

Y2K BUST

But then there's the question of Paul's admonition not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Does an examination of the teachings and conduct of the men who claim a celestial calling cause one to grieve the Holy Spirit? Paul did not equate such action by the Berean believers, but rather commended them for their diligence and faithfulness to the Word (Acts 17:11). He also instructs Christians that their ways are not to be "secret and shameful" (2 Corinthians 4:2). We can grieve the Spirit by engaging in any of the bad behaviors laid out in Ephesians 4. The setting of the verse makes it clear as to what Paul is warning about.

In reality, if the Holy Spirit is being grieved, it is not by modern-day Bereans, but by men and women like Benny Hinn and his wife, Suzanne, with their reckless and unrestrained speech under the guise of the Holy Spirit. Consider the following:

"Those who put us down are a bunch of morons. ... You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible, I just can't seem to find it. One verse that says, 'If you don't like 'em, kill 'em.' I really wish I could find it. ... *Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun — I blow your head off!*" (Benny Hinn on TBN's "Praise-A-Thon," April 1990, emphasis added).

"If your engine is not revving up, you know what you need? *You need a Holy Ghost enema right up your rear end.* ... Be God-pleasers, don't be people-pleasers. Because if you're a people-pleaser, you're a butt-kisser. If you're a people-pleaser, you're a butt-kisser. There's no other word for it" (Suzanne Hinn at the World Outreach Center, July 1997, emphasis added).

"The Lord also tells me to tell you in the mid-nineties, about '94 or '95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America" (Benny Hinn at Orlando Christian Center, Dec. 31, 1989).

Holy Ghost machine guns? Holy Ghost enemas? False prophetic words of destruction? Can any rational-thinking person believe that God is behind such comments? Can any sane Christian maintain that God is honored by these remarks?

Now, more than ever, the Church needs be on guard against these preachers, with their electronic pulpits and worldwide crusades. They have jaded their followers to where anything is acceptable. Christians must not be terrorized by their idle and angry threats, nor intimidated by their fallacious use of Scripture. Obeying the frequent commands of Scripture, to watch for and defend against false teachers and their teachings, are the activities which bring spiritual growth, discernment and maturity, and honor our Lord and Savior.

—MKG

The paralyzing blizzard of Y2K problems predicted by some didn't amount to a snow flurry. Gary North, Hal Lindsey, Chuck Missler, Grant Jeffrey and other doom-sayers warned of bank collapses, utility failures, aircraft disasters and 1 billion people dead on account of computer failures.

The only catastrophe appears to have happened to the Y2K doom-sayers themselves. Their disaster-preparation products were up against a Jan. 1 deadline and despite all the pessimism the Y2K gurus could muster, sales did not come close to meeting expectations. Stockpiles of goods went unsold as consumers began to put more trust in the sound and reasoned responses of government and civil officials.

Perhaps these would-be Jeremiahs knew all along that their prediction of global crisis was purely oversell — or at least they were not confident enough to put their money where their mouth was. Last year, the Christian Jew Foundation issued what it called a "\$25,000 Y2K Challenge" to doom-sayers such as North and others. It was quite simple: If only half of what was predicted to occur would happen, the foundation would write a check to the favorite charity of any who would sign a contract accepting the challenge. If, on the other hand, Jan. 1 arrived with only minor or inconsequential snags and business proceeded as usual, the Y2K alarmist must write a check for \$25,000 to the Christian Jew Foundation for its ministry work. No one accepted the challenge.

Some of the doom-sayers had merely jumped from one bandwagon onto another, from Bible Codes to Y2K. No doubt they will now latch on to some new fad or conspiracy theory. Most of these men have offered no confessions, no apologies, no repentance, no acceptance of any responsibility for their erroneous forecasts. There has been one notable exception: Gary North.

Late last year, it appeared North had begun to hedge on his prediction. He informed the Y2K merchants who logged onto his web site that the rush to buy their goods would come in 2000, not in 1999. North wrote: "You figured people would finally wake up this year. So did I. We were wrong. The world would go into 2000 almost as unprepared as it was a year ago, or five. The world is oblivious." The windfall, according to North, for these entrepreneurs was yet to come. "Why do you want to sell it now, when nobody wants to buy it? Why do you ask for minimal mark-ups now when people will trade their heirlooms and appreciating currency for it next year. ... The bonanza lies ahead," North told readers.

