

Contending EARNESTLY for THE Faith

The Crowning DAY!

*"I live for today nor anxious be;
Jesus my Lord I soon shall see;
GLAD DAY! GLAD DAY!
Is it the crowning DAY?"*

OUR Lord's End Time Prophecy—Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21—emphasises four progressive and three specific "signs" that we are to take note of:

WARS: i.e. continuing and escalating human conflict;

EARTHQUAKES: i.e. ongoing and increasing natural disasters;

SIGNS IN HEAVEN: i.e. unusual astronomical events;

APOSTASY: i.e. undermining of true faith.

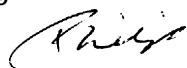
There is no doubt that these things have occurred in varying degree throughout Church history. There is equally no doubt that they are happening with greater regularity and increasing intensity in our time precisely as Jesus warned.

The three specific signs are:

**National Israel Restored;
Jewish Worship Corrupted;
Jerusalem Surrounded.**

The coming together of these four progressive and three specific signs in an intensifying manner is a certain indication that Christ's return may be close. That's why we must re-double our efforts to reach the lost and to rescue the deceived. To this end we dedicate this issue of CETF with confidence, faith and optimism. God bless you.

Luke 21:28 *"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh."*




ECUMENISM

BABYLON RISING

THE Pope was recognised as the overall authority in the Christian world by an Anglican and Roman Catholic commission which described him as a *'gift to be received by all the churches.'* After five years of debate, the 18 member Anglican-Roman Catholic commission concluded that the Bishop of Rome had a *'specific ministry concerning the discernment of truth'* and accepted that only the Pope had the moral authority to unite the various Christian denominations.

Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called for a debate on the report's findings. He said, 'In a world torn apart by violence and division, Christians

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need urgently to be able to speak with a common voice, confident of the authority of the gospel of peace.'

It is in fact the authority of the Gospel and the whole Word of God which has in the past prevented Bible believing Christians from being able to speak with a common voice with the Roman Catholic Church. Rome's history is one of suppression of the truths of the Gospel and their replacement with a religious system which bound people up with dead works in the vain attempt to earn salvation and brought them into submission to a corrupted clergy.

It has also been guilty of the most appalling persecution of Bible believing Christians for which it has never repented or made any restitution. The major false doctrines of Roman Catholicism which the Reformation opposed are:

1. **Justification by works.** BUT the Bible teaches we are saved by faith in the work of Jesus Christ dying as a sacrifice for our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10).

2. **Baptismal regeneration**—that a baby becomes a Christian through being baptised. BUT the Bible teaches that we must be 'born again' (John 3:5-8) through repentance and faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us, after which we are baptised (Acts 2:38).

3. **Worship of images.** BUT the 10 commandments which forbid idolatry remain valid for Christians (Exodus 20:4-6, Romans 1:18-25).

4. **Celibacy**—forbidding priests to

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marry, thus creating a distinction between the priesthood and the laity. BUT the Bible teaches the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:4-10, Revelation 5:10). Peter, considered falsely to be the first Pope, had a wife and enforced celibacy is described as a 'doctrine of demons' (1 Corinthians 9:5, 1 Timothy 4:1-3).

5. **Confessionalism**—where sins are confessed to a priest who then declares absolution for those sins. BUT the Bible teaches that we confess our sins to God and receive forgiveness through the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:5-2.2).

6. **Purgatory**—a place which is neither heaven nor hell, BUT a place where one has to be refined before going to heaven. But in the Bible there is only heaven and hell and those who are saved in this life need no further refinement (Matthew 25:46, Revelation 21:1-8).

7. **Transubstantiation**—the concept of the continual and perpetual sacrifice of Christ through the Mass. BUT the Bible teaches that Christ's sacrifice was complete and that the communion or the Lord's supper is the remembrance of that sacrifice (Hebrews 9:28, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

8. **Indulgences**—where through the giving of money a person's time in purgatory could be reduced. BUT since there is no such place as purgatory, this became a trick to deceive people into giving money to the church in the Middle Ages. There is no way that we can buy favour with God (1 Peter 1:18-19).

9. **Penance**—involving the torment of one's body in order to reduce time in purgatory. BUT Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, in order that we might be redeemed to God.

10. **Mariolatry**—the worship of the virgin Mary, her elevation to the 'mother of God' to be considered co-Redemptrix (i.e. she plays a part in our redemption along with the Lord Jesus) and the declaration of her 'immaculate conception'—i.e. she was conceived without sin. BUT this is the importing of the Babylonian system of the worship of the goddess, 'Queen of heaven' into Christianity. Mary was in fact a faithful Jewish woman called Miriam who played a vital role in bringing Jesus into the world through the miracle of the virgin birth. After this she had other children in the natural way and was a believer in Jesus. There is no other mediator between God and man except the Lord Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

While Rome may play down some of these doctrines in order to appear more acceptable to modern man, none have been repented of or renounced and ba-

sically Rome remains in its own words 'semper eadem'—always the same.

In view of all this, the push for a united church, with the Pope as its head will not be a triumph for the Gospel but for apostasy. As Protestants abandon the Bible as their authority it becomes possible for them to consider what would have been unthinkable for the Reformers—accepting the Pope as the authority over the Christian world.

However in these days where the Alpha Course has become the norm for evangelicals and Catholics as an introduction to Christianity, nothing should surprise us. Alpha is acceptable to Rome and its authors see no conflict between Roman Catholicism and Biblical Christianity.

This is part of the general trend of religious unity, which goes way beyond simply uniting the Christian churches.

It ties in with the prophecies relating to an apostasy (falling away from the truth) amongst evangelical churches and a coming together of world religions in a religious system like that of ancient Rome. In the Roman Empire people were free to follow which ever god they wished to, as long as they submitted to the overall authority of the Emperor who was known as 'Pontifex Maximus' (supreme bridge maker—a title taken over in the fourth century by the Bishop of Rome/Pope). They placed their gods in the Pantheon (all gods) in Rome (the Spirit Zone in the Millennium Dome is a modern parallel to this) and kept the peace ('Pax Romana') by not trying to convert people from their religions.

The early Christians could neither accept the divine status of the Emperor nor keep quiet about the one way of salvation they had found in Jesus and so ran into conflict with the Empire, resulting in persecution and martyrdom.

As we come into the last days of this age we should not be surprised to see the rise of Babylon as described in Revelation 17:3-6:

"And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her I marvelled with great amazement."

TONY PIERCE



FOOL'S GOLD

In light of the recent coverage in the media concerning the claims of gold teeth manifestations, Siam Bhayro casts a concerned eye on the portrayal and perception of Charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity.

THE British ITV night-time news and current affairs programme *Tonight with Trevor McDonald* featured an in-depth report by journalist **Jonathan Maitland** on the "gold-teeth" and "gold-dust" phenomena sweeping through the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches at present. The report itself is to be commended for its objectivity and fair-minded approach, as well as its knowledge of the context within which these phenomena are occurring—particularly the same circles which promoted the Toronto Phenomena.

The interview was of considerable interest, not least because it provided ample air-time for **Gerald Coates** to put across his view of current events. In view of our past articles on Mr Coates, it comes of no surprise that, rather than take advantage of the opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ, he launched himself into a flawed and rather embarrassing defence of the "gold teeth" phenomenon.

Mr Coates' opening comment was:

"If there is just one case of this that's proven, then it's the scientist's holy grail."

The following is an unedited transcription of the interview between Mr Maitland and Mr Coates:

★ ★ ★

Gerald Coates: I know of three separate people who are friends and acquaintances who have been back to their dentist and the dentist has said, "Well what is in your mouth is not what is in my records" so something quite unusual is going on here.

Jonathan Maitland: In your view, how significant is this?

GC: Well God doesn't intervene in many of the situations we would like Him to, because He would have to intervene in everything we say and do that's wrong, right the way through to some of the most terrible things happening in nations. What He does is He gives us signs that He is with us and that we can draw help from Him. Jesus changed water into wine. That had no function really. They had already run out of wine in the party so He was only aiding and abetting more drinking.

JM: So you think this is just a modern equivalent of that—this is a bona fide miracle?

GC: Yes I think it's true to say that God is touching people with gold as signs that He is still with us and although millions have turned their back on Him, He has not turned His back on us.

★ ★ ★

The report showed footage of a meeting in Surrey with Gerald Coates and Chilean Miguel Escobar. At this meeting, a lady called Sally was brought to the front amidst exciting claims that gold was appearing in her mouth. Standing at the front, with Gerald Coates holding the microphone beside her, she said, "If it is gold, then I just praise the Lord because I really want to show people how real Jesus is and if this is a way of showing them then thank you Jesus."

Sally's thanksgiving and prayer were certainly genuine enough, which is sad in view of what followed later in the report. A few days later, Jonathan Maitland interviewed Sally in her Kent home. Sally had been to the dentist and had the following statement to make: "The dentist had a look at my teeth and as I'd probably suspected anyway by that moment all he saw was amalgam." He said, "No, your fillings are amalgam—they're not gold."

Jonathan Maitland commented as follows: "But Sally says the dentist's verdict was irrelevant. Far more important she says was that she felt God's pres-

ence at the meeting and as a result her faith is stronger than ever."

As if to reinforce his assessment, Sally then said, "My faith has been here for a long time. It's not going to be rocked by the fact that gold did or didn't stay."

Another part of the report features another Charismatic meeting after which Jonathan Maitland interviews several worshippers. One claims to have gold dust on her hands, to which the bemused reporter is compelled to answer that he only sees sweat. The response from the believer was a relativistic "that's your opinion."

This feature was seen by many viewers in the United Kingdom and, as such, presents certain problems. Firstly, the presentation of fundamentalist Christianity in the media is at best embarrassing, and at worst a discredit to Christ and His Gospel. The report itself was fair. Jonathan Maitland did his best to present all involved in a positive manner. But the objective viewer cannot escape the conclusion that Charismatic Christians are quite willing to delude themselves and build their faith on experience rather than on the Scriptures. What is particularly distressing is that even when the world is not out to discredit us, we discredit ourselves!

When will we realise that the Gospel of Christ is itself a stumbling block? Our faith appears foolish to many in its purest form, but it is a "folly" in the world's eyes only, and a folly we are privileged to share in. But to take the purity of the Gospel and sully it with true foolishness is an affront to our Lord and something we should weep over. Let the world discredit us, but let us not do it ourselves.

But even more distressing than the ignorance demonstrated by the faithful adherents to these latest phenomena was the ignorance demonstrated by the one presented as their leader—the one chosen to speak on our behalf and present us to the outside world—Gerald Coates.

From his opening statement concerning the scientist's holy grail, to his explanation of the significance of the current phenomena, Mr Coates displayed a lack of coherence and understanding of our Lord's ministry.

Ask yourself this simple question—What does the phrase *the scientist's holy grail* actually mean? The answer obviously varies from field to field, but such

things as cold fusion or perpetual motion come to mind. Just what has this train of thought got to do with the supposed supernatural appearance of gold tooth fillings or the materialisation of "gold dust"? With a little bit of thought, Mr Coates' opening phrase turns out to be complete nonsense. Now there is a serious point to this reasoning. When one subjects the prating (c/f. 3 John 10 with 1 Tim 6:20) of this man to any reasonable analysis, it is found to be in want of reason and coherence. In short, it is vain and nonsensical babbling.

This is compounded by the utter lack of respect for our Lord. In the past, Mr Coates has described the Lord Jesus Christ as "fun and unthreatening"—two adjectives which are not suitable for the One who will appear in the air and smite the armies of the world. In the interview reproduced above, the demeaning of the Lord's first sign at the wedding of Cana again betrays Mr Coates' scorn for the person and work of our Saviour. If we display no respect for our Lord, what can we expect of the world?

I recently heard a preacher state that the significance of the Cana miracle was that the Lord Jesus was making the following statement: "The kingdom of heaven is a party—and the drinks are on me!" Such folly in respect to our Lord not only betrays the wanton state of the visible church, but also that many ministers today have simply forgotten how to preach properly. Take as another example this quote from Nicky Gumbel in the UK national daily newspaper *The Independent* (Thursday 17th September, 1998): Paul says "Don't get drunk with wine, be filled with the Spirit. Come to a party where you can get drunk on God".

Just how can we ask for respect from the world when we allow ourselves to be presented in this manner?

But beneath all the nonsensical jabbering of the Gumbels and Coates of this world lies a more sinister problem—doctrine. We have already covered the problematic doctrines of these two men in past issues of Vanguard and such things do not need repeating here. It suffices to say that it comes of no surprise that, in the absence of anything true and good to say, such men are left to babble their own inflated thoughts and discredit our Lord further.

by SIAM BHAYRO

DARKNESS OR DAWN

"...but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" —1 Sam 30:6 b.

HE needed to for no-one else did or would. Look at the context. Read the previous two chapters and the one in which our text is found. Humanly speaking the situation was hopeless.

Saul had led Israel into such a backslidden state that the truly anointed of the Lord — David — was actually joined against the people of God, if not in battle at least in heart. He had joined forces with the Philistines. May be there's a parallel today! Some of us have frequently been accused of being opposed to the church, but I'm not. Please read on and let the Holy Spirit illumine to your mind other present day applications to the Church.

Just prior to the incident, which gives rise to our text, were it not for the fact that a Sovereign God was ordering things, David would have found himself in an untenable position, which would have threatened his true loyalty or his very life; and it wasn't really of his making. It was because he was harassed and pursued by Saul whom God continued to allow to rule over Israel. I wonder why? Well, God permits strange things at times to reveal His glory and show that it's neither Saul nor David but God Almighty who truly rules over the affairs of His people.

Have you noticed the irony of God's ways? Chased from his land by Saul, David sought refuge among the people of the giant that he slew when he became champion of Israel and not only that but in the very city from which Goliath hailed. It was Achish, king of Gath who gave David refugee status — 1 Samuel 27:1-4 — having previously been deceived by David playing the

"mad-man", when it first became known that he was the slayer of Goliath of Gath — c/f 1 Sam 21:10-15.

