
Editorials

WHY NO ACCOUNTABILITY?

Late last summer, a brief news item with a Cuba dateline appeared in newspapers across the country. The headlines were along the line of "Nation honors Castro on his 79th birthday." The Aug. 14 article said:

"Cuba honored President Fidel Castro's 79th birthday Saturday, revisiting his nearly five decades in power on the communist island with tributes in state-run newspapers and documentaries. Dozens of children danced and cut an enormous blue-and-white cake for Castro, the world's longest-ruling head of government. Castro maintains a busy schedule — including speeches that can stretch to six or seven hours — and has shown no interest in retiring."

Some may wonder what this news report has to do with apologetics. It has a lot to do with one very prominent modern day "prophet" and his ability to seduce the undiscerning (Matthew 24:24). It is a decisive and emphatic testimony to a false prophet.

Throughout the years, Benny Hinn has tantalized his faithful with numerous prophetic words. The most outrageous of his purported divine revelations was his sermon at a New Year's Eve service in 1989 at the Orlando Christian Center, his former church in Florida. Hinn told his congregation — and the world through

audio media — a dramatic sequence of "prophecies" concerning events in the next decade.

Hinn entered a trance-like state, heightening the effect by interspersing tongues — "*Ta-Kaa-Pa Kaa-Paa Daa*" — throughout his homily. Hinn covered a wide range of future events, including the Church, economics, domestic and world politics, and the claim, "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."

It was also here that Hinn declared, "The Spirit tells me Fidel Castro will die in the nineties. Oh my. Some will try to kill him and they will not succeed. But there will come a change in his physical health and he will not stay in power."

Considering just a couple of the statements in the news report, such as Castro being "the world's longest-ruling head of government" and his keeping "a busy schedule... [with] no interest in retiring," demonstrates just how far afield Hinn's prophetic declaration is from the facts. God's Word reminds His people that the word of the prophet that does not come to pass is a word that He did not speak (Deuteronomy 18:21). Words which truly come from God are infallible and inerrant. God's objective in speaking through the prophets was to communicate His sure and certain word to His people. There is no room for or possibility of error.

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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

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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

(continued from page 3)

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