern California attacking me. I will tell you under the anointing now, you'll reap it in your children unless you stop. You'll never win. You'll never win. ... And your children will suffer. If you care for your kids, stop attacking Benny Hinn. You attacking me on radio every night, you'll pay and your children will. Hear this from the lips of God's servant. You are in danger. Repent! Or God Almighty will move His hand. Touch not My Anointed."²

Paul Crouch, president of the Trinity

Broadcasting Network, eliminates those who question Hinn from the Body of Christ. On a recent broadcast of his "Praise The Lord" show he asserted: "Who knows, even some of the heretic hunters might get saved tonight. We could dare to believe that together, could we not? Would somebody say me an 'Amen' out there?"³

Hinn agrees. During the same telecast he asserted: "Had someone told me a few years ago, I would be fighting so-called Christians, I would never have believed it. The unbelievers have been kinder to me, than these so-called Christians. Do you know what they really are? False brethren. That's what Paul calls



them.”⁴

Further, Hinn does not reserve his wrath for theological critics. During a sermon last August at his Orlando Christian Center, Hinn told of an unpleasant encounter with a customs supervisor at a Chicago airport. Hinn said of the man, “If I could have killed him, I would have.”⁵

Two months later, in a phone conversation with Hinn’s younger brother, Christopher, and attorney Stephen W. Beik, who said he represents Hinn, the statement was dismissed as a joke. “And you took him seriously?” Beik asked.⁶

Apparently someone did. PFO obtained a cassette tape from that service and found that the angry comments had been edited from the sermon.⁷

THE TEACHINGS

James 3:1 warns, “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.” Of deep concern for Christians are Hinn’s distorted teachings on the Godhead. His books and sermon tapes are replete with unorthodox theology. One can never be sure if Hinn will generate tritheism, modalism or Arianism when he speaks about God’s nature. Occasionally, he even makes a Trinitarian point.

While Hinn stresses the personage of the Holy Spirit, he frequently appears to become unclear himself as to the details of this biblical truth. During a service at Grace World Outreach Center in St. Louis, Hinn’s illustration on the person of the Holy Spirit rivaled the teachings of the Watchtower Society:

“Listen church, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one. How are they one? You’ll never understand the oneness until you understand the work. Well, let me say this to you. It’s like the sun in the sky. That’s probably the closest thing we can use so we can understand. And don’t try to figure it out whatever you do. It’s just like the sun. You could say the Father is like the sun, Jesus is light that comes out of it, and the Holy Ghost is the heat you feel when you stand there. But when it comes to the work now, whenever we see the

Father in the Godhead, we see him having a special job that the Son and the Holy Ghost do not do, but the Father only. We see the Father as the great commander. He’s always saying, ‘Let there be light.’ ‘Let’s make man in our image.’ ‘Isaiah, go tell that king.’ ‘Moses, go to Pharaoh.’ He’s always giving commandments. Say after me, ‘The Father is the commander.’ [Congregation repeats.] Now when you look at Jesus, what is his job? Every time he moves he is doing, doing, doing, doing. Well, the Father says, ‘Let’s do it.’ So the Father says, ‘Let there be light.’ Jesus does it. ‘Let’s make man.’ Jesus does it. ‘Let’s save the world.’ Jesus does it. ‘Let’s heal their bodies.’ Jesus does it. He’s the doer. The Book of Acts says Jesus began to both do and teach. He, himself, said ‘I came to do the will of my Father.’ So say after me, ‘Jesus is the doer.’ [Congregation repeats.] But how about the Holy Spirit? Every time you see him, he is the power behind the doing. Say after me, ‘The Holy Spirit is the power.’ [Congregation repeats.] ‘He is the power of the Trinity,’ say it. [Congregation repeats.] It’s like this, my dear brother, if I said to someone sitting here, ‘Please turn on the lights.’ Suppose the lights were off. I said ‘Turn them on.’ So the guy goes and puts on the switch. I’m the one who said, ‘Turn them on.’ He did it. But who brought the light? The electricity. The Father says, ‘Switch, put on the switch.’ Jesus goes and does it. And the electricity, the Holy Spirit, brings it up, shines.”⁸

Moreover, Hinn’s comments show his ignorance of both theology and science, since the sun’s heat is not the sun and the sun’s rays are not the sun. As well, electricity is not the light and vice versa. On the other hand, Scripture affirms that each of the three persons of the Godhead is equally God.

In his book, **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Hinn makes another incorrect illustration when he writes that the Holy Spirit is “the breath of God,”⁹ and a person.¹⁰ Both of these cannot be true and the Holy Spirit is not God’s breath.

Hinn’s unorthodoxy goes on: “The first person Adam met was the Holy Ghost. You say, ‘Really?’ Don’t you remember it was the breath that came

through him and opened his eyes feeling the breath of the Spirit. He’s the first manifestation of the Father to humanity.”¹¹

Hinn also appears to call into question his own purported visitations from Jesus Christ. In the same message, Hinn cautioned: “You say, ‘I had a vision of Jesus.’ I’m gonna shake you even further now. ... You say, ‘I’ve seen Jesus.’ Oh, have you? John saw him and fell like a dead man. Whom have you seen? You say, ‘Really?’ Don’t you know? He is his Spirit. Jesus hasn’t left heaven to meet you anytime yet. But he has sent his Spirit into the earth. He’ll come and sup with you through the Holy Ghost. He’ll speak to you through the Holy Ghost. He’ll manifest his presence through the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost will always testify, and magnify, and glorify Jesus. You say, ‘But it looked just like Jesus.’ Well, what do you think the Holy Ghost looks like. The Holy Spirit is his Spirit. How often have we closed our eyes and seen a figure in white. You say, ‘Who is that?’ The Holy Ghost. ‘Oh, I didn’t know that.’ Oh, you should. He is the manifestation of Jesus to your mind. He’s the manifestation of Jesus to your spirit.”¹²

These are only a few examples of confusing theological statements Hinn has made.¹³ While Hinn is right some times, he is often wrong. For the undiscerning Christian, this could be a serious peril.

Such a preacher might contradict himself for several reasons. He might be confused himself. He might be a deceiver. He might be trying to create an impression, a persona, or some other type of image. Or he might be untaught and unable to process detail. One thing is certain, God is not behind the confusion.

A CONFUSING TESTIMONY

Hinn’s personal testimony is no less murky. For starters, he has issued a number of contradictory stories about his pedigree. In cassette tapes and books he has regularly said that his father once was mayor of Jaffa, Israel. This claim has been refuted.¹⁴ Then he said his father was not mayor, but only the “unofficial mayor” of Jaffa. Then he said his publisher was at fault: “[Thomas] Nelson [Publishers]

and I discussed it. And I even told Nelson, I said, 'Look, we better not say "mayor." Let's kind of give the whole picture politically.' And Nelson said, 'People aren't interested to know all those politics and this and this and this. If he functioned as mayor, he was.' And basically he was."¹⁵ All of these claims also have been refuted.