But in the providence of God the tables will turn and first it will get worse before it gets better as it so often does with the ways of God. The Philistines who hosted him as a refugee will eventually turn against him and drive David away. God couldn't allow King David to fight for the Philistines against Israel. That would be irony gone mad. Of course it might give David another chance to kill Saul or, as the Philistines feared, an opportunity to ingratiate himself with his king and former master — c/f 1 Sam 29:4. God has other plans — His own plan.

Saul's time is running out! Like his much later successor King Ahab of whom we wrote in the last CETF, (Vol 5.1 — March/April '99) Saul too has an appointment on the mountains of Israel and it's going to be a witch, the Witch of Endor who will prophesy it via an ectoplasmic or demonic impersonation of the great prophet and intercessor, Samuel — 1 Sam 28:15-20. Strange indeed are the ways that God allows, but thank God He is always right, and His timing is always precise.

As Philistia is fighting Israel and while David and his men are absent from the city that King Achish gave to them — c/f 1 Sam 27:6 — the raiding Amalekites, another enemy of God's true people, make their attack. Setting fire to Ziklag they carry off all the defenceless women and children. David and his men return to such utter devastation that they weep unashamedly until they can weep no more.

After the tears things are about to turn really nasty for the man who is destined to be Israel's greatest King. All the people began to turn on him. Then David

shows his true greatness:

"...but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" —1 Sam 30:6 b

Now let me draw some specific parallels between that day and our time as we apply the truth of our text. I'm sure you've seen others as the Holy Spirit has opened His truth to your heart and mind.

CHRISTIAN LEADERS

A backslidden leadership has broken through the hedge and the Bible says:

"He that digs a pit shall fall into it; and whoever breaks a hedge, a snake shall bite him" —Ecclesiastes 10:8.

It would be hard to find a better description of what occurred between David and Saul than the first clause, nor what ultimately happened to Saul than the second.

Of them it is recorded:

"Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker" —2 Samuel 3:1

It is God Himself who ultimately calls the shots and He is ALMIGHTY.

PHILISTINES & AMALEKITES

The word rendered *"Philistines"* derives from a root signifying *"sojourner"*. They have a similar influence upon God's people as *"the mixed multitude"* that joined Israel as they left Egypt — c/f Ex 12:38 with Nehemiah 13:3 — but worse. Philistines not only cause compromise but ultimately they attack the true people of God.

The Amalekites were valley dwellers. (*Amelek* = *"dweller in a valley"*). They live in the low places of life and influence others with their life style. They too end up attacking and sometimes defeating God's people. The pilgrimage of the compromiser is fraught with danger.

Beware the “Philistine” and the “Amalekite”.

ENCOURAGED IN THE LORD

The Hebrew “chazaq” signifies “to strengthen; prevail; become strong; be courageous; firm; resolute”. It’s something we have to do ourselves. No-one else can do it for us and it’s only in the Lord not in each other and certainly not in ourselves that we “encourage ourselves”. The backslidden leadership has failed to do this. They encourage themselves in all sorts of things e.g. self esteem, religious politics, popularity seeking, mammon worship and so on — but not IN THE LORD.

David recognised his need for he had observed Saul’s lack in this area. But there were other reasons:

All reliance on the flesh had failed. Being a refugee in Gath was alright for a time, but the Philistines ultimately turned on him. His own kith and kin were now gone, captured by the Amalekites; and then his own men turned on him too. They had family who had been captured. It was a hopeless situation. Everything was against King David. There was ONE who wasn’t — “David encouraged himself in the LORD his God”.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Ah — that’s the key. Not fatalism but sovereignty. Not “Whatever will be, will be ...”, the Doris Day doctrine as Rodney Howard-Browne has mistaken it for the glorious truth of God’s Sovereignty — what a mistake! BUT a God who is over all and who makes “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” Romans 8:28. That includes our mistakes and failures as well as our right choices and achievements. To encourage ourselves — strengthen ourselves — in the Lord is the most marvellous of pursuits.

When we do that it will be said of us as it is recorded of David:

“And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and ... there was nothing missing, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither plunder, nor any thing that they had taken: David recovered all” 1 Samuel 30:18-19.

I cannot give the “faithful remnant” a cast-iron guarantee that the recovery of things that we have lost will happen before Christ returns, for the “apostasy” is

now set and will run its course. I can assure you that King David’s greater Son will requite and recover ALL. That is my confidence and that is my trust.

For myself I wish, desire, even long for, the re-establishment of true fellowship with my friends and colleagues who have ignorantly or wilfully embraced (God alone knows which) the Apostasy before Christ Returns. But I have no guarantee and I will not recant. There is no real fellowship in the Gospel apart from the TRUTH.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12: “And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

So where to from here?

CETF — Now in Sixth Year

Come November 1999 we will enter our seventh year since we launched the CETF journal in New Zealand and Australia. Vanguard was first published in Britain in October 1996. We shared distribution of the two papers shortly after and have progressively formed more solid links between the ministries since then. Quite recently a number of things surfaced which indicated that changes were afoot and a more permanent association needed to be established.

Editorship: Vanguard, since its inception has been edited in Britain by Siam Bhayro, a young man who has a passion for TRUTH and for GOD’S WORD. Siam graduated with a First Class honours degree in Hebrew from University College London in 1997 — for which he was awarded the Faculty of Arts medal. He is now in the final year of his Ph.D. He is married to Lisa who is a science teacher. His anonymity is no longer necessary nor, for that matter, desirable. Nothing will change in this regard apart from his name being known. Philip Powell and Siam Bhayro will continue to act as joint-editors of both CETF and VANGUARD.

New Addresses:

- **The UK CETF Office** will move closer to where Siam and his family live and will now be the same as for Vanguard previously viz: PO Box LB1475, EGHAM W1A 9LB, UK. Phone/fax +44 (0)1379 388456.

- **In Australia** there will be no change.
- **In New Zealand** the new address will be: CWM, C/- Bill & Raemar Verrant, 55 Ruby Street, LEVIN 5500. Phone 0-6 367 0105.

- **New Web Site:** Our new address is “http://www.christian-witness.org”. Please visit. We are developing a section to help former Roman Catholics and those presently seeking for the truth of the Gospel. There are many other helpful things published on the site, including archives of past CETF’s and VANGUARDS. Those qualified and available to help in preparing articles for the web site please email us at “rob@christian-witness.org”.

Finance: I have frequently said: “That which God commissions He enables.” He has never let us down; neither with volunteers nor with money. There have been occasions when we have been tested and have had to defer publishing due to cash flow. Much more could be done if there were a release of funds to help. All too often, in the work of God, too much is done by too few. But we are grateful. We do not complain. Below you’ll see a statement of accounts for the NZ and OZ operation. A similar statement was published previously for the UK. Each country is financially autonomous.

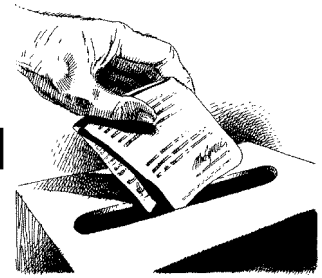
Preaching Tours: The Lord called me to PREACH and TEACH the Gospel. There is a ready acceptance of the public pulpit expression of this calling and increasing opportunity for it. However ministry tours usually result in a huge build up of paper work and some delay with our publishing programme. So I’ve realised that I must minimise my involvement in the admin of CWM and obtain a state of the art laptop computer so that I can write articles as I travel as well as communicate efficiently with my editorial colleagues. The NZ address changes will partly facilitate this. Please pray about the computer purchase. The sort I need is not cheap as I must be able to access all my research and data files as I travel so require a machine that will duplicate everything on my office machine or replace it.

Signs of Change: We recently advertised David Wilkerson’s “The Re-proach of the Solemn Assembly” along with CETF and VANGUARD in a national Christian newspaper. The first respondent wrote— “About time someone spoke out.” Since then many more have asked for the free material. Some even sent donations. These are encouraging signs. I sense that the latest “gold fever” that has hit the Church is making people wake up to all the nonsense. Even “fools’ gold” serves some purpose! God grant that these encouraging signs will continue.

¹ Quoted in the video SIGNS & WONDERS EXPOSED: Part 3 — CWM RESOURCE.

Your Letters

● We print letters from you, the readers. Letters may be edited for the sake of brevity.



My Dear Brother,
I expect that you will have read the book "The Bible Code" written by Michael Drosnin. I have just read this and although it would seem to have been accepted by many Christians and, to say the least, is profoundly "shattering", I find myself not a little disturbed in my spirit. I would indeed be indebted to you if you would let me have your views on this. Although the subject of the book seems so authentic, I am left with a feeling of grave doubt, and fearful that, in some way it is some sort of delusion. I look forward to hearing from you. In Christ,

C. L. Gore
Wigan, UK

Dear Mr Gore,

Thank you for your letter and the concerns you raise. Drosnin's Bible Code has certainly proved to be popular and many Christians have been wowed by its startling claims. I believe you are correct, however, in your caution concerning this book.

It is at best an elaborate hoax which is possible to due to the nature of the Hebrew language. The Hebrew language is written using a largely consonantal alphabet, with vowels not being represented save for a couple of letters which can function as either vowels or consonants. Due to this feature, it is statistically much more probable that any experienced linguist can find whatever he is looking for. This is especially true in relation to names because there are several ways of spelling non-Hebrew names using the Hebrew alphabet.

For example, on page 124, Drosnin shows a table of Hebrew letters in which can be found the revelation that there will be a world war in the year 2000. FANTASTIC!! But consider this — with just a brief search, I also found my name immediately followed by the Hebrew verb to teach in the third person masculine singular. In other words, using Drosnin's method, I discovered that I would teach mankind to have a world war in the year 2000. Or is it that I would teach mankind how to avoid a world war in the year 2000?

The point is that, due to the nature of the Hebrew alphabet, anyone can say just about anything and justify it by say-

ing that it is hidden and encoded within the Bible. I managed to find myself in Drosnin's world war example with hardly any effort. Just imagine what I could accomplish if I had done months of research. Well actually we don't have to imagine because Drosnin has already done this, and most profitably too — Drosnin is a best-selling New York journalist who knows what stimulates the public and sells.

Drosnin also misuses scripture in order to construct his argument. Consider page 122, in which Drosnin quotes Isaiah 29:11 & 18. Drosnin's point is that these verses refer to the mysterious Bible Code. To confirm this, he states that hidden in this part of Isaiah are the phrases "they will be computerised" and "the secrets, the magical words of the book". This contradicts the more traditional (and dare I say correct) interpretation of this chapter which concerns Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, and is a type of the end-time siege of Jerusalem. Incidentally, the only apocalyptic sealed book I can think of is that which is opened by the glorified Jesus in Revelation 6 — it is not opened by a computer!!

But there is a more sinister side to all this. People have been trying to use the Bible to tell the future by such methods for generations. Rather than pay attention to the actual text, and its plain meaning, people are more attracted to the hidden — the occult. Divination by any means is evil — be it with sticks, omens or astrology, the practise of such things is forbidden in scripture. Thus to use the text of scripture for such purposes is the most extreme irony. The world would rather ignore the message of the Bible and ponder these so-called hidden codes. The believer should shun such a profane use of scripture, and follow the what the Bible actually states.

Editor, Siam Bhayro

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Just an idea — A way to help:
Dear Philip,

We really enjoyed your ministry recently in Victory Fellowship Gosnells, and to receive your paper *Contending Earnestly for the Faith and the Vanguard* is a real bonus. We realise the tremendous cost it must be to send these papers out and felt as a fellowship we could

help contribute towards the expense. So Operation Postage Stamp was brought into being and every Sunday dear Sister Eileen collects from different ones \$1 each, and this is sent to the administrator each month. The burden could be lightened if everybody shared the cost in this way. So we would encourage others, who benefit from the excellent reading material, to promote similar ideas. Yours in the promotion of God's Truth,

Joan J. Phillips
Perth, Australia

★ ★ ★

Lots of similar inquiries from everywhere:

I am looking for a bible-based, Christ preaching church in the ... area. Are there any that you know of that I could visit? I would really appreciate your help (if possible) on this as it is difficult to find a good church.

Yours etc, A.U.
Bay of Plenty, NZ

Editorial Comment: Most complain that they can't find any good preaching or teaching around the churches any more.

Amos 8:11: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."

★ ★ ★

Dear CWM
Thank you for continuing to send us your literature, which is like a breath of fresh air. We have been in a mobile home for three years, moving from job to job ... <and> have been blessed by the Lord as we trusted in Him for our direction, wisdom, guidance and fellowship. It is so wonderful to see how many believers He has brought us into contact with. We have not been part of a fellowship for awhile and can see from your literature that it was timely that we stood aside . . . Very timely, Praise the Lord, otherwise we could have been swept along

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with the multitude. Enclosed is a small donation to "keep on, keeping on" amidst adversity. May the Lord "bless you and keep you" in your ministry for Him. Thanking you.

BM
Waikato, NZ

★ ★ ★

I have just received my first copies of your magazines, Vanguard issue 6 and CTF 5.1, as well as the "Reproach of the Solemn Assembly" by David Wilkerson. Thank you very much! This is well needed information for the church today. I am a young minister in a ... Pentecostal church and I have really appreciated your material, as it has helped me to answer many questions that I am facing — sometimes daily, with all that has been occurring throughout NZ and the world. I am writing also to inquire about past copies of both publications. I would be very grateful for any that you could send to me. I praise God for the Truth, as it will set us free. May He bless you with peace and protection as you minister His Truth, as sheep among wolves. Kind regards,

CM
North Island, NZ

★ ★ ★

Dear friends
Please find attached cheque for ... to help with the cost of your very important ministry. I love the truth of 'The Word' and see the light of faith growing dimmer as this age progresses, consequently your magazine, which I look forward to receiving is important to keep a balanced view of the world as it is today. Keep up the good work.

JW
Hawkes Bay, NZ

★ ★ ★

Ever heard of this place before? Style gives it away!

Greetings in the Glorious and Majestic Name of our Lord Jesus! I have been told by one of my friends that you are a very good teacher of the Word. Praise God for your ministry. With this letter, I wish to request you to enroll my name in your mailing list so that I may be able to receive your teaching material. I believe this would be of great help to me in my pastoral ministry in guiding many believers to live by the Word of God. Thanking you and expecting to receive your teaching material. May the Almighty God bless you and your ministry. Yours in the Service of His Majesty.