Then on Jan. 10, 2000, North wrote:

"Clearly, as of this week, I was wrong in my predictions. ... I will now pay a price. I do apologize if I have embarrassed you or made your life worse. ... I believed that Y2K would create havoc. It still might, depending on how many bugs are still in the systems, but I will not here appeal to the 'still might'

argument. So, let me say without hesitation that my predictions did not come true. The events did not take place. ... So, at this point in the aftermath of the rollover, I look foolish. I was prepared for this. I thought it was better to risk my reputation or credibility in a life-saving effort than to tell people, 'yes, Y2K will cause problems,' and then refuse to define what degree of problems and what to prepare for."

Still, some may question the sincerity of North's wordy confession. Anybody who writes that much to apologize (over 4500 words) isn't really apologizing — especially when North, throughout, puts the blame onto others. As well, his confession falls short of Christian reconciliation in that he fails to ask forgiveness. His apology also concludes with an appeal for ministry donations to continue the work.

Moreover, his words of regret are posted, not on his ministry's web site (www.GaryNorth.com), but on the DiscoverTruth.com web site. (If it does appear on North's site, it is not readily available and is well hidden among a maze of documents.) North's ministry, on its web site, continues to publish and promote the same "doom and gloom reports" of Y2K devastation. As such, web surfers who log onto the site are completely unaware that any apology was issued.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

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bringing them closer to the TV set and as people are coming closer, I see loved ones picking up the hands of the dead and letting them touch the screen and people are getting raised as their hands are touching that screen," Hinn said. "The word will spread that if some dead person be put in front of this TV screen, they will be raised from the dead — and they will be by the thousands," Hinn promised the Crouches and the viewers of their *Praise the Lord* show.

Yet Hinn had much more to tell viewers of the world's largest network of religious stations. "TBN will no longer be just a television network, it will be an extension of heaven to earth. ... The Lord just said to me these words, ... 'TBN will not only be a Christian network, it will be an extension of heaven to the earth,'" he declared. Hinn went on to say, "So if you want to go to heaven, if you want to see heaven, if you want to taste heaven — turn on that channel because you will."

Once again Hinn's declarations put him more at home with the occult than a biblical setting. His concept that TBN is to become an open passage to a higher spiritual realm closely resembles an occult vortex known as a "Cone of Power," through which spiritual powers energize agents on earth.

Hinn also weakens his claim of divine revelation for the careful listener. "Now the Lord just told me — and I don't know whether this is true or not..." he said during the TBN broadcast.

—MKG

ENGLAND DENIES SCIENTOLOGY CHARITABLE STATUS

The foreign crusade of the Church of Scientology suffered yet another setback when it recently was "denied the tax benefits that go with gaining charitable status in England and Wales," according to a Religious News Service article. The December 9 ruling was one more defeat in Europe for the Los Angeles-based sect. Germany and several other European nations have opposed the church, claiming it is "more a business than a genuine religious movement," the report stated.

Similarly, the Charity Commission, which oversees and regulates charities in England and Wales, stated the controversial group did not meet the qualifications of a "public benefit" organization, which is a primary requirement in securing charitable status. However, the church was granted nonprofit tax status in Sweden.

The church responded to the Charity Commission's decision by saying they were "wrong on the law and wrong on the facts," according to the Associated Press. Scientology says it has 15,000 followers in England.

—MKG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

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- Balancing submission and authority,
- Balancing covering and counseling,
- Balancing sorrow and joy,
- Balancing the Law and the Gospel,
- Balancing the church and family, and much more.

Adams succeeds in his purpose: "It is my hope to observe the importance of proper balance in a number of specific areas, to point out some of the imbalances currently weakening the church, to describe the sorts of influences that tend to knock Christians off balance, and to suggest some of the ways in which to counter these. So far as I can tell, there has been a lack of interest in this subject that, consequently, has resulted in great confusion" (page viii).

This book is recommended, knowing it will help to keep you on track and balanced.

—GRF