Hinn's younger brother, Christopher, provided documents in an attempt to substantiate the claims but they did more to undermine than support them.¹⁶ The documents included two in Hebrew and a certificate from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Ecclesiastical Court. The former were written in Hebrew and Personal Freedom Outreach had them translated by two independent sources. They were work permits from Tel Aviv/Jaffa with one indicating Costandi Hinn's status was being changed from that of a temporary worker to a permanent one.

The permits say he was a minimal security risk and one revealed an \$8.00 a month raise. The second also contains the provision that Costandi Hinn could be fired with only two weeks' notice. Hardly conditions and provisions that would be placed upon the mayor of a city.

The latter certificate was a proof of employment. It said that the elder Hinn worked from 1939 until 1948 as a "Telephone, Radio, Technition [sic]" at the Jaffa Post Office. From 1950 until 1964, he served as "Secretary for Labour Exchange in the Labour Ministry for Jaffa." In 1964, he was appointed "Liason [sic] Officer for the Minorities [sic] and Public Relations of Tel-Aviv Jaffa Municipality." The latter position was held through 1967. There is still no indication, whatsoever, that Costandi Hinn ever was mayor of Tel Aviv/Jaffa and no list of the mayors of Tel Aviv/Jaffa contains his name.

THE SALVATION

Hinn has given a number of different accounts of his conversion experience. There are significant differences between cassette tapes containing Hinn's testimony and that given in his books, **Good Morning, Holy Spirit** and **The Anointing**.

In a 1983 message in St. Louis, Hinn told a simple story of how he was

converted right after his immigration to Toronto from Israel in 1968:

"Then in 1968, I was only about 13 or 14, we moved to Canada and it was in Canada that I was born again right after '68. ... Someone witnessed to me and I got saved—right then—which was right after '68."¹⁷

Then, in **Good Morning, Holy Spirit** Hinn indicates his conversion occurred in February 1972.

In a 1987 taped message, Hinn told of an angel who took him inside the room where he was saved:

"And I was now with the angel flying. I saw myself in this dream flying with the angel holding my hand and he took me right to my school. The next morning at ten of eight I got saved **in the exact spot** where the angel took me in a dream. ... This angel takes me by the hand in my dream and **I'm in my school**."¹⁸

In **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Hinn says the angel "dropped me on Don Mills Road—right at the corner of Georges Vanier School. He left me inches from the wall of the school, right beside a window."¹⁹

In the taped version, Hinn is led by a lone schoolmate from his locker to a room off the library:

"I go into the school, open my locker, get my books, a girl shows up called Michelle ... Took me by the hand and pulled me to the prayer meeting ... and I tried to stop her, please understand when you stutter you can't talk, you'd just better keep quiet and just follow ... She takes me to a room in the exact corner where the angel had dropped me in my dream. I get into this room and there's six fellas... one of them called Bob Tadman... another fella called Paul Pynkoski... All I know was I was feeling something and I said, 'Jesus.' I remember my words were, 'Come back.' I didn't know what to say. Nobody told me, say 'Come into my heart.' So I said, 'Come back.' When I said come back this feeling just went, shhhhhhhhhh. And when it did I said take my life. And from that day till this I've never been the same."²⁰

In **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Hinn tells of a group of students who invited

him to a prayer meeting. Michelle, the sole player in the 1987 account, is not mentioned.

Hinn writes: "As I sat there [in the library] not even thinking about the dream, a small group of students walked over to my table... They were the ones who had been pestering me with all this Jesus talk. They asked me to join the morning prayer meeting."

Later, in the meeting, Hinn remembers: "I don't know why I said it ... I repeated those words again and again, 'Lord Jesus come back. Lord Jesus come back.'" He then adds something missing from the cassette tape account: "Suddenly I saw Jesus with my own eyes."²¹

Yet none of the key players mentioned by Hinn remembers the meeting where Hinn says he was converted. No one interviewed knew how, when, or under what circumstances Hinn was converted. Everyone assumed a conversion but none remembers Hinn ever giving them details.

THE STUTTERING

Hinn claims not only to transmit the supernatural, but also to have, himself, been a recipient of divine healing from a severe stuttering problem. However, those who knew Hinn during his youth in Toronto can't recall a speech impediment as severe as he says he had.

Hinn describes himself during his teen years as growing up in Toronto, Ontario, as a lonely young man with few friends. He says his "severe stuttering problem" made him shy and reclusive:

"It destroys your image ... brother, that's it, no friends, nobody talks to you, and if you do talk to anybody they're gonna mock you."²²

"I was stricken in early childhood by a severe stutter that made oral communication unbelievably difficult, almost impossible. ... I was a loner—quiet, shy and uncertain."²³

"Benny Hinn had stuttered **all** his life."²⁴

"Now when I grew up, I stuttered so bad that nobody would talk to me. Because when they did, they could not make out what I was saying."²⁵

"If I'd tried to speak, words just didn't

come out.”²⁶

“From my earliest childhood I was afflicted with a severe stutter. The smallest amount of social pressure or nervousness triggered my stammering, and it was almost unbearable.”²⁷

“For twenty-one years of my life, for twenty-one years of my life, I stuttered. For twenty-one years of my life I couldn’t talk. And now I begin to preach so fast, I spoke so perfectly that I was telling myself, ‘slow down, slow down, slow down,

slow down.’ Do you know why I speak so fast sometimes? I’m not aware of doing it. It’s because for twenty-one years I couldn’t talk.”²⁸

“Because of my stutter, I didn’t get into many conversations...”²⁹

THE ORLANDO CHRISTIAN CENTER: *“Where you’re only a visitor once”*

EDITOR’S NOTE: Orlando Christian Center in Orlando, Fla., is home base for faith healer Benny Hinn. According to Thomas Nelson Publishers’ promotional materials, Hinn founded the church in “March of 1983, with 250 people and now has more than 7,000 in attendance each week.” On Aug. 12, 1992, Kurt Goedelman and Paul Blizard, co-directors of Personal Freedom Outreach, went to Orlando to see the church and hear Hinn preach. What follows is a “first-person” account of their visit.

We found a beautiful complex full of apparently happy worshipers, but visitors beware, one may be subject to search by Hinn’s police force: “OCC Security.” As we entered the building to attend a Wednesday evening service, we saw uniformed and plainclothes security personnel equipped with walkie-talkies and earpieces. They gave us the once-over as we entered.

“... it is somewhat unnerving to enter a ‘church’ and see uniformed guards,” I said to my colleague, Kurt Goedelman.

When entering the bookstore in the foyer, we noticed stacks of Hinn’s books on the floor, along with Benny Hinn Ministry T-shirts and bumper stickers. In spite of Hinn’s statement in an Oct. 28, 1991, **Christianity Today** interview, where he said: “I no longer believe the faith message. I don’t think it adds up,” the bookstore carried a wide assortment of word-faith titles by authors such as Charles Capps, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. Also on the shelves was Rebecca Brown’s bizarre, **He Came to Set the Captives Free**.