JM, pastor
Vashi, Navi Mumbai

Dear Mr Powell
Please note that I have a change of address. I would love to continue receiving the "Vanguard" ... I must say that some of the articles are quite sobering and it is quite distressing to read what so-called Christian leaders are saying. I find it hard to reconcile some of the things quoted by Roberts Liardon in your latest report, with a Biblical viewpoint of God and our relationship with Jesus. Surely the closer we get to Him doesn't mean less respect, honour, reverence and fear. It is a frightening thing. While some things may be unpalatable to read at times (in your articles), maybe we need to be shocked into taking a good look at what the Scriptures really say, and what our attitudes should be. I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and I believe that he is holy and so should we be in all our ways. May the Lord bless and continue to use you.

JF
NSW, Australia

★ ★ ★

Dear Philip Powell
I thank you for your strong stand for the faith and for not being afraid to stand up and be counted. I receive Vanguard and CETF and they are a rich blessing to me as good strong Bible teaching is very lacking where I am. What I am also writing to you about is to encourage you and your publications to continue to name "names" that are false teachers. It is easy to be too sensitive (or is it "political correctness"?) to name these people lest you sound judgmental, but I firmly believe we are to do this to warn others. I confess, I have been soft in this respect at times and it helps no one. I cannot think the apostles would pussy foot around if they came across these false teachers — and they didn't! As for our Lord Jesus, well we know that He did not suffer those who made a mockery of God or those who led others astray. I know you do what you do out of love for our Lord and there is no higher calling. May God bless you in your very important ministry.

AT
VIC, Australia

★ ★ ★

I've just received the tape **Reproach of the Solemn Assembly**. I wholeheartedly agree with David Wilkerson. It grieves my heart too. I go to the AoG in (reluctantly). We've been through a rough patch.

There are a few leaders who believe and embrace the gold teeth phenomenon. They watched this video of this lady healed of cancer who then got covered in gold dust. I don't even want to see the video. Our church has "tried" to bring in revival along the patterns of Pensacola. Hasn't worked. I knew about the leaders you mentioned in your letter <sent out with the DW audio tape> to be false, but why Rick Joyner? Can you point out to me what's wrong with Rick Joyner or what's wrong with his books and the visions he received? I'm open to correction. Can you give me some names of Christians or churches in ... for support?

MH
New Zealand

Editorial Comment: We try to answer all genuine inquiries as completely as possible. Sometimes considerable research is required to provide an in-depth response. Unfortunately we don't have the volunteers and can't afford paid staff to carry this out. As the Lord provides we hope to do better at this in future. In the meantime the best we can do is to direct our readers to our web site www.christian-witness.org where you will find many helpful links to answer your questions. In some cases we can provide back numbers of CETF or Vanguard, but these too are now in short supply. God willing and finance permitting we plan to publish a book on Neil Richardson's excellent UNMASKED articles that have appeared in the various issues of Vanguard. Please pray about this and other similar ventures of this nature.

★ ★ ★

I am a New Zealander currently living in London on a 2 year working visa. My mother receives your Vanguard newsletter and has sent me an article from the June 1999 issue. The article is called Unmasked ... Colin Dye, and also discusses Roberts Liardon. First of all I want to thank you for this article for it has confirmed to me what I suspected. I recently watched a video of Roberts Liardon preaching and had to stop it half way through — I could not believe his arrogance or lack of humility and it really bothered me. I have also attended Kensington Temple (only once), which Colin Dye is Pastor of. A friend told me that he believes he is to lead London into revival, and this

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immediately made me "suspicious". Once again, you have confirmed my reservations about the man and church. He is very well known among Christians here in London, but unfortunately, looking around me there are no signs of revival. In fact, I have often just "people-watched" and have been overwhelmed by so many people heading toward an eternal hell. People these days, it seems, simply do not want to hear about God anymore!

JM
London, UK

★ ★ ★

Over the last few weeks my daughter and several friends have been attending meetings at I have been told that there are many "signs and wonders" occurring, including sights of angels, gold fillings and gold dust. Bit by bit I have been able to help my daughter understand that these supposed miracles are deceptions, which are leading many Christians away from the written Word of God, but I am lacking in literature and testimonies to help rescue my other friends, it was good news to see that there is a tape available. One of those who attended spent two days wobbling around as if she was drunk, and quoted Jer 23:9 to justify this peculiar behaviour. I hate it when Christians (of all people) twist and distort Scriptures to back up their claims — that is more the domain of cults. God bless

RG
South Island, NZ

★ ★ ★

I have a serious concern, it is this. How can God bless worship in churches that largely use music that comes out of places that teach serious error? I wont go into all the details but mention songs that come out of Pensacola, Hillsong (Hill's Christian Life Centre), Vineyard. People differ in forms of service and expression but when the occult filters into churches, how can God bless any (musical) expression in that church? Can you comment?

CG
WA, Australia

Editorial Comment: We agree! It's too simplistic to dismiss this issue as being a matter of "style" and "personal preference". There is an underlying problem that primarily relates to the song writers and performers themselves. For example Geoff Bullock has stated that he probably was not even a Christian when

he wrote many of the early songs which gave birth to "Hillsong". Since his divorce and re-marriage he is embarked on a new spiritual walk. But if he got it wrong the first time what guarantee have we that it's right now? True, we should not and do not judge anyone in respect of salvation but we can accept Biblical guidelines and the Bible tells us not to give place to a novice i.e. one newly come to the faith. If Geoff Bullock wasn't saved when he wrote those early songs then, in biblical terms, he's a novice now and should be learning not teaching others. Sadly so many pastors and other Church leaders are so bereft of spiritual discernment and Bible knowledge that they end up aiding and abetting this music-driven down-ward spiral in the Church.

Does God have a sense of humour?

The next three letters were from the same place at around the same time.

★ ★ ★

To the distributors of "VANGUARD" and "Contending EARNESTLY for THE Faith" — Blenheim. Dear Sirs, My niece ... often reads me extracts from the two publications, as above. I have found them to be very enlightening, and, although I am 83 — a born again Christian for 65 years — one is never too old to learn. Is it possible for me to receive these publications? Thanking you in anticipation. Sincerely Yours in Christ,

JB
Gisborne, NZ

★ ★ ★

Your magazine is so negative and doesn't build up the Body of Christ, only causes division and pulls down. I no longer want to be associated with your organisation. Please take me off your mailing list.

PA
Gisborne, NZ

★ ★ ★

Greetings to all. How my daughter and I enjoyed Philip's ministry. Indeed a breath from Heaven. I am so grateful for the Lord for the teachers and watchmen He has given to the Church in these last days. May He give us all a single eye looking only to Him. Shalom.

JR
Gisborne, NZ

Dear CWM

I just want to say thank you for my papers I get. I've been a Christian since the Billy Graham Crusade in 1959. I love the Lord more every year, but lately have been a bit worried by some of the things going on today. I prayed the Lord would help me on the true path, and not to be taken in by any false doctrine, so I am so very grateful for all your teaching. I was almost taken in by Benny Hinn. So keep up the good work. God bless you.

MB
Wanganui, NZ

★ ★ ★

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you for sending me so regularly CETF and to compliment you on the many fine articles within its pages; articles that frequently have some very good academic as well as spiritual content. It is also invaluable for me as continually it provides some sharp relief against which error and truth can be discerned, and it enables me to be a better "Berean".

There is one article that has occurred in your most recent publication referring to Celtic Christianity. I have personally little knowledge of that as an issue within itself. However, your ability to pull apart almost everything Roger Ellis has said raises an issue which for me is pertinent to the kind of work I find myself involved in with youngsters.

The word culture emerges, live and kicking. In witnessing and evangelising, just how much does one concede to prevailing cultural norms and trends? I never seem to get this right. Also, I find that as generation succeeds generation, this changes and what is relevant to one generation becomes old hat to the next. I am not always willing to make the Gospel "relevant" lest such "preaching" or witnessing loses its power.

However, there is a point where Paul states that he learns how to talk to anyone, implying, I think, that is to engage people where they are in their thinking. Catching youngsters' attention is an all-important skill, and how to do that with what equipment one uses is a constantly live issue.

Compromise is the danger here, and the number one pitfall. Whereas I do not look for a "catch all" answer, I would be glad of some observations, and maybe more discussion at some point.

Mike Lampard
Liverpool, UK

Communication, culture and compromise:

A response to Mike Lampard's letter to CETF (5.5.99) by Neil Richardson

FIRSTLY, on behalf of CETF and Vanguard, I'd like to thank Mike warmly for his kind encouragement. He is one among so many of you, our readers, who keep us keeping on in our written work in His service. Without your gifts and edifying words, we would not be able to continue.

Secondly, Mike alludes to the academic aspect of our articles. This is a tricky balance to get right: the excellent Christian journal *The Briefing* (<http://www.gospelnet.com.au/mat-media/>) was asked by one reader recently to "print more digestible articles for the ordinary person". My own articles can perhaps at times be a little lengthy or laden with references and footnotes which may deter the average reader. Often this is to pre-empt cries of 'Foul' and 'Unfair!' and 'Unfounded criticism!' as we seek to show that we are earnest enough to be thorough and diligent, covering all angles.

We would challenge all Christians to use what intellect God has given them (often greater than we think when His Spirit animates our thinking), persevering with these sometimes weighty matters, that we become **"transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Romans 12:2). So it is of joy to us that some may find academic rigour to be of merit in this age of sound bite and rhetorical blandishment. **"Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD"** (Isaiah 1:18).

Thirdly, Mike kindly applauds our efforts in discernment. We are, indeed, like so many other more gifted brothers and sisters in Christ, keen that God should use us to help others to see the difference between true and false spirituality, and (more subtly) true and false Christianity. You will find that most who call themselves Christians are happy to derogate Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Scientists, for example, thinking that this is their discernment job done (see Nicky Gumbel articles Vanguard Jan 1998 issue).

As Alan Morrison memorably put it in the title of his book, there is a "Trojan Horse in the Temple". Apostasy, as in the days of Ezekiel, is occurring **"at the door of the temple of the Lord"** (Ezekiel

8:16). People are swearing by the LORD even as they swear allegiance to Malcham (Zephaniah 1:5). Many have forgotten, if I can put it reverently, what Jesus looks like. His name is upon their lips (often sung in mantra-like repetition), but knowledge and love of His true character and life as revealed in Scripture is far from them.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shall not be a priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will forget your children" (Hosea 4:6).

Why should we go chasing after the false gods of maniacal laughter, animal noises, electric shocks, gold teeth and health and wealth prosperity? It is because we have forgotten our sufficiency in Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9). As Peter Jensen so aptly puts it, "Our whole personal history as believers, and the whole sweep of God's work in saving the world, can be simply summed up as 'Christ' ... You cannot have more than Christ; to attempt to have more is to endanger what you already have" (The Briefing #223).

So then we must, it is our spiritual duty to warn our family in Christ of those pernicious things that will endanger that Pearl of greatest price, our Lord Jesus Christ, our only and best possession. For this we are happy to risk the charge of negativism: to avoid being negative about antichrists (those who oppose or seek to replace Christ) in the church, is to join with them (1 John 2:18-20). May God give us grace.

Fourthly, money. We thank you so much for your kind donations, and hope by God's grace and will to continue providing both magazines free.

Fifthly, culture and communicating the gospel, especially to youth. Mike's dilemma is a very real and common one, I'd suggest. Anybody who has tried to work with young people will have found that 'speaking their language' and 'getting into their groove' will soon become issues. I've worked co-leading youth and student groups almost continually from the ages of 14 to 22. I'm now 23 and teach at a secondary school (ages 11-18). And I've always been encouraged by fellow workers that we should be aiming to 'meet them at their level'. But something has often perturbed me here: I have been and am still a 'young person' and very often the people who tell me these things could less accurately be described as such!! Some men and women often in their forties and above seem to get into this pattern of thinking:

1. My youth work is not thriving: it's stagnant and shrinking. I can't seem to

motivate and encourage the young people in my group.

2. Therefore, there must be something wrong with the way I am delivering the Christian message (in word and action).

3. Therefore, I must find out what styles and approaches they use in life, seek to emulate them so as to 'speak their language'.

4. Then I will win more for Jesus, because they will finally understand what I'm saying, or they will "dig what I'm on about".

But there are some tenuous assumptions here. One is that the main problem is that young people don't understand the language and style of older people. I radically disagree. This may be a problem, but it is not scriptural to say that the reason why people don't believe is because they don't understand. The main reason why people don't believe is because they don't want to! We are all at the same level here, young and old. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

As Francis Schaeffer pointed out, man's main problem is not one of communication, it's one of morality. It's not that we don't understand, it's that we don't want to. Of course young people (and older people for that matter) will say that they don't understand, that their leaders are stuffy, boring, not dynamic, etc. etc. This indeed may be true, and we obviously need to be careful to be infectious excited by the truth God has revealed to us and in us. But it is a pretext, an excuse for non-belief. If we become the most exciting, down-to-earth, up-to-date youth leaders in the world, will we experience revival? No. We may fill our youth clubs, but this is not the same as filling the kingdom of heaven.

This communication problem vs. moral problem antithesis I think is Roger Ellis' main problem (and similarly the rest of the New Church movement). Their post-millennial eschatology leads them to expect global revival and Christianisation of the world before the return of Christ—that the Bride will make herself ready. The reality is the world is going deeper and deeper into darkness and gearing itself up for the "Strong Delusion" of 2 Thessalonians 2. **"The love of many shall grow cold"** (Matthew 24:12). **"False prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many"** (Matt. 24:11). **"In the latter times some shall depart from the faith"** (1 Tim. 4:1). **"Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"** (2 Tim. 3:13). By God's grace, many individuals of every tribe and tongue are being saved. But the teaching of Scripture is not of an end-times revival, but

of apostasy.

So the New Church is stuck. They want revival: they see (if they are prepared to look) apostasy. So, in order to get large numbers into the kingdom of God, they have to "redefine Christianity" (as Rick Joyner would put it). They find it much easier to convert people to "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6) of sound and lights which doesn't involve repentance, death to self and total submission to Christ's Lordship (all of these concepts are utterly absent from Alpha News, the Alpha Course propaganda paper).

