

would be on the horizon would be real, concrete, and objective events (Matthew 24).

Murray demonstrates a disregard for truth and accuracy and takes advantage of the ignorance and gullibility of his television flock. He has based his interpretation of Bible prophecy on an erroneous date. Murray says the Mount St. Helens' eruption occurred on Pentecost Sunday in 1980. It did not. The volcano's primary eruptions began May 18, a week before Pentecost, which was celebrated on May 25, 1980. But Murray doesn't let historical fact stand in the way of his interpretation. This sort of implausible hermeneutic may titillate an audience, but does nothing to honor God by rightly dividing the word of truth.

Murray repeatedly calls those who challenge his Bible interpretations "Bible-thumpers," "numbskulls," and "yo-yos." However, it is Murray who would be more rightly regarded with such scorn. Despite his efforts to establish himself as an extraordinary Bible teacher, careful examination of his ideas shows him a confused teacher to be avoided.

—MKG

## JESUS SAVES, YES JESUS SAVES

Christians have long sung of the saving power of Jesus. As they sing, they express the power of Christ to save one from spiritual death. Recently, however, Dallas Cowboy's cornerback turned CBS sports analyst Deion Sanders gave new meaning to the popular hymn. Apparently Jesus is now saving from more than just the consequences of sin. He saved Sanders \$2,765 off a \$4,265 auto repair bill.

In 2001, Sanders had work done on his 1961 Lincoln Continental convertible. Since that time, auto repair shop owner Phil Compton, along with his attorney, Ed Edson, have been trying to collect on the bill for the repair work. According to an *Associated Press* report, "The owner of the repair shop said Sanders wanted to pay only \$1,500 of the \$4,265.57 bill, saying that Jesus had informed him that was all he needed to pay."

Compton serviced the vintage automobile and returned it to Sanders' home in Plano, Texas, in November 2001. Pilar Sanders, former wife of the sportscaster, took the keys and repair bill from Compton and retreated into the locked house while bodyguards and housekeepers moved other vehicles around the automobile to prevent it from being returned to the repair shop. "When Sanders drove up, he refused to pay the invoice amount, handing Compton a \$1,500 check and saying, 'Praise Jesus ... I follow what in my heart I'm told to pay,'" the *AP* reported.

Compton filed suit in March 2002 in an attempt to collect the outstanding balance. During the July 14, 2003, trial, held in Texas State District court, Judge Joe Cox ruled in favor of Sanders. Testimony was given during the trial which stated that Compton had been told that there was a \$1,500 ceiling on the cost of repairs.

Sanders told the *AP* that "I'm not hurting for money. And let's be honest. A \$4,000 bill, I could have written a check a long time ago. But it's the principle. I'm tired of getting ripped off."

—MKG

## LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND SHAMELESS

Two local business-related publications last summer disclosed the successes of their respective hometown televangelists. The *St. Louis Business Journal* examined the "evangelism empire" of Joyce Meyer, while the *San Antonio Express-News* revealed the spectacular income of John Hagee. Each report revealed an opulent kingdom that is amassing millions of dollars through donations and the sale of books, tapes, and other materials.

The St. Louis publication sought, but was refused, an interview with either Meyer or her husband, Dave. The newspaper also noted that an "exact revenue figure for the ministry wasn't available." Joyce Meyer Ministries is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, an organization that oversees and sanctions the financial activities of evangelical ministries. The ECFA regularly receives inquiries concerning Meyer and her ministry.

Despite these obstacles, the June 20-26, 2003, issue of the *St. Louis Business Journal* divulged prominent items in the inventory of Joyce Meyer Ministries, including an annual income estimated at \$57 million, a \$19-million headquarters, Meyer's personal silver Lexus SC 430 sports car, and an eight-bedroom, seven-bath, 7,000-square-foot home valued at more than \$500,000.

The *Business Journal* also said that within her office complex, the "hallway leading to the television studio features larger-than-life murals of Meyer in various speaking poses." Critics of Meyer long have noted her unabashed vanity. The *Orlando Sentinel* has stated that Meyer has had "plastic surgery," which the newspaper reported "Meyer readily admits." She wears tailored suits and lavish jewelry. Likewise, photographs of Meyer fill her Web site and magazine publications. As one approaches the guardhouse at the front entrance to her ministry's headquarters, a large portrait of the Meyers looms behind the guard.

While the *St. Louis Business Journal* reported on Meyer, the June 20 edition of the *San Antonio Express-News* revealed John Hagee's exorbitant income. The newspaper revealed that for the year 2001, "Hagee's total compensa-