About 45 minutes before the service, we sat down in the fifth row from the front. We conversed with people in the nearby pews. One person spoke enthusiastically of Hinn’s claim that his father had been mayor of Jaffa, Israel, “for 10 years” and of his Greek heritage.

We also asked this person about Hinn’s claim to have seen the face of Jesus appear on the wall of the church. He pointed to a blank wall where the apparition had been seen. “It was there for thirty days. The mouth and eyes even moved,” he said. When asked if he had witnessed the event, he replied: “That was before I was a member, but it is on videotape.” We asked if the tape was available for viewing or purchase. He replied, “Pastor Benny does not want it released.”

A couple turned around and enthusiastically asked: “Is this your first visit to OCC?” “Yes,” answered Goedelman.

The man continued, “Pastor Benny always says, ‘At OCC you’re only a visitor once.’” The excited couple then turned around again, anticipating Hinn’s entrance.

The service began and near the end of a series of songs, while “heads were bowed and eyes closed,” Hinn made his entrance. Diamonds and gold glittered as he waved his arms, continuing to lead the singing. Giant TV screens gave everyone in attendance a close-up.

Following several church formalities and announcements, Hinn began preaching his “sermon.” It was a familiar theme: “Touch not mine anointed.” Hinn hopped through the Bible, trying to prove his point. It was obvious he was angry at his critics and wanted his congregation to share in that anger.

Hinn began the message with the preface that video cameras might have to be turned off because he had some things to say that he did not want taped. This is when we began to take notes. Hinn began to decry the “persecution” he was receiving.

He told a story of an incident with a customs agent at a Chicago airport. “Those people are mean up in Chicago,” Hinn said. “Just because I am a preacher they gave me a hard time. I told that customs man ‘I want to see your supervisor!’ When I got into the supervisor’s office he said to me, ‘You’re just like [Jim] Bakker.’ That made me so angry – If I could have killed him, I would have!” As shocking as these words are coming from a supposed preacher of the Gospel, “death” and the judgment of death, was a central theme of his message: death to all “persecutors” and all those who question Hinn and his teaching.

Hinn continued: “Now I’m going to tell you that God prophetically is showing us in the Psalms, that the body of Jesus Christ in America will sooner or later become militant, and say: ‘We’ve had it! You touch us one more time and, DROP DEAD BROTHER.’”

Hinn continued to spew out his purported divine judgments: “If you pray, ‘get ‘em,’ nothing can prevent that from happening, but God has allowed enough grace that you can say, ‘Lord forgive them’ and God will not allow anything to happen to them, it’s really up to you. God has given you the choice whether He should judge them or not, it’s in your hands.”

“With my severe stuttering problem, I knew that it would be useless to argue with the usher.”³⁰

Hinn says God commissioned him to preach the Gospel, but he protested, “Lord, you know I can’t talk.” Hinn then

says that his “severe stutter” was eliminated when he stood up to preach for the first time to a church youth group in Oshawa, Ontario. This purportedly happened Dec. 7, 1974, nearly three years after his conversion in February 1972.³¹

During that time, Hinn had contact with many people, including friends he made at a church called The Catacombs. At this church, Hinn performed with a group that sang and did interpretive dancing. Hinn also was in regular contact with people who would

Not only did Hinn say that he and his church will have license to pronounce death on persecutors but maintained that they did not have to forgive those who persecuted them. Hinn, in his teaching, twisted the words of Jesus on the cross where Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Hinn said, “Now you say, ‘Well I forgive them,’ you can and you must, but there’s a place you don’t say ‘Father forgive them.’”

Hinn then contended that if the person “knows” what they are doing they are to be turned over to God for retribution. Hinn said, “Christian, wake up, God is not mush, mush stuff, there is wrath with God, there is justice with God. We all think of the Lord as being some weakling! I’ve had people tell me, ‘Well, Benny Hinn, forgive them.’ I said, ‘You don’t know the scriptures! You forgive them only when they know not what they do.’”

Hinn further maintained: “There are folks out there that are persecuting you, not knowing what they are doing, you must forgive them and you must say, ‘Father forgive them.’ There’s folks running around, attacking you, know exactly what they’re doing. I have two of ‘em who’ve done that to me. The Lord reward them. I pray that in my own prayer time, I said, ‘**Lord, don’t forgive them, let ‘em have it!**’ [Congregation applauds] Hey, Hey, Hey that’s in the Word.”

I was so shocked by this teaching that I gasped, catching the attention of the couple in front of us. They turned around and I whispered to them, “That teaching is wrong, Jesus said to forgive those who persecute you.” The couple snapped their heads back around.

The service concluded with Hinn’s altar call: “Remember this, Numbers chapter 12, Korah and his company stood against Moses and were judged. Remember Numbers 16, even his own sister Miriam was struck with leprosy for attacking her brother, God’s servant. You will not escape, even though you’re a saint, there is punishment for those who’ll touch God’s servants. It’s very serious. So tonight I’m gonna ask every person who will say, ‘I’ve attacked ministers,’ I want to right now to make your way down front.”

We then went to the front, not in response to Hinn’s call, but to get a photograph of Hinn. A worker told us to stand by a particular door and Hinn would pass there.

As we stood waiting, we noticed people with hearing aids, some on crutches and two young people in wheelchairs. For all his cross-country traveling on healing campaigns, many in his own congregation apparently go without help.

When Hinn passed I asked, “How about a picture?” When he saw the camera, he insisted that we step up on

stage to get a better shot. One of Hinn’s attendants snapped the photo of him with his arms around us, two of the kind of people he was denouncing only five minutes before. So much for spiritual discernment.

We went to the crowded foyer to buy a recording of the service and found ourselves surrounded by Hinn’s security force.

“What’s the problem?” they asked us.

One of the patrol identified himself as “head of security” and again asked, “What’s the problem?”

“We’re just trying to buy some tapes.” Goedelman replied.

“I understand you have a tape recorder,” he said as he reached and tried to confiscate Goedelman’s camera, which had a zippered case. “What’s that, what’s that? Is that a tape recorder?”

“No,” Goedelman said, “it’s a camera.”

The guard wasn’t satisfied until he saw the camera removed from its case. Then he pointed at Goedelman’s Bible and asked, “What’s that, is that a tape recorder? What is that?” Goedelman opened the zippered cover to reveal his Bible.

“What is going on here?” I asked.

“We had a complaint from some longtime members that there was a problem with you two,” the guard said. “And that’s what we’re trying to find out. Just what is the problem?”

We surmised that the couple who sat in front of us during the service had been upset by my spontaneous critique of Hinn’s teaching on forgiveness, and had reported us to security.

“What problem **would** there be?” I asked.

“I don’t know, that’s what we’re trying to find out,” the security guard answered.

“This is really strange, we traveled all the way down here to hear Benny Hinn preach, we hear a message, and we are detained by security guards, I would like to know, what **is** going on here? What kind of a church is this?” I asked.