Anybody can fill a hall or even stadium if you have the right combination of music, lighting, film, props and set. This does not stop being true of Christian meetings. But as soon as you tell people honestly of God's character, of His perfection, of our sin and depravity, of our total need for salvation and helplessness in achieving it, of the offence of the Cross... all of the glitter fades away. Its effectiveness is nullified. No amount of multimedia will make people glad to hear that they are sinners in the hands of an angry God. In the end, many have concluded that as well as changing the medium (so as to get them in the door) we have to change the message (so as to keep them there). One American church leader says that the most stupid thing we can do in evangelism is to call people to repent of their sins. I guess that makes John the Baptist (Matt.3:2), Jesus (Matthew 4:17) and Peter (Acts 2:38) pretty stupid, in this man's eyes. In what sense is he a Christian?

Mike is quite right. Compromise is a major danger here. But it is also true that, as he says, catching youngsters' attention is an all important skill. I can honestly say that over half my waking hours are devoted to developing this frustratingly elusive skill: teaching children is a lifestyle, not a job! In no way am I seeking here to denigrate the use of means. I believe in the use of energetic music. I think visual aids are sometimes appropriate in teaching and preaching. I can never bring myself to be outraged as many are at the use of drama in church or Sunday school. Games are a vital part of Sunday School and youth club. All of these things can be helpful, they can be part of the "all means" (1 Cor 9:22) that Paul speaks of. But Paul also says in the same epistle that he would "not know any thing among you, save Jesus, and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). And it is **"the gospel"** that is **"the power of God for salvation to every one that believes"** (Romans 1:16).

I fear it is because we do not trust the strength of the gospel: we believe it is too weak to gain and keep the attention

of young people whose concentration spans have been stunted and maimed by TV-culture and whose sense of fidelity and commitment has been warped and mutilated by the example set by their parents' generation.

We also fear it is too offensive: so instead of presenting it to them, with reality, with fervour, plainly and without embellishment or diminution, we doctor the message. We delete the bits about hell, about submission, about how we stand condemned naturally, that we must be born again, and receive the life of Christ, and be prepared to lose our own.

Also, we do not respect the Holy Spirit's power: it's all become human technique. Of course, the message of Christianity without the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is repugnant to the unregenerate hearer. So much of our work is to pray for the Spirit's stirring up of hearers. Our work is utterly useless without Him. Instead of turning to God in prayer, that He might convict the hearers when we preach the word, we turn to the message itself and change it, making it more palatable. Instead of letting the Spirit give us contagious vitality and enthusiasm so that people cannot help but see the reality of Jesus in us, we tinker around with the medium, equating electricity, sound, light and movement with real life.

SO SOME CONCLUSIONS:

Whether you are older or younger, don't assume that it's because you wear unfashionable clothing/don't have enough multimedia equipment/don't listen to the Top 40/haven't seen Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace/etc. that young people won't hear the message of Jesus. They're just like any human: rebels, dead in trespasses and sins, in need of the Spirit's illumination.

Whether you are older or younger, don't cling to traditional ways for the sake of them, either. Don't avoid means and methods such as sketches for fear of diluting the message: just use them as signposts to the gospel, rather than distractions from it.

Whether you are older or younger, believe in the Gospel of Christ. Don't add or subtract. It's enough. It's perfect. It's beautiful. It is unchanging and always relevant because it deals with our main human problem (the moral one: we are sinners). It's powerful and able to change the heart of man, by means of the application of the Holy Spirit.

Whether you are older or younger, pray and read the Bible. The essential reasons why any Christian's testimony lacks power are that he has failed to bring his hearers to God before addressing them and to ask for power in doing so, and that he has failed to **"let the word of**

Christ dwell in him richly in all wisdom" and rendered himself unable to **"teach and admonish others...with grace in his heart to the Lord"** (Colossians 3:16). (My paraphrase.)

God bless you, Mike, and all our brothers and sisters who work with the young. May He use you all to lead many of them to Christ.

"Don't stop the little children, and don't forbid them to come to me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

"Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained strength" (Psalm 8:2).

"If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19,20).

"Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

by Neil Richardson

PANDEMONIUM is a word that has come into vogue among the **Revival Now** gang, who obviously don't understand its meaning or significance. Some time ago Rodney Howard-Browne said something to the effect — **"God loves pandemonium"**. Well maybe his 'god' does, but not the God of the bible.

JOY, the official British AoG magazine (July 99, pg 34), uses the word as part of an article heading about the late Smith Wigglesworth, whom they quote prolifically without the slightest hint of any authentic documentation.

When legends such as Wigglesworth are quoted I'm always keen to know the source, which every reader has a right to expect. I doubt if he said or did half the things which are attributed to him. Frankly, contrary to what JOY published, there's no such thing as **'Holy Pandemonium'**. It's a contradiction in terms.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary **pandemonium** is **"The abode of all the demons; a place represented by Milton as the capital of Hell, containing the council-chamber of the Evil Spirits; in common use = hell or the infernal regions."** I am quite sure that no Pentecostal pioneer such as Smith Wigglesworth would have knowingly used that word to describe anything holy. When a subsequent generation of self-declared leaders attribute such defamatory notions to their fathers in the faith it's high time their orthodox contemporaries either deposed them or deserted them. We call for such action.

Here's John Milton's famous quote from **Paradise Lost** (bk XI. 424) — **"Pandemonium, city and proud seat of Lucifer."**

May God deliver us from all PANDEMONIUM.

G R E A T E X P E C T A T I O N S F A L L F L A T

Rodney Howard-Browne's

"Good News New York"

What was touted to be "the largest soul-winning crusade of the millennium"¹ turned out to be the biggest embarrassment and reality check in the tainted career of the ambitious South African "evangelist" Rodney Howard-Browne, 38.

As he and his volunteers from around the world gathered together in the Big Apple for a six week crusade at Madison Square Garden starting on July 7th, they found themselves alone with each other as Manhattan's unsaved souls carried on as usual on the congested streets outside.

Howard-Browne claims that he got his vision for "Good News New York" during a divine dream he had back in February, 1998. In this dream he was visited by Billy Graham who spoke to him about his 1957 four-month crusade that he held at Madison Square Garden where 55,000 people responded to altar calls. Howard-Browne said that when he awoke his pillow was wet with tears and he knew he had to "go to New York and launch one of the biggest soul-winning crusades since the 50s."²

From there the vision began to grow in the mind of the "Joel's Bar bartender."³ "We're believing for 150,000 souls to come to Christ,"⁴ Howard-Browne boasted to the hosts of Dominion Sky Angel's satellite network. And that esti-

mate was confirmed and multiplied by South African evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, who told Howard-Browne, "I believe that the harvest will be three times that amount."⁵ (Bonnke is on GNNY's roster as a guest speaker.)

On the first Friday night of the crusade (which ran Wednesday through Saturday for six consecutive weeks) around 2,000 people trickled into the 20,000 seat arena. A crusade representative told us, "the low turn-out is disappointing, but I expect the numbers to increase in a couple of weeks when things heat up."

As the worship music began in a volume that could only be described as deafening, virtually all those attending immediately sprang to their feet, hands lifted, and swayed to the beat, waving their hands in the air. The unchurched in the crowd (those who were not pre-programmed to lift "holy hands") who remained seated could be counted on one hand.

The evening's M.C. was ex-700 Club host, Ben Kinchelov, who warmed up the crowd as things got underway. He introduced all the singers and speakers, such as basketball Christian celebrity, Meadowlark Lemon, who gave a short testimony of how God got him out of his poverty stricken existence and demonstrated some impressive basketball moves for a man in his golden years.

No Rodney Howard-Browne crusade would be complete without a strong-arm offering taken. That job was given to Pastor Rick Shelton of St Louis who pastors a 5,000 member church. His text was taken from Luke chapter 5, when Jesus told the fishermen (Peter, James



& John) to launch their boats and let down their nets which could barely hold the fish that were caught. Shelton exhorted the crowd, "All things hinge upon the law of sowing and reaping. We need your boat! When you put your boat in the ministry, Jesus steps in the boat. Where's your boat? It's in your purse or pocket! Get it out! Rodney's got to have your boat, so Rodney can push back from the land. He assured the people that if they did so their boats would then be filled to overflowing.

When Rodney Howard-Browne finally took centre stage, he began with the cry, "Let's get ready to rumble!" He let everyone know that his credentials to do what he was doing came from Jesus himself who told him when he was only 13 years old, "I've done all I'm going to do for these people. I died on the cross for them. You must tell them. I said, "I will tell them". The destiny of the people, Howard-Browne was shown as a child, falling over the chasm in flames was now on his shoulders.

The rest of his message was delivered with a deadpan face and in a monotone voice. He preached on heaven and hell

¹ From "The GNNY Vision" news release from the Good News New York web-page of Rodney Howard-Browne (http://www.gnny.com/about_gnny.html)

² 7/5/99 Interview with hosts of Sky Angel broadcast. (Sky Angel's satellite network is televising the crusade every Friday night live).

³ Rodney Howard-Browne is well known as the "Holy Ghost bartender" by his own claims at holy laughter meetings he has held around the world. See clips of RHB's "Joel's Bar" statements on the Christian Sentinel's documentation video, "The Animalisation of Christianity".

⁴ 7/5/99 Sky Angle broadcast.

⁵ *ibid.* Howard-Browne quoting Bonnke.

and quoted more scripture verses than he ever did in any of his holy laughter revivals. After all, if it worked for Billy Graham, it might work for him. Unfortunately, Howard-Browne lacks the charisma and magnetism of a youthful Billy Graham and without the draw of lying signs and wonders, his words just fell flat. When the time came for the altar call, he sized up his crowd and made it a call for rededication instead of salvation. "Come down here! Get out of your seat! I'm talking to those who already have given their life to Christ," he shouted.

The news releases that were published on the Good News New York website gave a very positive spin on the events. Howard-Browne's public relations people must have adopted the Word/Faith motto of "calling those things which are not as though they are". They reported that 7,000 people were brought to Christ before the event even began by teams of street witnesses sponsored by area churches. GNNY boasted that they mobilised over 5,000 volunteers from 2,100 churches around the world⁶, including "Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Full Gospel and Apostolic Faith Mission"⁷. This number contradicted the number reported on the GNNY website prior to the event as "25,000 volunteers"⁸.

Another optimistic article of the opening week's activities was reported on the internet by *Religion Today*, that quoted an "eye witness report that "several thousand people attended the first Good News New York rally July 7 despite a power failure in Newark, NJ, that prevented trains from moving through Penn Station. More than 300 people made decisions to become a Christian." This is a far cry from the estimate of 2,000 people at opening night as told to us by a conference official two days later. And the power failure couldn't account for the same number in attendance on the next Friday night when we attended.

The best known charismatic church in all of Manhattan, Time Square Church, pastored by author David Wilkerson, was not on the list of sponsoring churches. Wilkerson has been critical of the holy laughter movement and keeps himself separated from those who promote the new spiritual drunkenness craze.

During Rodney Howard-Browne's interview on Sky Angel, he might have had Time Square Church in mind when he said, "There are churches in New York City that really don't want to work with us. But it's provoked them to where they're on the streets now winning souls ... Ultimately it's going to have an impact because people are not going to be able to just sit there and criticise whatever and say I don't want to get involved in this crusade. It's motivated them to get out of their church and get souls saved ... so it's going to have a ripple effect around the city."⁹

Rodney Howard-Browne told the Thursday night audience. "There are Christians in this city who think I'm nuts! God told me to build an ark. It's not my job to bring the flood. He (God) said there was a storm coming, so it's coming."¹⁰ Perhaps some of his confidence that God has raised him up to save the world, starting in New York, stems from various prophecies given by people involved in the current "River Outpouring" over the past decade who are waiting for the final harvest before Christ's return. Known as the "latter rain," many enthusiasts have seen the year 2000 as a target time for its fulfilment.

Rodney Howard-Browne was a guest on TBN's Praise the Lord program on August 12, 1993, with fellow guest Dwight Thompson and host, Paul Crouch. On that show Crouch called the new signs and wonders in Howard-Browne's ministry the beginning of the latter rain. And Thompson warned the church, "If you don't flow in the move of the Holy Ghost, you're going to be left out!"¹¹ On that same show, Howard-Browne mocked his critics saying, "You might think this is put on, but this is not put on. You go get a crowd and see how you do!"

It was on that same show that Dwight Thompson related a vision he supposedly received from the Lord about a time coming when stadiums will be filled to overflowing with converts to Christianity.

TBN aired another confirmation of this last days' stadium outpouring on March 2, 1994 with guest, latter rain "prophet," Paul Cain. "I was dreaming that I was on my way to a place where the last day ministry had been instituted and was now in progress," he recalled. "In this particular vision there was the largest stadium that I have ever seen before and

it was jammed with people who were witnessing all of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit ... Over the loud speaking system they were saying, 'we have a resurrection from the dead over here' ... And it seemed like all the network anchor people were there ... reporting "All of the stadiums across the land are filled with people and there are no sporting events to announce ... the whole world has gone mad over Jesus."¹²

Then again on February 3, 1995, TBN aired another certified false prophet, John Hinkle¹², pastor of Christ Church in Los Angeles, confirming the last days' vision of the stadium crowds. "All at once, the Holy Spirit had picked me up and took me into this football stadium," Hinkle asserted. "Just as I got into the stadium, I heard the announcer say 80,000 people are here today ... And then instantly the Holy Spirit came as a shaft of light and was beside every person in the stadium ... And I saw the streets outside, everybody was on their faces, stock exchange, everybody was just — and in government places they were on their faces, just crying out to God." Paul Crouch responded, "This is Joel, chapter 3, in the latter days I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh!"

