

HINN HELPS PROMOTE TV SERIES SCAM

Benny Hinn again has demonstrated his lack of discernment by promoting a non-existent television show that is now the subject of a major fraud case in Southern California.

In November 2003, the TV evangelist had Joseph “Jo-Jo” Medawar on his *This Is Your Day* show, where the Lebanese native spoke of a series he was creating about homeland security agents.

“The Lord is doing some wonderful things around the world and also at home and in Hollywood,” Hinn said on the show.

Medawar said the show would be called “DHS: The Series.” He said it would follow the experiences of two agents who are “truly born-again Christians.” He told viewers it was to be “a Christian program, but a mainstream program.” Appearing with Medawar on the show were the three primary actors of the series: Alison Heruth-Waterbury, Tim Cavanaugh, and Stephen Owens.

Medawar claimed to have government approval and the endorsement of President Bush. “The amount of the advisers that have joined the show is almost mind-boggling,” Medawar told Hinn’s audience. He also said that the actors portraying the central figures in the series have undergone “some very high-level training.” While the claims sounded good, court documents allege that they were a scam.

According to a Copley News Service report, Medawar was arrested this past Sept. 23 at his Century City, Calif., office on charges of mail fraud and obstruction of justice. The report said that during the past 30 months, Medawar allegedly had “scammed about 70 investors, many of them linked to Southern California churches.” Medawar, CEO and Executive Producer for his Steeple Distributions production company, is accused of defrauding investors of \$5.5 million.

Medawar had produced a trailer to promote his series, but officials said the piece was made up mostly of video segments from other programs and movies that Medawar had neither produced nor had permission to use. Hinn used the promotional piece on his broadcast. Court documents said Medawar did have “several dealings” with a homeland security official, but that the official told Medawar the DHS name and seal could not be used without permission.

Medawar stated that Matt Crouch, son of Trinity Broadcasting Network founders Paul and Jan Crouch, would be the executive producer of the show. He also claimed that a deal was in the works to allow TBN to simulcast the series as it aired on network television. Medawar told Hinn that at the series premiere, Hinn would be there walking arm in arm with the program’s actors.

“The Lord is a part of the program,” Hinn told his audience. He then highlighted a “revelation” given by Ruckins McKinley, of Life Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., on his Sept. 22, 2003, broadcast. Hinn said, “God is putting Hollywood on the altar. That was the word God gave that night, and it’s happening.” He further offered a word of prophecy of his own that the actors from the series will reach other Hollywood actors for Christ.

Those who have monitored Benny Hinn’s broadcasts and healing campaigns are familiar with his propensity to name-drop and publicize his encounters with celebrities and world leaders. Yet, as with his providing Medawar a worldwide platform for his television scam, he does so at the risk of his friends and viewing audience.

—MKG

RALSON RETIRES AS NCVC DIRECTOR

Colleen Ralson, who headed up the Nauvoo Christian Visitors Center in Nauvoo, Ill., has retired as the center’s director. Ralson, a fourth-generation Mormon who was born and raised in Utah, was director since the center opened in 1988. She became a Christian in her early 20s after rejecting Mormonism. Ralson left a successful career in nursing when she signed on to become the NCVC’s director.

The NCVC was a joint mission project established by Watchman Fellowship and Personal Freedom Outreach. In 1987, the two ministries purchased a building in downtown Nauvoo and launched the NCVC. Ralson was enlisted as director and began converting the structure, which previously had housed a hair salon, the office of the city’s newspaper, and residential apartment, into a place to provide a Christian witness in a community steeped in the skewed faith, facts, and history promulgated by the Mormons.

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Also, giving heed to Paul's admonition to "weigh carefully" a prophet's words (1 Corinthians 14:29), what do we find? We find a false prophet intoxicated by the visions of his own heart and not from the mouth of the Lord (Jeremiah 23:16).

And what do we further find? We find a man who continues to reach new heights of popularity every year. We encounter one who is never held to any measure of biblical accountability for his erroneous proclamations. Rather than receiving the rebuke called for in Scripture, Hinn is adored. "Christian" book publishers continue to print and sell his writings and — with little surprise — "Christian" television networks, such as the Trinity Broadcasting Network, provide an ongoing visible platform for Hinn. Even *Charisma* magazine, with its facade of displaying the banner of discernment, remains voiceless in exposing Hinn for what he is. All of this points to a Church that has lost its will and ability to discern. It is a sad commentary and God's people are suffering as a result. Truth is to be guarded by the Word.

Or how about Hinn's more recent prophetic utterance, given a full decade following his prophetic word for the 1990s? Hinn informed Paul and Jan Crouch and their TBN viewing audience:

"You're going to have people raised from the dead watching this network. You're going to have people raised from the dead watching TBN. ... I'm telling you I see this in the Spirit. It's going to be so awesome. ... I'm telling you, I feel the anointing talking here. People are going to be canceling funeral services and bringing their dead in their caskets, placing them — my God, I feel the anointing here — placing them before a television set, waiting for God's power to come through and touch them. ... 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. You wait. Now the Lord just told me — and I don't know whether this is true or not... I see — I see quite something amazing. I see rows of um, cas— of caskets lining up in front of this TV set. And I see them bringing them closer to the TV set. And as people are coming closer, I see actually 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" (Benny Hinn, *Praise the Lord* show, Oct. 19, 1999).

In the time between Hinn's utterance of that statement and the present, two esteemed Charismatics have succumbed: Word Faith teacher Kenneth Hagin and Evelyn Roberts, the wife of Hinn's mentor Oral Roberts. Yet, it is safe to contend that the Hagin and Roberts families did not give heed to Hinn's "anointing" as he instructed a postponement of funeral services, and to place the body

in front of a television set so that the corpse would "be raised from the dead."

Christian people need to wake up and have the courage to hold Hinn responsible for his declarations. The Church need not be afraid of speaking out against false prophets. Men like Jerry Falwell need to stand firm and apply the Scriptures, exposing Hinn for what he is. Indeed, as Paul declared, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Former PFO director, the late Bill Cetnar, often said, "Time is the enemy of a false prophet." However, for Hinn and his followers, time can sometimes be an ally, allowing his forecasts to be forgotten. Yet news articles like the one cited above and the fact that people are still burying their dead should be a reminder as to why Hinn, and others like him, should be rejected as prophetic voices — and called into accountability.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

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Ralson's personal history in the LDS faith, along with her knowledge of Mormon theology, doctrine, and terminology, helped make her an outstanding director. Likewise, her artistic talents afforded her the skill necessary to create the displays and resources necessary for the NCVC. She is the author of *The Christian Companion to The Triple Combination*, a guide to using the Mormons' own scriptures as witnessing tools.

"Watchman Fellowship and Personal Freedom Outreach had the easy role in establishing the Center. All we did was to secure the building and select a director for the Center. Ralson is the sole individual responsible for making the Center what it is today through all her hard, dedicated, and selfless work," according to PFO director Kurt Goedelman.

In late October, a farewell banquet was given to recognize Ralson and her 18 years of service to the NCVC. "Without her vision, work, and sacrifice, the Center would have never been possible," Angela Goedelman stated during an address honoring Ralson. "It is so hard to leave, I could cry when I think about it, but I believe it is time," Ralson said.

The NCVC Board of Directors have appointed Rocky and Helen Hulse as the new directors for the Center. Rocky is a fifth-generation Mormon. He and his wife are also the founders and directors of Mormon Missions Midwest Outreach.

—MKG