The guard then said, “You can leave now! Leave the property!” A uniformed guard followed us to our car and took note of our license plate as we left the parking lot.

In the wake of our reception at OCC, we can only agree with the couple who said, “Pastor Benny always says ‘At OCC you’re only a visitor once.’”

by Paul R. Blizzard

have noticed his stutter.

Hinn has made public a Sept. 18, 1992, letter from Friar Henri, Director of the College des Freres in Jaffa.³² Friar Henri taught Hinn religion there in the early 1960s. In his letter, Friar Henri states that as a child Hinn stuttered. Nonetheless, not one person interviewed about their contact with Hinn in Toronto, including people he named in his testimony, recalled him having a severe stutter. The only allusion to a speech complication was a reference to Hinn's jumbling of words when he would speak rapidly while anxious or under stress. These people attributed his speech difficulties more to difficulties with the English language.

David Lockwood, who was youth pastor at Trinity Assembly of God in Oshawa, remembers meeting Hinn at a Kathryn Kuhlman appearance in Pittsburgh. Lockwood is the man who invited Hinn to address the youth group, called Shilo Fellowship, on Dec. 7, 1974, the night Hinn says he was freed from stuttering. "I can't recall him stuttering," Lockwood said.³³

Jim McCalister was co-pastor of The Catacombs church, which met every Thursday evening in downtown Toronto at St. Paul's Cathedral. The Catacombs grew out of the efforts of Merv Watson, a school music teacher. The nucleus of the fellowship was young people from the Jesus People movement of the mid-1970s. Hinn and schoolmates from Georges Vanier Secondary School regularly attended services there. McCalister, who now lives in Florida, said he did not remember Hinn as a stutterer, but that he "spoke very rapidly and he wasn't always with it. Benny was a little bit of a problem to me in terms of his exuberance for anything that was a little bit frothy."³⁴

Watson remembers Hinn, too, but not as a stutterer. "When Benny got excited, he had kind of a repetitive thing, like: uh, uh, the, the, uh. But to the extent that he describes it, I was quite surprised. Because it wasn't that pronounced that it was difficult for him to speak. He would get excited, but, you know, we all get a little tongue-tied."³⁵

Also during the timeframe Hinn asserted to be a stutterer, Watson

further recalled: "We used Benny in a production where he shared the dramatic antiphonal declaration of a Psalm which required clear speech and clear rhythm."³⁶

Mike MacLean was another personal friend of Hinn's during The Catacombs years. MacLean roomed with Hinn during a church trip to London, England in 1974. When MacLean was asked if Hinn had a stutter, he said, "No, in fact I can remember saying to my wife when I read [Hinn's] book, 'Do you recall Benny having a stuttering problem?'" He added, "...the biggest thing that threw me in the book—the one comment I made immediately—was the stuttering. He talked as if he could hardly communicate."³⁷

When MacLean was asked what happened at Oshawa, he responded: "It was one of the first meetings he [Hinn] had, people were just falling over."

Paul Pynkoski, whom Hinn identifies as being present at his conversion experience, said, "I don't remember a stutter of any pronouncement."³⁸

A Georges Vanier Secondary School administrator does not recall Hinn stuttering, but said he was someone who "loved to perform." Even after 20 years, this administrator recalls Hinn stopping him in the hallway to remind him of an interpretive dance program he was performing in. He remembered Hinn asking him, "Are you going to come and see me dance?"

Hinn told Norman Snider in the **Toronto Globe and Mail's Fanfare** magazine: "I'm an artist. I've always been an artist."³⁹

In a **Toronto Globe and Mail** article dated Dec. 25, 1976, Hinn told reporters Peter Whelan and Aubrey Wice that his call was based on his power to knock people over. The article relates: "On December 7, 1974, he first spoke in public at Trinity Pentecostal Church in Oshawa." Then Hinn's own words: "I held up my hands to pray and the 100 people present fell on the floor. That's when I became aware of my tremendous power." It is noteworthy that he told Whelan and Wice nothing about being freed from stuttering, which he now cites as the prime event in his call to the ministry.⁴⁰

What emerges from people's recollections of young Benny Hinn is a man

who loved to perform and be in the limelight. This desire to perform was later apparently fueled by an intense drive to pattern his ministry after faith healer Kathryn Kuhlman, whose career he appears to have tried to emulate.

One could surmise that Hinn's emulation of Kuhlman could be the reason for his claim that his father was a mayor. Kuhlman's father served several terms as mayor of Concordia, Mo. during her childhood. The stuttering story could be another possible example. **People Weekly** magazine reported: "As a young preacher, Kathryn stuttered in a thick Southern accent ... She began a self-improvement program. 'That's why I speak so slowly now,' she explains. 'A lot of people think my speech is affected, but it's just my way of overcoming my problem.'"⁴¹

While Hinn did stutter as a child, testimony from those who knew him as a teen indicates that he must have outgrown the problem. Those people also remember him as being outgoing and social, not a recluse. None of them remembers Hinn being divinely healed of stuttering as he now alleges took place at Trinity Assembly in Oshawa. A healing which Hinn did not claim in his earlier recollections of the Oshawa meeting.

THE SCHOOLING

Another problem with Hinn's story is his reputed completion of basic education in Canada. Hinn says: "During my senior year at Georges Vanier ... I had an encounter with the Lord ... in February 1972."⁴² Yet, he was not a "senior" in February 1972. Hinn is pictured as an "undergraduate" in the 1972 Yearbook, **Vestigia** of Georges Vanier Secondary School.⁴³ There, Hinn is listed under his birth name: "Toufik Hinn."

Hinn's use of the terminology "my senior year" in **Good Morning, Holy Spirit** is incorrect on two counts. First, the terminology was not used. During the time Hinn attended school in Toronto, there were 12th and 13th grades in secondary school. According to an administrator, the terms freshman, sophomore, junior and senior were not used because of the grade structure. Second, if the term had been used for the benefit of a United States reading audience, it could apply only to

the 12th or 13th grade. Hinn completed only the 11th grade before dropping out.

According to the manual **Recommendations and Information for Secondary School Organization leading to Certificates and Diplomas 1972-1973**, one can only graduate from secondary school by completing, with proper credits, either grade 12 or grade 13.⁴⁴

It appears that as early as 1976, Hinn tried to portray himself as a secondary-school graduate. The Dec. 26, 1976, **Toronto Globe and Mail** says:

"He finished Grade 12 at Georges Vanier Secondary School on Don Mills Road and planned to take a Seneca College course to become a travel agent. On his way to pay the tuition fee, an inner voice told him to go home and he realized God wanted to meet him."

This story is not told in any of Hinn's newer books or tapes.

Hinn could not have attended Seneca College anyway. Its admissions policies, obtained from a 1971-1973 course catalog, would have prohibited him from applying for admission to the college without a secondary-school diploma.⁴⁵

Hinn has backtracked on the account of his schooling. In the Oct. 5, 1992, edition of **Christianity Today**, Hinn says, "I never said I was a senior, period. Anywhere. It's not in my book. All I mentioned in my book is that I got saved in high school in February of 1972."⁴⁶

However, on page 28 of **Good Morning, Holy Spirit** he says, "During my senior year at Georges Vanier..." (emphasis added).