This "prophecy" even identified the big outpouring as beginning in New York, seeing the comment about the "stock exchange." However, Howard-Browne's intentions are to follow NY with crusades in Los Angeles and Chicago.¹³

Many Christians who do not support Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry can't understand why we in discernment ministries can't have the Apostle Paul's attitude in his letter to the Philippians when he said, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice." (Philippians 1:18)

The problem is that Howard-Browne is using the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a bait and switch tactic to gather more people into the "River Awakening," in which he sits as head. In the Sky Angel interview he showed his hand. The host said to him, "I think you have coined a phrase not normally used in church pulpits, 'Have a drink.'" "The drink that I speak of," Howard-Browne responded, "is not a natural drink, but a spiritual drink." He went on to explain that he would not be bringing holy laughter to Madison Square Gar-

⁶ Good News New York press release handed out to media during opening week.

⁷ Biographical Profile of Rodney Howard-Browne, published in press kit at GNNY.

⁸ "The GNNY Vision" undated article available at www.gnny.com

⁹ 7/5/99 Sky Angel broadcast.

¹⁰ "Crusade brings good news to NYC" article on www.gnny.com

¹¹ Praise the Lord, 8/12/93

¹² See the Christian Sentinel, XXXXX 19XX issue for the article, "it was only a cleansing," documenting Hinkle's false prophecy that God would rip out all the evil of the world on June 9, 1994.

¹³ Statement by RHB at Press Conference on 7/6/99.

den. "This crusade is not one of our revival meetings that we've been conducting in the churches for the last ten years. ... When we go to churches it's really to stir up the church for revival to come ... We're focused in on the lost of New York City ... It's not that we are changing what we do; this is just a different part of what we do."

At the Friday night crusade that we attended, Howard-Browne made a little joke about his change of character saying, "You could say I'm a closet evangelical." Time will tell whether or not he's able to make a true transition or if the gospel is merely a means to an end.

This article was originally published in the August/September 1999 issue of the Christian Sentinel magazine, PO Box 133, Walnutport, PA 18088, USA. <http://www.cultlink.com>

Jackie Alnor is the Assistant Editor of the Christian Sentinel, a periodical that follows the various trends blowing through the church in the last days. She and her husband, Bill Alnor, have been active as investigative reporters for over two decades, and were associated with the late Walter R. Martin, who Bill worked for as news editor. You can visit them at their website: <http://www.cultlink.com>

The largest soul winning crusade since 1957?

The final tally of those attending GNNY was reported by *Religion Today*:

"Crowds at the Garden, in the heart of Manhattan, were disappointing. Most rallies drew 2,000 to 4,000 people in the cavernous, 19,000-seat facility, with the largest gathering more than 9,000 and the smallest 2,000, Howard-Browne's organisation said."

—Religion Today, 8/13/99

It would seem that the reports of over-flowing crowds were highly exaggerated.

News and More Views

Undoubtedly the big News breaking thing in Christendom is the Gold Phenomenon. It's worldwide. First gold tooth fillings, sometimes replacing amalgam and at others appearing from nothing, then gold dust, then gold tooth-fillings with crosses. It's amazing stuff and the world is looking on and pouring scorn on Christianity, while not a few discerning Christians are leaving their churches in horror that leaders and members can be so stupid.

Where and how did it all start?

Thar's gold in them thar mouths!

According to British journalist Steve Adams the gold filling phenomenon happened in the 50s among America's beggars and 20 years later in Chile also among the poor under the ministry of Puerto Rican evangelist, Gigi Avila. Another 20 years on and it's claimed to be happening all over the world, but now it's no longer just the underprivileged. People from all walks of life are getting in on the act.

So when and how did the recent spate of "divine dentistry" commence?

Steve Adams writes: "Ironical?? perhaps, it can be traced to the world's gold capital, South Africa. It was there in late 1998 that Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship's (TACF) John Arnott witnessed

what he termed miracles. In early March 1999, a subsequent outbreak at Arnott's own church during an intercession conference saw 300 people coming forward over a series of evenings, claiming to have had some sort of dental miracle. On returning to their various countries, conference attendees reported that the phenomena had travelled with them. A TACF press release reported that, some are testifying that these miracles happened while watching conference sessions on video tape. "Suddenly the possible manifestation of the power of the Spirit was obeying no boundaries. Reports of occurrences came thick and fast from Australia, Mexico, the USA and Switzerland."¹

South Africa to Toronto! Haven't we seen that connection before? John Arnott, you might have guessed. I have an email written by Petra Drnovscek PA to John Arnott on 18 March 1999:

SUBJECT — PRESS RELEASE

"John Arnott has asked me to forward this press release to you for distribution. Even as I type this, people are sending in testimonies of how their fillings are turning into gold! God is good!"

Then from the gold guru himself, John Arnott: "Why would God fill people's teeth with gold? Perhaps because He loves them and delights in blessing His children. Perhaps it is a sign and a wonder to expose the scepticism still in so many of us. Perhaps His glory and presence are drawing very near."

Petra Drnovscek
"mailto:pdrnovscek@tafcf.org"

As Robert Liichow of Inner-City Christian Discernment Ministry (ICCDM) points out it's all perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. ICCDM's web site is well worth a visit — "<http://www.discernment.org>"

Bob's book *The Two Roots of Today's Revival?* is also worth reading and will hopefully be available soon from our offices in NZ and Australia.

It's the same old story of orchestration that occurred with TB and the same group of people behind it. In NZ it was Kerry Sharp of Palmerston North, New Zealand — "ksharp@manawatu.gen.nz" who was one who circularised John Arnott's press release and of course Tony Black of the Ken Gott "Revival Now" connection in UK and the Houstons "down-under" did his bit too,

¹ July edition of CHRISTIANITY (was called Alpha). Cover Article. ICCDM — PO Box 15639, Detroit, Michigan 48215, USA Fax +1 313 882-3987

² Contact your nearest CWM Office.

plus those of the Rodney Howard-Browne connection, such as Richard Riss et al. It's called auto-suggestion.

John Arnott is quoted as praying at his TACF, (remember the former Vineyard Church which became so wild that even the late John Wimber distanced himself and his organisation from them) "Lord grant us dentistry miracles like they have in South Africa" or some such request. Now you tell me that's not brain-washing and auto-suggestion? And then they'll tell you it's a sovereign move of God. Yes I'm sure — motivated by emails, web-sites and other means in our "global village" world!! Some people may be gullible. We're not all stupid.

But could there be something more sinister than mere "auto-suggestion" and what is the Biblical position on all these "tooth filling" claims?

If our understanding of Bible prophecy is correct — and the longer this "revival" goes on and the more bizarre it becomes the more I am convinced that it is correct — then the biggest contributing factor to the apostasy will be "lying signs and wonders" — c/f 2 Thess 2:9 with Matt 24:24.

Of course in a sense this has always been the case. The mystical miracles of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, have deceived millions throughout church history. But the sinister thing about this is that now these "mystical miracles" — gold in mouths and gold in the air (dust) and the hair (see below) — have entered the evangelical, pentecostal, charismatic section of christendom with devastating effect.

The "church" is hell bent on the road to Rome and many sincere church leaders can't or won't see it. That's the sinister aspect and of course it's linked to bible prophecy so we can do very little about it except take heed ourselves and warn others. It's hard to even pray about it for the divine die is cast.

The biblical position about "gold tooth filling" is really very simple. God will NOT do it — at least the God of the Bible won't! Psalm 18:30 states: "As for God, HIS way is perfect" i.e. "absolute", "the ultimate", "nothing beyond it". Men may fill teeth with gold — or more accurately put gold caps on teeth that are badly damaged — but God won't. God won't use inferior material and yes, gold is inferior to the ivory which God put in our mouths at birth. It's an absurd notion and completely contrary to the nature and character of the God of the Bible.

Just as God won't give a person a wooden leg or a glass eye, so He won't cap or fill a tooth with gold. It is idolatrous to suggest that He will or does. In the mere suggestion of such a thing we are creating a "god in our image", which

is the process that leads to paganism. I repeat — it is idolatrous and it's unreasonable to boot.

Reason is both a human and a divine faculty. God invites us to reason (Isaiah 1:18). Faith is not based on reason, but nor is it unreasonable. Faith is not believing something that you know is not true. That's credulity. It's not faith. Reason is part of the equation in this whole issue of "gold materialisations" and reason is a faculty given to us by God. We ignore it to our detriment and dishonour.

With this in mind I put my ear to the ground, kept my head on my shoulders and guess what? The following surfaced and ironically enough from the Revival Now camp itself. Didn't we tell you that God would cause them to reveal their folly?

The challenge of a metallurgist

Kevin Millican "kmillican@csi.com" has an honour's degree in engineering metallurgy from Salford University in Manchester. The course was 4 years full-time with two 6-month periods in industry in the second & third years. When he graduated in 1984 he began work at a testing laboratory in Great Yarmouth and was promoted to Test Laboratory manager conducting more than 100 failure/metallurgical investigations. He is also a chartered engineer.

Kevin has made his services available to the Christian church. He is willing to test people who claim that their amalgam fillings have turned to gold. Why? Kevin says, "Don't under-estimate this sign; if it can be verified, then it is more spectacular to the scientific community than a virgin birth, medical healing, or even the parting of the Red Sea".

When I challenged him Kevin responded:

"I said 'if it can be verified...'. My contention is that if this had really happened then it would be verifiable and that a dentist and metallurgist could work together to achieve this. If this were the case then the changing of one element into another would be beyond scientific explanation whereas a virgin birth or rapid movement of water would not be. If this is a real miracle then it should be shared with the whole world and put up for scientific scrutiny. If it isn't, then people are being deceived and it should be shown up as a mistake, hysteria, or fraud. Either way, I am making my skills available to try and find out."

In his original offer, circulated by INTERNATIONAL REVIVAL NETWORK — IRN NEWS DIGEST — Coordinator:

Tony Black "http://www.revivalnet.net" Email: "News@revivalnet.net" on 11 May, 1999 Mr Millican appears to take a position quite different from mine and in support of the phenomenon. He writes:

"This is not (necessarily) a word from God but an observation by a metallurgist. I've been reading about these gold fillings/crowns and wondered about its significance as I expect many other Christians have. The only explanation I have heard so far is a sign of blessing. I probably wouldn't have thought much more than this if it weren't for the fact that I have just heard of it happening to someone I know locally. This is in the process of verification so enough of this example for now."

The significance of this sign to the world is far more (sic) greater than a "blessing". If it can be verified that mercury amalgam fillings have changed to gold, then this is a sign that God has taken the gloves off with regard to the world of science and the world's preoccupation with it as the source of truth. To change one metal into another was for some time the scientific "holy grail". As science developed it became understood that this was virtually impossible (you need a nuclear reaction and it only works in the direction of a more expensive metal to a cheaper one); gold is an element and can't be changed into or from any other by chemical reaction.

Changing a filling is an excellent way of demonstrating God's sovereignty over the very fabric of the universe and the fundamental principles of science:-

- 1. That a change has occurred can be verified by a dentist. If a filling was drilled out, its shape would change. Dental x-rays before and after can be used to determine if this has happened.*

- 2. The material used for dental fillings is documented.*

- 3. That the fillings are really gold is verifiable by a dentist working with a metallurgist/chemist.*

- 4. Fillings are a good choice for a sign because sleight-of-hand or other fraud would be virtually impossible.*

Don't under-estimate this sign; if it can be verified, then it is more spectacular to the scientific community than a virgin birth, medical healing, or even the parting of the Red Sea".

Kevin Millican CEng BSc (eng.met.)
Mweldl Lowestoft, England.

Well there you have it! Kevin Millican metallurgist and chartered engineer, even if his theological reasoning, according to my view, is flawed, he has put his scientific prowess at our disposal. The bottom line is that when we last communicated (12/8/99) Kevin told me:

"To date I have seen no reliable evidence. I have made myself available to the christian community to evaluate these incidents properly but so far no one has taken me up on my offer to analyse some filling material. I have investigated three incidents of gold dust phenomena but I can attribute a 'rational scientific explanation' to all three so this cannot be considered any kind of proof."

At least the man is honest and reasonable, which is something that cannot be said for many of christendom's leaders who promote this silly nonsense. If Kevin or any expert like him comes up with real evidence we will publish it.

The sad thing about all of this is the poor reflection that is being made upon the "church" and its leaders. For example The Canadian Press of Wednesday May 12, 1999 "<http://www.nationalpost.com/network.asp?f=990512/2587127.html>" carried the following heading —

TV evangelists forced to recant claims of God's divine dentistry 'An honest mistake'

And reported as follows: (Full Report)

WINNIPEG — God works in mysterious ways, but two high-profile evangelical Christians in Western Canada have been forced to back down from claims that He gave them gold teeth. A chastened Willard Thiessen, host of a daily religion program on Winnipeg television, admitted yesterday he was wrong in telling his tele-flock that God had inexplicably planted a gold tooth in his mouth.

It turned out the gold tooth had been implanted by his brother Elmer, a dentist in British Columbia.

"I'm embarrassed to tears about this," said Mr Thiessen, president of Trinity Television. *"I thought I had a miracle."*

"There has, in fact, been a rash of gold-teeth claims by evangelical Christians of late," said Mr Thiessen.

"I told people to please check their dental records before they declare a miracle. Please check with your dentist," he said.

Mr Thiessen is not alone in his embarrassment. Dick Dewert, a religious broadcaster in Lethbridge, Alta., told a CJIL-TV audience during an on-air fundraising marathon in March that God had implanted a gold tooth in his mouth after a bout of intensive prayer. But Dr Jack Sherman, Mr Dewert's longtime dentist, said he had put it in about 10 years earlier. *"It was an honest mistake,"* Mr Dewert said at the time. *"I was sincere in what I said. When miracles appear to be happening, it's easy to get excited and, in my case, jump to conclusions."*

"Praying to God to repair teeth is just another way of asking God to reveal himself through healing," said John Arnott,

senior pastor for the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, a charismatic evangelical Christian group.

Mr Arnott said about 20 of his flock of 2,000 believe God polished their fillings or replaced them with gold after praying for such healing in March.

"You're sceptical at first. It takes us a while to learn that, really, God can do everything," he said. *"Verifying the claims has proven inconclusive, but that doesn't matter,"* he added.

"It's just the Father saying 'I love you, I know all about you.' That's precious to the person."

Mr Thiessen also maintains that God does work through dentistry. *"In the 1970s, my wife, Betty, had two large cavities in her back molars,"* he said. *"We were poor as church mice and couldn't afford to see a dentist. We were travelling and at a meeting, and, when it was done, they were filled."*

Meanwhile in Britain the Daily Mail of Tuesday 15 June, 1999 carried a full page report (page 11) about this new phenomenon that is sweeping Britain's charismatic churches. Other newspaper tabloids have reported it too. They actually poke fun at the Word of God in misquoting Psalm 81:10 ... *"open my mouth wide, and I will fill it"* and report — *"The result has been mouths filled with gleaming molars at church meetings throughout the country."*

Guess who the papers identify as being behind it all in UK? Gerald Coates of the Pioneer Church, who promoted the Diana Prophecy from which thousands of Christians began to attend his services and rallies throughout the UK; David Pytches, former vicar of St Andrews Church, Chorleywood, who was one of the first to import the Toronto phenomenon from Canada, to Holy Trinity Church, Brompton; and you've guessed it, the UK Press also makes reference to *John Arnott, who is the pastor of the former Vineyard Church at Toronto Airport.*

In New Zealand, WELLINGTON businessman Lawrie Cornish offered a reward of \$1000 to anyone who received a miraculous gold tooth or filling that was verified by dental records. Wellington's daily newspaper *The Dominion*, Thursday, July 29, 1999 reported, "Despite extensive inquiries and the help of other investigators, he had not been able to find anyone." The phenomenon hit the news "down-under" following a congress held in the Wellington Elim Church in June ('99) as a result of members of the congregation claiming dentistry miracles.

According to the Dominion Mr Cornish was asked by Elim Church officials to stay away, but he continued to attend

and said that the miracles were being faked in the name of the church, and that they were obviously fooling some of the faithful. We understand that no-one has yet claimed the reward of \$1000 for a verifiable dentistry miracle.

And NOW:

Thar's gold in that thar gal's hair !

Even more bizarre than the "gold dentistry" are the claims about gold dust. By all accounts this started with a woman from Brazil called Sylvania Machado, who had definite "spiritistic" and "occult" connections. According to Cult Awareness Ministries (CAM) Jan Groenveld "Jan.Groenveld@uq.net.au" You can see "pictures of God producing gold dust in church — or so they claim" on web site "<http://www.revivalglory.org/campstest.htm>" then Jan adds, "Look carefully at the pictures enlarged You can see how it is done."

CAM are quite correct when they claim "THE MOST DANGEROUS LIE IS THAT WHICH MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE TRUTH" — Cult Awareness Web Page: "<http://student.uq.edu.au/~s101663>" Personal Page: "<http://www.uq.net.au/~zzjgroen>"

As with the "gold tooth" phenomenon so with this extension to "gold dust" the thing has been orchestrated onto the world stage. During my recent tour of Australia I was told of an AoG pastor from Tasmania who had exported the idea from his own church near Hobart to Victoria on the Australian mainland. A similar thing has happened in New Zealand where, in a number of cities and towns, gullible Christians are claiming "gold dust". Usually it disappears as suddenly as it came and cannot be collected as it's only there in appearance and not in reality. As with the strange animal sounds associated with "Toronto" and "Pensacola" so with this latest "Revival Now" gimmick there are all sorts of weird and wonderful explanations such as:

"God is showing that He loves us." Well I thought He did that in sending His Son to die for us. Wasn't that sufficient?

Or "Gold is the wedding gift from Christ to His Bride. The church is going to be raptured soon and Christ is now giving her gold to make herself ready." Fantastic — isn't it! The Bible says the Bride's going to walk on gold in heaven. I would have thought that was enough. And anyway where did this idea about Christ giving gold to His Church come from? Not from the Bible that's certain.

I and all those associated with CWM reject the entire nonsense. It is not aid-

ing faith. It is undermining the faith of some and acting as a stumbling block to unbelievers. One of our associates recently wrote to me: Do you think it would be possible to get a sample of this stuff? Just a visible trace? Privately, I always like to test things out a bit; just for the sake of personal curiosity. I have connections who would like to pop this material through a mass-spec or GC machine — and also, to examine a trace under high power microscopy — forensic gear. If you know of a possible source through which to obtain a specimen, let me know. We'll pay lab costs. Be funny to identify the gold as "machine contrived" or "a product of human intervention". Provable evidence of fakery would make a nice headline in CWM remembering, that "forensic science derives from the knowledge of God given to man, so that man would know when he's being had."

Shane Hammond
"shane@powerup.com.au"

Well it looks like Shane's idea has been pre-empted, at least to a degree. *Charisma*, one of the most confused and deceived magazines in christendom has already blown the whistle and, AMAZINGLY, John Arnott has taken some notice, though his position remains very weak. Didn't we tell you that such would be the confusion among the ranks of those who have turned from the Truth that they would reveal their own folly?

So for this reason and to avoid reinventing the wheel we have decided to publish the following, which was distributed by email from *The Belfast Berean* 11/09/99:

—Original Message—

From: The Belfast Berean
belfastberean@belfastberean.freemove.co.uk
Date: Saturday, September 11, 1999, 7:16pm
Subject: Belfast Berean News Desk
—Charisma News article

Gold Dust Phenomenon Stirs Up Questions Among Charismatics

While gold dust keeps appearing in charismatic meetings in the United States and abroad, metal tests puzzle those who say the substance is falling from heaven.

By Andy Butcher

A Brazilian evangelist at the center of the "gold dust" phenomenon being reported at charismatic churches across the United States and Europe says she is unfazed by scientific reports suggesting that all that glitters is not what it seems.

Two independent tests on samples of the gold-coloured dust that falls from Silvania Machado's head during services have found the substance to be more like plastic glitter, with no gold content.

But Machado, who attributes the manifestation to her divine healing from cancer, is untroubled by the conclusions of the analyses carried out on behalf of *"Charisma"* magazine.

"To me, it doesn't matter what it is as long as it's from God," she said. "Some people focus on the signs instead of the fruit. I must continue to share with the world what God has done in my life and the life of my family."

Speaking through an interpreter, Machado tells packed churches how after more than 10 years of sickness, during which she desperately sought a cure through a spiritualist, she was finally healed after being prayed for by Christians. Now when she prays for others, gold-colored flecks start to rain from her head.

The curious occurrence is happening elsewhere. Revivalist Ruth Heflin—who first brought Machado to the United States after hearing about her ministry—regularly sees the same manifestation at her meetings. She believes the dust is a sign of God's glory.

"The Lord loves for us to show off the gold dust because of His relationship with us," said Heflin, whose ministry is based in Ashland, Va. "We couldn't do this ourselves. He is doing it because His coming is so near."

In May, John Arnott of the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF) cancelled a scheduled four-day appearance by Machado after sending a sample of the flecks that cascaded from her head on the first night for testing. A geochemist at the University of Toronto concluded the specks did not contain any gold or platinum but were some type of plastic film.

Machado and her team were "sweet as could be" when Arnott presented the findings, he told *"Charisma"*.

"I just threw up my hands and said, 'I don't know,'" Arnott said. "It is not up to me to judge them, but I couldn't reconcile the two, so I just said, 'We're not going to proceed with the meetings.'"

"Charisma" had two samples of Machado's gold dust analyzed by the U.S. Geological Survey in Washington, D.C. Both were deemed to be plastic film with no traces of gold, platinum or silver.

These days Machado avoids carrying a handbag to or stepping down from the platform at her meetings to avoid accusations that she is faking the phenomenon, reported *"The Richmond Times-Despatch"* recently. One of those attending a meeting at Heflin's Calvary Pente-

costal Tabernacle told the newspaper that chemical components of the dust were meaningless to her faith.

"The gold doesn't have to do with how man measures metal," said Debbie Kendrick. "It might not be anything we've ever seen before. It's more like manna from heaven."

Meanwhile, churches also are reporting incidents in which people's silver fillings are being miraculously renewed or even replaced by gold ones. A number of cases have been documented and verified at TACF, reinforcing Arnott's decision not to continue the Machado meetings. "I didn't want to have her here because we have had far too much of the real thing—gold teeth and gold dust—to have something suspect," he said.

But Heflin stands by Machado. It was God's presence, not the gold dust, that first convinced her Machado was genuine, she said. "I began to weep because of the wonderful sense of His presence," Heflin said of Machado's meetings. "Perhaps we should call it 'glory dust' instead of 'gold dust.'"

A full report on the gold dust and gold teeth phenomena will appear in the November 1999 issue of *"Charisma"*. The article contains an account—documented by dental records—of an Oklahoma woman who received seven gold crowns during a healing service in Tulsa six months ago.

Well that's the claim of *Charisma*. We'll see. Let's do our bit to keep them honest. Note how they slant things in the above report to allow John Arnott a "let-off". I suspect that things have become rather messy in Toronto already without inviting more criticism in having the Brazilian lady.

Another big thing that has come and gone in the "Revival Now" camp is Rodney Howard-Browne's Good News New York (GNNY) series of meetings in Madison Square Garden, Manhattan. Our report on page 11 by Jackie Alnor, an American journalist, shows that the event which RHB *"dreamed"* was going to change the face of New York, the USA and in fact the world, turned out to be a fizzer with an average nightly attendance of between 3,000 and 4,000 people, of whom, most must have been his trained workers — some 2,300.

The report (see page 11) speaks for itself.

Have you visited
our website yet?

www.christian-witness.org

MINISTRY TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

In June/July I undertook six weeks of ministry in Australia. This took me right across that vast continent and I must confess that I found it to be most exacting — getting older, I guess. In future I must schedule some off time and allow for travel. We are grateful to those who pray for us as we do these ministry tours of which there have been four during 1999.

1 Corinthians 16:9: *“For a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

Mostly I dealt with the theme “WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?” We plan to list these messages in the next CWM Catalogue, God Willing.

NZ — South Island: When we arrived in NZ from Australia in 1992, I did a mini tour of the South Island under the auspices of AoG. Since then I had not attempted another until my 3 weeks earlier this year, when I visited Nelson (2ce), Christchurch, Timaru (2ce), Roxburgh, Alexandra, Te Anau and Invercargill.

Distances are considerable and population is sparse, which has advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side the roads are never “crowded” as in some other countries and even, to some degree, in the North Island of NZ. On the down side towns and cities are far apart and attendance at meetings less, on average, than most other parts. At one remote place there were only six people present.

The tour was worthwhile. We built bridges and secured a number of additional names and addresses for our mailing list. Of the 1904 New Zealand addresses listed on our database 345 are from the South Island.

NZ — North Island: Between the South and North island tours I was invited to preach at an Easter Convention in Melbourne. I took the opportunity to do three weeks of meetings in Victoria, after which, with a short break in between, it was all go for the three weeks travel over what has become for me familiar territory in the North Island. I took meetings in Lower Hutt, Palmerston North, Wairoa, Napier, Hastings, Gisborne, Tauranga, Rotorua, Auckland, Taupo and Wanganui before returning to Blenheim. This was probably the most productive visit that I have made in as

much as such can be gauged. Generally meetings were reasonably well attended.

AUSTRALIA: In April I held meetings in Glen Waverley, Shepparton, Ballarat, Warrnambool, Lilydale and Melbourne, leaving the major part of Australia to the later visit in June/July of which the following is a high-light report:

PHILIP'S MINISTRY TOUR OF AUSTRALIA June 17-July 27, 1999

I had a worthwhile, though somewhat gruelling, ministry tour of Australia, starting in Sydney with a meeting the very night that I arrived. This was small in attendance but encouraging to the local folks, who are led by a brother who resigned from AoG over the “funny stuff” and are now supporting each other in their stand. The leader is very supportive of CWM and Moriel.

The next day I made my way to an Anglican Chaplain of a University, who has a very challenging ministry in the western suburbs. The night meeting was good with a number of university students listening and asking interesting questions. The chaplain is an excellent man and I think we forged a friendship which could augur well for the future. As most will know Sydney is a stronghold of Evangelical Anglicanism.

The main event in Sydney and one of the more significant for the entire tour was the weekend at the Baulkham Hills CMA (Christian and Missionary Alliance) Church. It's a strong and strategic church being situated close to Baulkham Hills AoG which “churns out” Hill Song etc.

I am quite sure that many of the current anomalies, heresies, perversions and plain seductions of Christianity stem from the music mania and the false preaching and teaching of churches such as CLC at Baulkham Hills, Sydney, Australia. Unfortunately Senior Pastor Brian Houston, who is a talented and very popular young man, has been influenced too much by the apparently successful preachers of the false Faith and Prosperity school of thought from America. Now that he is Superintendent of the largest Pentecostal denomination in Australasia, unless he very soon sees the error of his ways, the already widespread perversions and seductions will spread like cancer.

It saddens me a great deal that the movement of which my forebears were pioneers in the British expression of it, is now seen in the Australasian counterpart, to be leading the drift into apostasy.

In contrast the man who pastors the

Baulkham Hills CMA and who was himself an AoG pastor has seen through what's happening. It is rewarding to sense a genuine expression of the Christian gospel through this CMA church being so closely situated to the deceived AoG one.

In Sydney I hired a car and drove up the coast of NSW to Brisbane calling off each day to visit Presbyterian and Anglican Church contacts and minister to their leaders and/or congregations. It was an interesting “ice-breaking” exercise, meeting unique leaders who have much to offer.

One was a true academic who after hearing me suggested that may be I could have some in-put next time in their denominational bible college, something which would appeal to me a great deal. All of the Anglican and Presbyterian ministers that I met are true Bible believers.

Interestingly one told me that they no longer automatically recognise their counterparts from other countries. For example they consider those who use their denominational name in New Zealand to be in heresy and have recently taken a stand not to endorse ministers from New Zealand who carry the Presbyterian tag.

I participated in a conference in Brisbane organised by Pastor Kerry Angilley. This was not well attended but it was a start and may be something will be built on the foundation or maybe the Lord will use it to launch something quite different.

I held two public meetings in Brisbane. These were organised on an ad-hoc basis and at short notice and were better attended and more encouraging than those in South Queensland that had been projected further ahead. In all, I spoke some nine times in 10 days including travel in the NSW coast and Brisbane sector of the tour, which was followed by meetings at Cairns, Darwin, Geraldton, Perth, Tasmania and Victoria.