Additionally disturbing is the fact this high school drop-out frequently portrays himself as having been an excellent student:

"I was very clever in school. I always had high marks."⁴⁷

"Amazingly, the principal really liked me...I will never, never, never forget the principal coming in and saying, 'we're gonna pass you this year without exams.'"⁴⁸

"And because I lacked in my per-

sonal life, I put everything in my school life."⁴⁹

"I was a good student."⁵⁰

THE SUPERNATURAL CLAIMS

Hinn claims that he has reached a superior level of spirituality he labels "The Anointing." According to Hinn, this level of faith has been achieved by only a few. Both Hinn and Thomas Nelson Publishers are guilty of perpetuating this myth by advertising: "In **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Benny Hinn introduced the Holy Spirit to the reader."⁵¹

These claims portray Hinn as a man of God who has seen "revelations" and "visions" unparalleled since biblical times. In fact, if one assembled Hinn's purported visions, dreams, angelic visitations and direct revelations from God into one book, they would exceed that of Jesus' Revelation to the Apostle John on Patmos!

Hinn says that this goes on all the time. He says: "Someone asked me, 'Benny Hinn, do you still have those mountain tops when you see angels and God visits you still? Is it still happening?' My answer is, 'It's been greater!'"⁵²

Hinn's extra-biblical extremes border on fantasy, if not occultism. He says there are little angels who look like children. In his "Personal Testimony" he says, "I'm telling you the truth, you could literally sit there in total shock. ... If you think I'm crazy, go on. Angels would appear in my bedroom at night and just stand and look at me. I would wake up to see angels in my bedroom. All sizes. Call me crazy but I would even see little boys in my bedroom with beautiful white robes. Like, little, they almost looked like girls but they were male. You say, 'Do you mean there are little angels?' I believe that 'cause I saw them. ... There must be little angels in heaven. I think so."⁵³

Occultist Emanuel Swedenborg in 1758 described angels he claimed lived in the "inmost heaven": "Externally they appear simple, and before the eyes of the angels of the lower heavens they appear like children, that is, as very small, and not very wise, although they are the wisest of the angels of heaven."⁵⁴

It is time for Hinn to repent of the

unbiblical teachings he has espoused and seek forgiveness for those he has misled.

Hinn claims: "If you hear anything about what I believe or what—or who I am, please don't believe it, unless you hear it from my lips. Because I speak the truth."⁵⁵ This is all PFO has attempted to do. Yet it is a difficult task as Hinn asserts: "You know, I'm probably teaching now, things that maybe in ten years I won't even believe anymore."⁵⁶

All the above cries out for answers and discernment. Is Hinn confused and therefore confusing? Is he making statements just for impression and effect? Is it lack of precision or outright deception? Whatever it is, we must continue to listen to him discerningly.

Endnotes:

1. "Double Portion Anointing," April 7, 1991, VT#309. Video tape on file.
2. Benny Hinn, Melodyland Christian Center, World Charismatic Conference, Aug. 7, 1992. Audio tape of cited statements on file.
3. Praise The Lord show, Trinity Broadcasting Network, Oct. 23, 1992. Video tape on file.
4. Ibid.
5. Orlando Christian Center, Aug. 12, 1992. Wednesday evening service attended by PFO Directors Paul R. Blizzard and M. Kurt Goedelman.
6. Oct. 7, 1992 phone conversation between PFO Directors G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman and Christopher Hinn and Attorney Stephen W. Beik. The call was in response to charges made by PFO in previous articles in **The Quarterly Journal** challenging the historical accuracy of Benny Hinn's claims in his publications and cassette tapes.
7. Benny Hinn, "The Apple of God's Eye," Aug. 12, 1992, T081292. Audio tape on file.
8. "Benny Hinn Testimony," Grace World Outreach, Saint Louis, Mo., March 4, 1983. Audio tape on file.
9. Benny Hinn, **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Thomas Nelson Publishers, pg. 66.
10. Ibid., pg. 85.
11. "Great Miracle Service," Church on the Rock, Rockwall, Texas, June 21, 1990. Video tape on file.
12. Ibid.
13. See further: "Good Morning, Holy Spirit? — Benny Hinn and Revelation Knowledge," **The Quarterly Journal**, July-Sept. 1991, pp. 1, 10-15.
14. **The Quarterly Journal**, July-Sept. 1992, pp. 13-14 and Oct.-Dec. 1992, pp. 2,9-10.

15. Praise The Lord show, Oct. 23, 1992.
16. Additional documents which claim to validate Costandi Hinn's political status in Tel Aviv/Jaffa were promised to PFO by Christopher Hinn during an Oct. 7, 1992 phone conversation. As of press time, these additional documents had not been received by PFO.
17. "Benny Hinn Testimony," Grace World Outreach, St. Louis, Mo., March 4, 1983.
18. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," Orlando Christian Center, July 19, 1987, Tape #A071987. Audio tape on file. Emphasis added.
19. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pg. 29.
20. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987.
21. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pp. 29-31.
22. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987.
23. Benny Hinn, **The Anointing**, Thomas Nelson Publishers, pg. 29.
24. Jacket of cassette tape, "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," Orlando Christian Center, July 19, 1987. Emphasis added.
25. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987,
26. *Ibid.*
27. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pg. 21.
28. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987. Emphasis added.
29. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pg. 27.
30. **The Anointing**, pg. 34; **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pg. 5.
31. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pp. 44-46.
32. Copy of letter on file.
33. Phone conversation between David Lockwood and G. Richard Fisher, 7/26/92.
34. Phone conversation between Jim McCalister and G. Richard Fisher, 8/20/92.
35. Phone conversation between Merv Watson and G. Richard Fisher, 8/19/92.
36. Phone conversation between Merv Watson and G. Richard Fisher, 11/10/92.
37. Phone conversation between Mike MacLean and G. Richard Fisher, 10/10/92.
38. Phone conversation between Paul Pynkoski and G. Richard Fisher, 8/20/92.
39. **Toronto Globe and Mail Fanfare** magazine, Feb. 15, 1978, pg. 11.
40. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pp. 44-46.
41. **People Weekly** magazine, Dec. 9, 1974, pg. 54.
42. **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, pg. 28.
43. **Vestigia**, 1972 Yearbook of Georges

- Vanier Secondary School, North York, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
44. "Recommendations and Information for Secondary School Organization leading to Certificates and Diplomas," Circular H.S.1 1972/73, Ontario Department of Education.
45. "Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Calendar 1971-1973," Admissions Policies, pg. 31.
46. **Christianity Today**, Oct. 5, 1992, pg. 54.
47. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. **The Anointing**, pg. 30.
51. Thomas Nelson Publishers advertisement for **The Anointing**.
52. "Personal Testimony Benny Hinn," July 19, 1987.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Emanuel Swedenborg, **Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell**, 1960, Division 280, pp. 155-156.
55. Praise The Lord show, Oct. 23, 1992.
56. *Ibid.*

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ARK

(continued from page 4)

tion, May 9, 1992). Certainly if the true Ark was found, there would be no speculation and guesswork. The world would know and some would be cashing in. World scholarship would be verifying it and leaving no doubt. It would probably be the biggest tourist attraction of the century. There would be a news frenzy over a find this incredible without a doubt.