I arrived back in Blenheim rather tired after six weeks with some 40 plus preaching engagements. If I do it again I must schedule some rest time. One morning I felt right at the end of my tether and had a two-stage flight plus a meeting that night. I was in Darwin where it's always hot and mostly humid though not quite as bad as it can be at other times of the year. They know only “dry” and “wet” in so far as seasons are concerned — no summer, winter, spring, autumn etc. Fortunately it was dry when we were there.

My wife, Kathleen and our son Jonathan were leaving early — about 6am — to spend their final week with our second son, David and his family, at

Canberra. I planned to see them off at the Darwin airport but was too ill to make it. After a bit of a sleep in and a dose of vitamins which my son-in-law gave me on his mother-in-law's instructions plus some headache tablets, I managed to get the flight and as it turned out we had quite a good meeting at the Geraldton Baptist Church. That was just one incident which I tell to evoke a bit of sympathy.

In Darwin we were delighted to welcome some Aboriginal people who had come from Arnhem Land especially for the meetings. They attended all four nights and were a great encouragement to us all. They say some of their people have embraced the "nonsense" revival, but others see right through it. They invited me to preach in their territory as did another leader from Ayre in Northern Queensland. This is something that we need to pray earnestly about.

The tour took me all around Australia so I had different sorts of weather to endure. I found the weather and everything about Cairns under the expert organisation of Hughie and Colleen Seaborn very pleasant indeed. After Geraldton and Perth, where hospitality and accommodation were provided by our good friends John and Joan Phillips, I flew to Tasmania and into winter with a vengeance as far as temperature is concerned. It was perishing and I almost did. This was new territory for me and real pioneer stuff with small congregations at all the meetings, but I sensed we broke through and next time will be much better, God willing. We met good new friends.

The Perth folks came up with an idea to help us in financing the increasing mailing bill that we face world-wide. They call it OPERATION POSTAGE STAMP.

The idea is that folks set aside say a dollar a week and send the accumulated amount collected from the group at regular intervals to the nearest CWM Office. Thanks John and Joan for the idea. May be others will follow suit and it will become something really productive in the things of the Kingdom.

I finished up in country Victoria and Melbourne where I was able to spend some time with our eldest son, Stephen and where, apart from one new contact, the Italian independent Pentecostal Church, I was among old friends. The visit to the new Italian Church extended the net so to speak and brought in some new contacts as did Cairns and most other places. We now have 2023 names and addresses on our Australia database.

I am grateful to all friends — new and old — who contributed to the success

of all four tours. Particular thanks to those who helped to co-ordinate the meetings — Peter Lewis, Jan Tweedie and James Jit in New Zealand and Maureen O'Brien and the CWM team in Australia.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Initially UK covered printing costs for VANGUARD "down-under". That no longer applies and has not done so for much of the period under review. So, as you will see from the following, there is an accumulating short fall, which we felt should be brought to the attention of our readers.

Printing in NZ and Australia has been produced at cost. In both countries our printers support CWM so the amounts charged are true cost figures. At times there has been no charge. A similar position applies in UK. The Australian printers also do all the typesetting and layout work free. Apart from these generous gestures CWM would not have been able to continue its work and ministry. Thank you in the Name of the Lord.

AUGUST 1998 to JULY 1999

Our major costs relate to printing and postage and are shown below. Extra administration costs e.g. phone, fax, email, stationery, photocopying, equipment maintenance, printer cartridges etc are not shown. If everything were taken into account CWM would show \$15,000-\$20,000 shortfall on these costs against donations in each country. We commend this situation to your urgent prayer.

NEW ZEALAND:

1904 Names & Addresses in NZ		
241 Other Countries excluding UK		
Total Printing	\$11,600	
Total Postage	\$ 8,600	
		- \$20,200
Donations		\$ 7,300
Shortfall		- \$12,900

AUSTRALIA:

2023 Names and Addresses in OZ		
Total Printing	\$6,400	
Total Postage	\$5,800	
		- \$12,200
Donations		\$4,400
Shortfall		- \$7,800

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

VOLUNTEERS:

The Lord has added so many to CWM that it would be foolish to try to mention them all by name. So I'll list them in teams:

- NAPIER, NZ — Soon after launching CETF a group of people from the Hawkes Bay area started to support us practically and have remained loyal throughout. Some of these form the team that maintains our New Zealand and overseas database and handles the bulk mailing and some of the resource dispatch of the NZ operation. Please remember them all in your prayers.

- HEALESVILLE, OZ — Location of CWM Australia and the place from which many ideas emanate and the publications and resource material circulates. The team includes our Australian printers who are currently putting my messages in book form. Please pray for them and for this new venture — that the necessary finance will be forthcoming to launch the project; and that it will proceed smoothly and with speed.

- LONDON, UK — Since launching the ministry in Great Britain the administration has been split between Preston in the north and London in the south. This will now come together as explained elsewhere in this CETF. We are very thankful for the past help of our friends Paul and Ruth Nuttall from Lancashire. They have been a real blessing to the work. Please pray for the progress of VANGUARD & CETF and the establishment of a CWM Resource base in Great Britain, where, due to the larger population base, the potential is considerable.

EMAIL AND INTERNET:

I have discovered that email is a mixed blessing. Correspondence is easy and rapid, but it tends to generate a communications "bottle-neck". Being involved, at editorial level, with two international publications requires that we receive, monitor and file lots of information documents. It is impossible for one person to do this efficiently, so mail has to be filtered. I am grateful for past assistance, which has been carried out by Dean Flanders in USA, who offered to help me. The task has now been taken over by a person who is based in Brisbane, Australia and who will be gradually establishing a team of researchers and mail assistants to work with him so as to spread the load.

As long as I am able I will continue to deal with most if not all personal mail myself. If you have written and have not received a response then please forgive me. At times I have had up to 200 emails in my IN BOX awaiting attention and action. Hopefully things will change in this regard shortly. We are always keen to hear from you, so don't give up writing. Email is better than what is now called snail-mail!

WEB SITES:

CWM now has its own domain web site

at: <http://www.christian-witness.org>

We are keen to establish a small team of workers to help in this work. It will require a certain amount of expertise. If you are interested you can contact our NZ based web site manager from our site.

TRANSCRIBING, TYPING, etc:

For some time friends from Auckland and more recently from Alexandra have helped with my typing load. We are grateful. Now as the work of publishing books, etc looms it is likely that more

help will be required. Access to a transcriber and being on email would certainly be bonuses. Once more we look to the Lord and His people. Thank you for praying!

FINALLY... FINANCE AND THAT LAP TOP COMPUTER:

Please pray that the right unit will be acquired at reasonable cost, so as to avoid extra pressure on our limited finance.

We are grateful to all those who have helped us financially. Some do this by

sending occasional donations through the post; others do it on a regular basis. A few have decided to do it by bank transfer.

Please remember us in your prayers. Thank you.

Please also Pray for future Ministry Tours:

- An Invitation to Malaysia and Singapore;
- Ministry to the Aborigines in Queensland and NT;
- Other Countries that have expressed interest in CWM and a ministry visit.

Benny Hinn... going lower

Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, is the man who deceives his neighbour, and says, 'I was only joking!'

—Prov 26:18-19 (NKJV)

WHEN Benny Hinn found himself in a bind over his gaffe about there being nine persons in the Trinity he said that it was only a joke. He has made many other irresponsible claims e.g. that humans were created to swim like fish and fly like birds and with a thought could move from planet to planet. When challenged as to his authority for such ridiculous claims he appealed to his Jewish origin (Hinn was born a Palestinian Arab, not a Jew¹) and his knowledge of Hebrew, which he clearly doesn't have. He said that the word translated to "have dominion" in the creation story means that Adam and Eve could do everything that the creatures over which they had dominion could do². So presumably they could lay eggs like hens and swarm like bees.

The teachings of Benny Hinn from the beginning of his ministry are obviously the rantings of a buffoon. His latest TV interviews however indicate that the man has gone beyond the pale; that he has indeed moved to a lower level. If you want more evidence we recommend that you contact Mike Openheimer of Let's Reason Ministries in Hawaii — administrator@letusreason.org

"For those whom God to ruin has designed, He fits for fate, and first destroys their mind" —John DRYDEN, The Hind and the Panther! (1687)

Paul Crouch (PC) is interviewing **Benny Hinn** (BH) on TBN with Paul and Jan Crouch Sept 13, 1999:

In the opening exchanges of the interview reference is made to Kathryn Kuhlmann, who BH appeals to as a precedent for his "cursing and blessing" pronouncements at a recently held Healing Crusade in Denver, USA. He also refers to Fred Roberts, whom he calls "an apostle", as being another person who encouraged him to "speak judgment" on his opponents.

BH: "He said you are entitled now because they blasphemed the Holy Spirit to tell God what you want to see done."

PC: "Because they were attributing your works to the devil; exactly what they did to Jesus." Hinn agrees.

BH: "See the second they attribute the work of God to Satan, we, as believers step into, legally step into, a place we can ask God to stop them."

PC: "Amen!"

BH: "William Branham was ministering one time — and this happened more than one time but I only heard about it twice — this happened; when a man came in and said — he was actually lying to William Branham — and said — he was trying to mock him — and came in and said he was sick and wanted William Branham to pray for him; and William Branham said you're not sick; you're just here to mock me; but you're going to walk out with the same sickness you said you had and he walked out sick!"

As the interview continues BH refers to an incident which he alleges took place under the ministry of Tommy Reed in the Philippines when God supposedly inflicted sickness upon someone who was opposing the meetings. Whether such did or didn't take place we have no means of checking. From the way BH recounts it, it's very doubtful. What is certain is that Benny Hinn is employing illegitimate fear tactics. Even worse he appeals to a biblical incident in the life of Christ in an unscriptural way. Read what Benny Hinn said in the light of Proverbs 26:18 and the couplet from poet John Dryden quoted above.

BH: "When they said this — 'It's of the devil,' He <said>, 'Ah this is one thing I won't forgive!' He spoke there, judgement; and the judgement He spoke was eternal damnation. He said I'll forgive any sin but not this one; and there he made the clear cut. So Tommy <Reed> said to the Lord, 'All right Lord, here's what I want done'. The last night of the meeting they brought this lady with arthritis on a wheelchair down <the> front. The man came back, in the back again, began to do the same thing. 'This is of the devil,' screaming all this stuff. And Tommy said, 'Lord now!' When he said 'now' the Lord healed the lady with, with the, with the arthritis and struck the man with her sickness, he switched sickness."

PC: "Jesus!"

BH: "He switched sicknesses and took it off the lady and hit the man with it. And the man began screaming and ran out. With ARTHRITIS."

Now pause for a moment. Ask yourself, "Are these the rantings of a man whose mind has gone, who is no longer thinking rationally? Or are they, as is

¹ *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, PFO Dec 1997, page 34.

² *Christianity in Crisis*, Harvest House Publishers, page 119.

being presented, the expressions of someone anointed by the Holy Spirit?" According to Benny Hinn God heals a woman in a wheel chair. In so doing He (i.e. God Almighty) "switched sickness" and brought judgment upon a poor Philippine man, who RAN out screaming with the same ARTHRITIS that had confined the woman to a wheel chair? Sounds like a double miracle with the second cancelling out the reality of the first. Now that really does stretch credibility.

Apart from the utter stupidity of the ravings of Benny Hinn in this clearly fabricated story the really sad thing is that he appeals to scripture as a precedent. There is such a thing as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of which sin our Lord said there was no forgiveness. Seeing so many in the "Revival Now" camp are all the time appealing to this SIN as their get-out from legitimate examination and judgment, by those who seek to follow the Berean example, it behoves us to know clearly what this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is in the Scriptural context.

Matt 12:31-32: *"Therefore I say to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."*

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is clearly a very serious matter. According to verse 22 the teaching was predicated upon a genuine healing performed by Christ, and related to exorcism. Not all sickness has its source in demon possession but this one was:

"Then was brought him one possessed with a demon, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, so that the blind and dumb man spoke and saw."

Following this Matthew tells us (vs 23-24):

"And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons."

Mark relates something similar and gives us a deeper insight into what this sin of the Pharisees and Scribes and may be also of some of the "common" people (see the Luke reference) really was:

Mark 3:22 *"And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, He has Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casts out demons. (v30) they said, He (Jesus) has an unclean spirit."*

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is ascribing the act of exorcising demons from people by the Lord Jesus Christ

(Himself) to the works of the devil (Satan), while maintaining that Christ Himself is demon possessed. We may extrapolate principles from these New Testament passages and relate them to the genuine work of true Gospel preachers in our time but the application made by Benny Hinn and others like him is not legitimate biblically.

Luke sheds further light on this in citing Christ's ironic question and unavoidable conclusion to those who wrongfully accused Him:

Luke 11:19-20: *"And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come upon you."*

The term "the finger of God" appears four times in Scripture and in only three connections. The first describes the true miracles of God as opposed to those of the Egyptian magicians — Exodus 8:19 c/f 2 Tim 3:8; the second relates to the giving of the ten commandments — Ex 31:18 and Deut 9:10; and the third to the works of Christ—Luke 11:20. The cross-reference of Luke's citation is to Acts 19:13 and is most illuminating. The Jews had their own exorcists and they were as impotent to deliver people as are their modern counter-parts in the false Signs and Wonders Movement that is headed up by such as Benny Hinn. Where are his GENUINE miracles? So far they have all fallen short in this regard.

So Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit relates to our Lord Jesus Christ and not to Benny Hinn or any self acclaimed "Anointed ONE" i.e. "christ". If you are doing what the Bible requires of you — "testing the spirits" (1 John 4); "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24), "proving all things" (1 Thess 5:21) and generally acting as a Berean Christian should act (Acts 17:11) it is impossible for you to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. It is far more likely that men like Benny Hinn and Paul Crouch et al are themselves guilty of the blasphemy that they impute to others.

Back to the TV interview. It gets worse and brings to light the very thing that we have anticipated and been warning about now for several years. Gullible Christians are going to be caught up in a net of deception. No wonder David Wilkerson has so strongly warned God's people to keep away from all of this nonsense.³

2 Tim 3:13-17: *"But evil men and impostors shall grow worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, know-*

ing from whom you have learned them; And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be complete, fully fitted for every good work."