Jewish tradition says that the Ark is buried in Jerusalem under the Temple Mount but no one knows for sure (see **Ready To Rebuild** by Thomas Ice and Randall Price, pp. 101-149). Excavations are forbidden there because of Moslem sensitivities. Again, tradition and guesswork.

Nearly a decade ago, 1983 was a fertile year for ark spotting and "arkaeology." Dave Webber in "Bible in the News" (May, 1983) suggested that the Ark was in the Vatican! The information came, he says, from an ex-Benedictine monk from Lubbock, Texas. Why would the Vatican hide this? They would have the most lucrative relic of modern times. Imagine what scholars, let alone the average person, would pay to see such a thing.

The Jerusalem Post (Oct. 13, 1987) ran a paid ad which said "The

Ark of the Covenant—The True Temple Site Found." The advertisement was purchased by a man named Tom Crotzer who invited all in Israel to come to a free lecture and films at the Jerusalem YMCA that evening. Crotzer claimed in the ad that the discovery had opened the countdown to prophetic times and the Messiah. Four years earlier **Biblical Archaeology Review** did research and an exposé of Tom Crotzer (**BAR**, May/June 1983).

Crotzer claimed much earlier to have discovered the true Tower of Babel and as well the very stone where Cain put Abel to death! Crotzer was the founder of a small commune in Kansas. He states that this group was like the Essenes of the second century B.C. Most would say, so what?

One of Crotzer's more bizarre claims was that London banker David Rothschild is a direct descendant of Jesus and that Rothschild will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Rothschild will have nothing to do with Crotzer. The kicker is that Crotzer boasts having pictures of the Ark but he will not release them to the public. How easily he could prove his claims if they were true.

Sigfried Horn of Andrews University says he has seen two of Crotzer's pictures. His evaluation is that they

were machine produced and are "modern fabrications". Crotzer has simply picked up on Futterer's ideas and reproduced those for modern consumption with a few doctored pictures thrown in.

We do not need the Ark of the Covenant. Hebrews 9 is very, very clear. Jesus fulfills all that the Ark stood for. The types symbols and shadows have passed away and the person for which they stood has come! Speculative pursuits just waste time and take our focus from Christ. If the Ark ever turns up we'll read about it in the legitimate press and in the reports of reputable archaeologists. Until then let's not get sidetracked.

Will Varner of Friends of Israel expressed this note of caution in his article "Searching for the Lost Ark." Varner wrote, "Be very careful in evaluating any stories about the supposed discovery of the lost Ark of the Covenant. Scripture is a veritable storehouse of information on God, the world, Israel, Salvation, the future and hundreds of other important doctrines and subjects. Let us labor to study what God has clearly revealed and not get caught up with extra Biblical ideas and teachings. We have enough in God's Word to keep us busy—let's not get sidetracked." Amen!

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experiences of ancient Israel. Thus a period of seventy years could be the time duration of this tribulation. But even more insistently, twenty-three years could be the length of this trauma. We have begun to see that the number 23 is definitely associated with judgment. However, when we analyzed much more biblical data, we discovered that the duration of the final tribulation is in all likelihood 2300 days" (pg. 245).

"The priests being 2000 cubits from the people (Joshua 3:4) represents 2000 years from Christ's birth" (page 445).

"The 2000 swine that plunged into the sea point to the year 2000" (page 446).

"The 200 cubits in John 21:8 represent 2000 years" (page 447).

There is more. On page 489, he writes of 400 shekels pointing to 4,000 years. Then on page 535: "While there is no biblical sanction for this addendum and therefore it carries no weight whatsoever, there is a curious fact that shows up. During the twentieth century there are only six years that have the unique distinction of having the sum of their integers adding up to the number twenty three. These are 1949, 1958, 1967, 1976, 1985, and 1994. $1 + 9 + 9 + 4 = 23$." He then concludes: "It is indeed curious, and probably not significant at all."

Probably not.

So, does Camping have anything new to offer in the way of prophetic interpretation?

Like a lot of cultists, he misuses Daniel 12:4, 8-9, which speaks of sealing the book until the end and are taken to mean that someone in the end time finally will see into information heretofore unknown and be able to date the coming of Jesus. Many others before Camping have claimed to have this insight.

Hebrew scholars Keil and Delitzsch deal at length with these verses from Daniel. In Volume 9, pp. 312-313, they show that the Hebrew text has to do with the preservation of Scripture, that Daniel's prophecies will be guarded

and preserved until their fulfillment. The "sealing of the believer" by the Holy Spirit is the preservation of the believer. The text suggests the rendering "preserved in security against defilement" or "in safety continue to the end." The verses are not a license for private interpretation.

Jesus' warnings "no man knows the day nor the hour" (Matthew 24:36) and "it is not for you to know the times and the seasons" (Acts 1:7) should make people cautious about any pinpoint date-setting. However, church history is littered with those who have ignored these admonitions. Camping's unique way of dealing with the verses is to say "we will not know the day nor the hour of the end of the world" (pg. 332), and then gives his readers a date between Sept. 15-23, 1994 (page 525).

Bible commentator Albert Barnes argues that knowing neither the day nor the hour means that no one knows the precise time. This is confirmed in the notes of the 1831 Greek New Testament. British scholar Adam Clarke said no one knows the season.

In the introduction to his book, Camping appears not to be committed to his own premise. He indicates there is a remote possibility that he could be wrong and "the nearness of the end might be subject to error."

His only hermeneutic is to make a particular text mean what he wants it to. To him, Old Testament events have little meaning apart from being prophecies of events for the Church Age. He writes on page 134: "God dealt with ancient Israel, the congregation of the Old Testament, when they sinned and rebelled against God. The end of ancient Israel provides insight as to what can be expected for congregations of today."

On page 133, he writes: "He would destroy the congregation of Israel because of wickedness. In the laboratory of God's Word, one can investigate what God says about the future of churches and congregations today."

Certainly there are general principles in the Old Testament about sin and its consequences. To suggest that Israel's history is prophetic and creates normative principles for the church is to miss all that the Epistles

say about New Testament church life.

Besides Kabbalistic numerical speculation, the nearest thing to describe Camping's Hermeneutic, is the Jewish term "Peshar." The Dead Sea Scroll Community saw most of the Old Testament as prophetic of just themselves. **The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion** explains:

"The authors of the pesharim believed the Scriptural prophecies to have been written for their own time and predicament and they interpreted the Biblical texts in the light of their acute-eschatological expectations" (pg. 298).

For instance, Habakkuk had little or nothing to do with the coming Babylonian invasion. All the words were addressed to the scroll community and was written prophetically about their times. This is not to say that some prophecies do not refer to us but we must be extremely careful since not all the facts and history of the Old Testament are prophetic of today as Camping supposes.

One-third of the Bible is prophetic and some of that has been fulfilled in Christ's first coming. To try to force the rest of it into a prophetic mold is to do violence to Scripture. Camping's system can only be described as very subjective.

Take Jeremiah 23, for example. Camping says, "These prophecies deal expressly and explicitly with conditions that exist today" (pg. 156). Again, "This passage warns of apostasy in our day, not in Israel's day" (pg. 159). Once more, regarding Jeremiah 23, "We are to carefully examine God's dealings with ancient Israel to find clues concerning God's plans for the New Testament congregations" (pg. 165). Then, on page 178, "The first principle is that ancient Israel was a picture or type of the New Testament church. God's judgment on Israel for their spiritual adultery sheds light on the nature of God's judgment on the New Testament church for its spiritual rebellion."

Camping likes to use the phrase, "the last day." He uses it so dogmatically that no one would think he misunderstands it and therefore misuses it. The "last day," which Camping interprets in all passages as one final

24-hour period, is used to prove one final day for the end of all things. However, it is not that easy. In some contexts it can mean that but the word "day" in Greek is not that precise.

According to H.E. Vine, the Greek word "day" can have a number of meanings. (**Expository Dictionary of the New Testament**, pp. 270-271). First it can refer to an extended period of opportunity as in John 9:4 and Romans 13:13. The "day" of salvation has extended over 1900 years. Secondly, it can be a period of undefined length marked by certain characteristics, such as sin, salvation, prosperity, distress, wrath, etc. Thirdly, it can describe the passing of judgment on circumstances as in "man's day" (I Corinthians 4:3), a period of rebellion against God. Gerhard Kittel concurs and says that "day" is often used figuratively and generally to mark a lifetime or even an epoch or age (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. II, pp. 943-953).

The word "last" (*eschatos*) is a comprehensive term that can signify ultimate things. Vine points out that the "last hour" in John 2:8 signifies "the present age previous to the second advent" (**Expository Dictionary**, pg. 311). It is not the last 60 minutes. Vine again says that the "last day" is a "comprehensive term including both the time of the resurrection of the redeemed and the ulterior judgment of the unregenerate at the Great White Throne" (*ibid.*). Camping takes some words in a strict literal sense when they help his case but spiritualizes and allegorizes other words with a vengeance.

Another strange speculation of Camping's has to do with why there are precise dates and numbers in the Old Testament. He appears to believe that the dating of events in the Old Testament is a prophetic calendar for today. The fact of the matter is that the inspired writers gave dates to prove the historicity of the Bible.

Camping has a startling view of the church in general. He says that the true church finally will be ruled by Satan. He suggests that the Tribulation is God's judgment on the church and as God judged Israel, so He will judge it:

"The church consisting of congregations and denominations all over the world, will be infiltrated and finally overrun by those who bring false Gospels" (pg. 54).

"Therefore we see very clearly that the temple is the church, the corporate body of believers. It is here that Satan will operate as the man of sin. Thus we know that before Christ comes again, the man of sin (Satan) will take his seat (rule) in the temple (the church, the body of believers) where he will be worshiped as God" (pg. 52).

He then says that the churches of Revelation 2-3 are the churches of the latter days (now) and the synagogue of Satan (pg. 108) and that pastors and elders "will begin to lead the congregation into spiritual adultery" (pg. 109). There is not much hope for the church as the apostasy will be worldwide (pg. 110). "God declares that it will happen, and Satan will rule the church" (pg. 111).

He then interprets Revelation 13:7 and the war with the saints:

"In this revealing verse God assures us that Satan will win in a sense."

There are other dogmatic and divisive statements. He says Daniel 7:25's reference to "changing times and laws" is being fulfilled because churches allow divorce for any cause and permit birth control. He adds to that "the pernicious teachings of free will" (pg. 149). On page 150 he holds that all who believe in a 1000-year reign of Christ in the future do so "because man does not want to talk about judgment day."

Camping goes on to say that "tongues" are Satan's big game plan to destroy the church. Apart from the issue of whether "tongues" are a human/psychological phenomenon, learned or faked, of God, or of Satan, Camping's broad castigations and categorizations are to be deplored. Branding all Pentecostal and Charismatic people as "of the devil" is unfair and wrong.

Camping insists that the Antichrist is Satan himself. However Revelation 13

indicates that he is a "man" empowered by Satan. He twists verses in Revelation to have them say that the tribulation is actually "the absence of physical persecution" (pg. 199). One would never get that from even a quick reading of Revelation and the Old Testament judgment passages.

The final weakness in Camping's system is his compulsion to create facts with Bible numbers. Biblical numerology is a stock in trade for a number of cults. People try to prove all kinds of things by selecting numbers from Scripture and giving them an arbitrary meaning. (See further: "Bible Numerology — Help or Hogwash," Personal Freedom Outreach Newsletter, April-June 1984, pg. 5.)

For instance, Camping, in his 1974 publication, **Adam When?**, said that the number 153 (the 153 fish in John 20) stood for the Aaronic priesthood, Christ's priesthood, and the New Testament period (pp. 277-280). Now in his book, **1994?**, he says that "the fish represent the believers who become saved" (pg. 503). So Camping, himself, has changed his mind on what the 153 fish mean. Another radio preacher says the 153 fish symbolize the United Nations.

Supposing that numeric patterns give insight into Scripture is a very speculative pursuit called Gematria. Prominent figures associated with this are Ivan Panin, E.W. Bullinger, F.W. Grant, Edwin Hartill, LeBarron W. Kinney and Jerry Lucas. All of these disagree as to the precise meaning of various numbers, showing how subjective it is.

Gematria can be traced to post-Apostolic Greek paganism. Medieval numerology developed into the Jewish Kabbalistic pursuits. Pythagoras and the gnostics are at the root of Camping's system.

So-called "divine numerics" is not a new discovery. It is certainly not a key to deeper Bible truth. It is a speculative pursuit. Since it is so arbitrary and so subjective as to its methodology, it dare not be introduced as a method of interpretation. Its roots are suspicious, its history confused, and its fruit a form of gnostic pride. Bible numerology is not a help, but rather a speculative morass that should be avoided. ★

time, throughout the city and its boroughs. Times Square will be ablaze, and the flames that ascend into the heavens will be seen for miles. Fire trucks will not be able to handle it all! ... "New York will be ablaze in all its boroughs!"

The second point of vagueness is the time frame. It is easy to prophesy with no time frame involved. One could predict a tremendous earthquake and tidal wave that would kill thousands. The odds are that within a few years or even a few months a natural disaster would strike somewhere in the world that could be cited to "confirm" the prophecy. Wilkerson qualifies the lack of time frame this way: "When will this come about, you ask? All I can say is, I believe I will be here when it happens! And when it happens, no matter where we are, in our apartment or on the job — we are not to panic or fear!"

Wilkerson also attributes recent California earthquakes to God's judgment. "Right now, God is shaking California with earthquakes, from San Francisco to Los Angeles to San Diego. The entire nation is feeling the birth pangs of judgment!"

In employing open-ended vagueness with the lack of a time frame, anyone could claim to be a prophet of God. Wilkerson, like other prophets, will be measured by the accuracy of the events prophesied when and if they happen; only time will tell. Anyone claiming to utter "prophecy" needs to consider Deuteronomy 18:

"And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22 NASB).

—PRB

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

name was on the cover of numerous books. But Paul Cho had to die. So I put Paul Cho to death, and last Easter Sunday it was David Cho who was resurrected. God Himself chose the name "David," Cho said.

According to the interview, the Korean Assemblies of God has presently reunited, Cho's younger brother's church is now independent and his father no longer considers "David Cho" a member of his family.

Critics of Cho charge that he has introduced New Age techniques such as positive thinking, positive speaking and positive visualizing into Christianity and that occult healings have helped him to build the world's largest church.

—MKG

WITNESSING TRACTS AVAILABLE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Three witnessing tracts produced by Personal Freedom Outreach have been published in two foreign languages. "A Gospel Test for Jehovah's Witnesses" is now available in Spanish and Russian. The testimony of PFO Director, Paul Blizard, "They Wanted Our Baby to Die!" also is available in Spanish.

Copies of the Russian version of the "Gospel Test" tract are being provided to missionaries traveling to the countries in the former Soviet Union. One St. Louis pastor who returned recently from Russia said that Jehovah's Witnesses present the most serious challenge to the proclamation of the true Gospel there.

PFO invites the readers of its Journal to share in this foreign ministry effort by way of the production of these tracts through their financial support. PFO will supply quantities of the pamphlet free of charge to missionaries going to serve in Russia.

The Spanish tracts are available for purchase at the same cost as the English versions.

To receive a free sample of the foreign-language tracts, send your request, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to: PFO, P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136.

—MKG

NEW JOURNAL INDEX AVAILABLE

Readers of Personal Freedom Outreach's newsletter can now have ready access to the more than 500 articles that have appeared in the quarterly publication since its inaugural issue in 1981. The Quarterly Journal Index is a complete catalog to locate all Feature Articles, Side Articles, Editorials, News Updates and Book Reviews from PFO's newsletters.

Categories in the Index also include: subject matter, computer diskette file titles and article size.

A copy of The Quarterly Journal Index is available from PFO-Saint Louis. Please include \$2.00 to cover the cost of postage and printing with your request.

—MKG

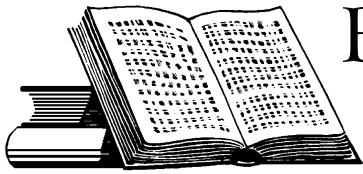
BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 16)

Christian concepts. Concluding chapters examine the integrity and validity of the Scriptures, the trustworthiness of the person and claims of Jesus Christ, and future of mankind based upon the resurrection of Christ.

Richards' publication is sorely needed. He has provided not only our Christian youth, but their parents, with an excellent guidebook to firmly respond to the numerous campaigns promoted by evolutionary advocates.

—MKG



BOOKS IN REVIEW

HEAVEN ON EARTH?

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AGENDAS OF DOMINION THEOLOGY

by Bruce Barron

Zondervon Publishers, 238 pages, \$12.99

For an introductory course in Dominion theology (also called Theonomy, Triumphalism and Reconstructionism) this book is a must. The author deals not only with the theology and teaching of the movement but also with its history, key players and critics.

Barron defines Dominionists as Christians who seek to take “dominion in civil government” and as those seeking to build “a society that is self-consciously defined as exclusively Christian” (pp. 13-14). The strict Theonomist sees this happening by the direct imposition of the Mosaic Law on all society. Many Christians would like to see this Christian kingdom imposed by God, not by man as do the Reconstructionists.

Barron shows the various differences and forms within the movement, from the strict Reconstructionists to Pat Robertson’s teachings.

The value of Barron’s book is that it is not just a critique. He offers principles for Christian involvement in government.

Barron sorts through the various strands of the postmillennial spectrum of which Dominion theology is a part and, as well, elaborates on the nuances of pluralism. This book could have been called “The sorting out of the broad and complicated world of the Christian right.”

The book is timely, balanced and informative. It is well-researched, scholarly and readable. It includes a subject index that makes the information easily retrievable. There is also a five-page glossary that defines all the important words and concepts.

The book’s only shortcoming, which is no fault of the author, is its price, which might limit its readership.

—GRF

POWER RELIGION

by Michael Scott Horton, Editor

Moody Press, 353 pages, \$17.99

Power Religion, the sequel to **Agony of Deceit**, is a powerful book that places truth above subjective experience.

The irony is that Moody Press printed it, given its past practice of publishing books by Mark Bubeck and C. Fred

Dickason who taught the very thing—demon-possession of believers—refuted in one chapter of **Power Religion**. One would like to see Moody become more consistent. Or, perhaps they have relented.

Editor Michael Horton dovetails articles critical of Power Politics, Power Evangelism, Power Growth, and Power Preachers (Christian “Superstars”) with very little overlap or repetition. The perspective is “deep and wide” and the 15 contributors are extremely readable. The chapter by Dave Powlison on the dangers of modern psychology is profound and mind-stretching. Some of the teachings exposed are so bizarre and weird as to be almost beyond belief. Some of the quotes put forth from the “Power Preachers” sound like science fiction or occultism. If it were not for the quotes and documentation it would be hard to believe that these things could ever be said.

Today’s Christians are not like their Berean forebears. They are naive consumers. They need to read this book and others like it, study and digest the contents and halt their slide toward mysticism and irrationality.

Horton sums up his purpose on pp. 19-20: “In short, this book is a warning about the uncritical adoption of paths to power that seem for a time to lead to greater spiritual vitality but in reality lead away from the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It issues a challenge to believers to refocus their gaze upon the only worthy obsession—Christ and Him crucified.”

—GRF

IT COULDN’T JUST HAPPEN

by Lawrence O. Richards

Word Publishing, 192 pages, \$14.99

It Couldn’t Just Happen is another great work for the next generation of Christian apologists and defenders of the faith. This publication is excellent in providing answers to the many humanistic questions and tough skepticism which our young people will encounter in public schools and by way of the media.

The heart of the book examines the theory of evolution and presents solid, biblical reasons for rejecting the many conjectures which are claimed to be “scientific.” The hardcover publication is replete with color photographs, illustrations and charts. These items make the work tremendously appealing and will easily retain the interest level of most any young reader. Each chapter concludes with a “Just for Fun” segment, a series of enjoyable and thought-provoking questions.

While the book’s focus is the contention that God exists and he created the universe, the final section includes several chapters that give the reader defenses of other

(continues on page 15)

Editor’s Note: The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.25 to the price listed to cover postage costs. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.