BH: Under the anointing not one word falls to the ground.

PC: Amen.

BH: I am not the same man under the anointing that I am now — My children are afraid of me under the anointing. What they do not know is that I'm afraid of the anointing too. (laughter) I'm not afraid of myself, I'm afraid of what the anointing can do to me if I mistreat it. Or if I abuse it or if I misuse it.

Clearly Benny Hinn is not talking about the "anointing" as the whole of scripture portrays it and John the apostle describes it in 1 John 2:19-29. What is this anointing that he and others keep talking about? Nowhere in the New Testament is there any idea of ANYONE being specially anointed other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ANOINTED ie the CHRIST (the words "anointing, christ, messiah" all derive from the same root). There is a sense in which all of God's people have a general anointing and John makes it clear that this gives us a relationship with our blessed Lord, but it never makes one higher, better, greater or more powerful than another. This is utter heresy and is part of the necessary creation of a "mystique" to silence criticism and critics. But it won't work.

From here the TV interview goes to a level which can only be described as horrific and occultic. TBN screens a video recorded at Denver when Benny Hinn pronounced blessings on those who support him and curses on those who oppose:

BH: I've been preaching 25 years almost I've never seen the anointing as frightening as I saw in Denver Friday night; and so when you hear me in just a little bit give blessings and cursings and basically all I say each, any who attack this anointing, I speak a judgement on them.

According to an eye witness account: "In the recent Denver crusade Hinn became a different person under the influence of the "anointing" unlike anything seen before. So much so, that his voice changed to a "growl". He was telling the people to raise their hands and exalt the master Jesus. It was obvious that he was not talking about the Jesus of the Bible. He also cursed all who would raise their

³ *Reproach of the Solemn Assembly*, audio tape by David Wilkerson available from CWM: <http://www.christian-witness.org>

hands against his ministry in word or deed." Here are some extracts from the video recording of what happened at Denver.

BH: "My skin is about to explode. Your body will tingle from the top to the bottom. Lift your voices. Lift your hands and ask him for it — People of God be healed! People of the lord be delivered! Rise up out of your sickness and jump into the river of healing and be healed, in Jesus' name. Take your seats this is just the beginning of the service." Hinn then brings up a man claiming two thirds of his heart is dead. "He's barely been able to walk." Hinn growls, "The glory! The glory, if I don't release it I'll blow up. If I don't release the anointing I'll blow up. I got to release it on somebody. The demon must bow to the name of the master Jesus ... Yes Lord I'll do it! I place a curse on every man and woman that will stretch his hand against this anointing I curse that man who dares to speak a word against this ministry. But any man, any woman that raises his or her hand in blessing towards this ministry, I bless that man. I bless that home. I bless that family. Any man, any woman, any person that raises his tongue in blessing toward this work, raises his tongue in blessing toward this anointing, raises his tongue in blessing toward this servant of the Lord, I bless them.

I bless the work of your hands. I bless your life with his mighty power. I bless your home with divine protection. I bless your children with long life and I bless you <with> length of days. I bless you with healing. I bless you with prosperity. I bless you with the very presence of Almighty God. I, a servant, bless you in the name of the one I serve. I bless <your> people tonight in Denver. Lift your hands and receive the blessing.

I rarely ever do what I'm doing now. This is the Holy Ghost on me telling me to do this. I bless you; I bless your homes, your life, your future, your children. May every attack of Satan be destroyed. May every plan of hell be destroyed against you (change of voice) and every plan of God be established in Jesus name. Amen, amen."

Benny Hinn's recent programmes, seen on TV in Hawaii, reveal new programming styles with interviews and crusade clips with Hinn consistently changing his tune and a dangerous trend toward Catholic type worship and ecumenical unity.

A number of third wave charismatics, key players in today's revivalism were guests on Hinn's programme over recent weeks — Kenneth Copeland, Rod Parsley, Joyce Meyers and Rodney Howard-Browne. Hinn clearly is assuming the apostolic father figure of the healing min-

istry picking up the mantle where, not Kathryn Kuhlmann, but William Branham left off.

Here's just one extract from one of the TV programmes to let you see where things are heading. Sounds a bit like a Jimmy Bakker re-run. This is with Benny Hinn (BH) and Rod Parsley (RP) on This Is Your Day, August 24, 1999:

RP: "The healing ministry is almost dead. When you look at who's out there praying for the sick today, there's not many!" (This is false. There are more healing ministries today than there ever were.) "And the Lord said to me to build a healing centre, a healing and prayer centre that people can come to, 24 hours a day, any day of the week, and be prayed for and get healed. And I did not really know what the Lord would show me, but as time went on I began to get the picture much clearer. January 3rd the year 2000 we break ground for that Healing Centre in Dallas Texas. It's going to have Healing Gardens with Healing Statues of Biblical Healing saints from the Old Testament. Its going to have a Healing Fountain an Eternal Healing Fire. It's going to have places where people can come to and be prayed for in a Healing Cathedral and Chapels in it. Think about a place that will be staffed with partners, God anointed partners. They will be there volunteering where people can come 24 hours a day and be prayed for. So no one will have to wait for a crusade. Yes I will continue to have crusades; yes I will continue to travel; but what wonderful thing it would be when Gods people can come to a place like that. It's going to be built with Jerusalem rock. It's going to look like Jerusalem and the Lord gave us property a mile and a half from the Dallas Stadium right on highway 114.

Saints we have to preserve that anointing; whether it's the anointing ... that's on Rod ... and your building a place ... now expanding your own ministry"

Rod Parsley then prayed showing how little he understands about the true Biblical anointing.

"Holy Spirit of God I thank you even now your servant has been willing to conceive this child, this healing center where multiplied thousands upon thousands would be healed, but more than <that> where the healing ministry will be preserved. Preserved so that we will not lose our roots; so that people may know the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlmann and Aimee Semple McPhearson, A.A Allen and Jack Coe; of Oral Roberts and Lester Sumrall, God, where those anointings will be multiplied [I'm seeing this now Benny] and brought to bear in that place; multiplied by one another — Smith Wigglesworth's anointing multi-

plied by Oral Robert's anointing, multiplied by Kathryn Kuhlman's anointing, multiplied by Benny Hinn's anointing. And when the people come there, their faith will be at such a level that that spiritual genealogy, which you are preserving will come to bear against their need. A.A. Allen had a miracle valley. This is going to be a miracle mountain.

BH: "Whoa! This is going to be a miracle mountain."

Editorial Note: Those who are overawed by the names mentioned above may care to read Neil Richardson's Unmasked article (VANGUARD — June '99) and consider where and how many of them ended. For the record, I met AA Allen just before he died of extreme alcoholism or a drug over-dose, no-one seems to be sure which. He was preaching in Stockport, Cheshire near where I was pastoring in Manchester, UK. He was a bitter man who claimed to have distributed "miracle saw-dust" from the floor of his "miracle valley" tent. Was he just someone who had missed his way or simply a man who had never discovered the true way?

I and another young AoG pastor approached him to discuss some of the outrageous things he had said during his sermon. I believe our approach was with a sincere desire to help him. He refused to talk to us and barged past using his brief case to push me aside. The following night he claimed he had been attacked the previous night by "two demons". Those two demons were David Phillips and Philip Powell. I was saddened to learn only a few months later that A.A. Allen had died in circumstances which certainly raised questions about his entire life and ministry.

That incident and A.A. Allen's life and ministry, plus the record of a number of the other "big" names mentioned above, beg a couple of questions which are troubling many with regard to the 20th century Pentecostal Revival. Was the whole thing a huge fraud? Is there ground for the claims that are coming loud and clear from the camps of the cessationists that the Pentecostal outpouring of 1906 and the charismatic renewal of the late 50's and early 60's and the current "Toronto-Pensacola" River Revival are all branches of a tree that is rooted in deception, heresy and apostasy? These questions and others like them have occupied our thinking and that of a number of our friends for quite some time. We plan to address them in depth through our publications starting in the next issue of Vanguard with an article by Siam Bhayro on CESSATIONISM and my own article on THE GENUINE ON-GOING PERSONAL REVIVAL. We hope you stay tuned.

White Cane Religion

and other messages from the Brownsville Revival by Stephen Hill (Revival Press, 1997)

BOOK REVIEW

by Richard Engstrom with Dean Flanders

(Ezek 32:8) All the bright lights of heaven will I darken over you, and set darkness upon your land, says the Lord GOD.

JESUS said to His disciples, "You are the light of the world." Therefore the bright lights of heaven could be likened to the preachers and authors in the history of our Faith that have illuminated the landscape of this world in the light of the Word of God. Once upon a time these lights were indeed bright, so bright in fact that their legacy remains to this day, even despite their errors. The reason why authors such as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, Augustus Strong, Calvin and Wesley have been regarded as such bright lights is because they believed in the fact and reality of the Word of God. This has all changed in our century and especially during the past 20 years. There have been more "Christian" books published in this century than in all the previous centuries combined — but the light has been replaced with lightness. There is no longer much evidence of a fearful regard for what the Bible says: Now "what the Bible says", is interpreted to mean whatever our authors want to say it means. Even definitions of the words in the Bible, definitions that have stood for centuries, are being disputed. The historical scholarship of our Faith is being ignored with arrogance: Those authors who were once revered as bright lights of heaven are being systematically accused, discredited and dismissed. It is God's judgement against the Apostasy of Christendom that He has allowed this to happen, yes, He has decreed it. Contending for the faith once delivered to the saints has been replaced with contending for whatever agenda our contemporary authors are being paid to represent and the book, WHITE CANE RE-

LIGION, is a perfect example of this.

The author, Stephen Hill, is the chief evangelist at the Brownsville Assemblies of God in Pensacola, Florida, where there has been an ongoing Toronto-style "revival". Since I have read many reports about this "revival", both pro and con, I have been aware of the controversies surrounding this affair. I was pretty sure that this book was going to amount to little more than an attack against those who are offended at the disorderly excesses that are often reported as occurring there. As it turns out, I was right.

This book purports itself to be just a collection of evangelical sermons by Stephen Hill. Technically that is true, but the underlying agenda of this book is to accuse and denounce those who do not believe that the "revival" in Brownsville is genuine. From the very first sermon (chapter one), Hill establishes his charges against the detractors of the Brownsville "revival" by casting them as "blind guides". The text for this sermon entitled, WHITE CANE RELIGION, is Luke 6:39b: Can the blind lead the blind? Shall not both fall into the ditch? From there he proceeds to lambaste his "critics". If this sermon, along with the rest, is typical of the preaching at Brownsville, I can see why he and they have been subjected to much opposition. Hill does all of this threatening under the guise of generic evangelistic preaching. I have never heard him preach and apparently he is a very charismatic and passionate preacher. His sermons are quite rousing, that is, if you can get past the fact that he spends a lot of time castigating the critics of this "revival, and if you can overlook the most glaring of his doctrinal errors.

I can't see that he did himself, or his cause, any benefit by publishing this book. Those in his own gang will con-

tinue to clap their hands off, and those who are already prejudiced against this "revival" will only find confirmation for their suspicions.

There are many false doctrines promulgated in this book which must be denounced and rejected. How conspicuous his errors are, however, depends upon your frame of reference. If, for you, orthodoxy is determined by what is common and popular, you will probably not agree with my analysis because you will not find much in this book that you haven't heard preached all of your life. I will only enumerate and comment on the most conspicuous errors in this book: but even these can only be seen by careful contrast to what the Bible says.

1. CHRIST IS OVER HERE!

It is quite apparent and annoying that the unannounced but primary purpose of this book is the defence and exoneration of the Brownsville "revival," and this is Stephen Hill's constant refrain. In chapter one, He writes:

"There are people who literally wanted to get saved at the Brownsville Revival, but before they got out of their front door, some blind guide caught their ear and whispered, 'You don't need to go over there. God can touch you right here.' (God can touch people anywhere He chooses, but what if He chooses to touch them at the Brownsville Revival — just as He has touched hundreds of thousands already?)"

Throughout the rest of the book, Hill characterises those who have their doubts about the "goings on" in Brownsville as people with a critical spirit and even as enemies of the Gospel of Christ. Brownsville, on the other hand, he practically describes as the place to get to at any cost if you want to be in the place where Christ is. Hidden like leaven in every one of his sermons, there is this unrelenting theme: "You need to GO to where Christ is, and He is here at

Brownsville". I utterly reject this lie on the basis of this warning from our Lord Jesus Christ:

(Mat 24:23) *Then if any one shall say to you, here is Christ, or there; don't believe it.*

If God chooses to touch people at Brownsville, it is because that is where they live now. It is an utter contradiction of Christ's Words to suggest that people ought to drive or fly thousands of miles to Brownsville in order to "get blessed". I furthermore assert that those who do journey from around the world to find God at Brownsville are looking for a god that they have not yet known. They are looking for another Jesus, one that is different from the Jesus that the whole world already knows about and Who is immediately available to everyone everywhere.

2. GOD IS CALLING YOU NOW!

Then there is the matter of Stephen Hill's spiritual presumption that just because you are in his audience or reading his book, that the HOLY SPIRIT is definitely speaking to you NOW, PERSONALLY. In many places in this book, Hill makes assertions to this effect:

"My friend, you are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing. You are reading these words because God has called you. He is speaking to your heart."

He insists that just because you are reading his book that God is calling to you, now! This is a claim, even above and beyond what Christ Jesus claimed for His own Words.

(John 6:44) *No man can come to me, except the Father who has sent me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

NO, not even our Lord Jesus Christ presumed that His Father was drawing all that He spoke to, but Stephen Hill does, and it is because of this kind of false doctrine that the Brownsville "revival" is questionable, and should be viewed with suspicion.

With even greater presumption, Hill resorts to intimidation. Hill warns his audience:

"God sees everything and He will tell the Prophet [Hill & his associates?]. He will tell the preacher what is going on in your life."

God may very well "tell the preacher what is going on in your life," but this is the kind of cultic strategy that we have all become very aware of in recent years. The fear of man brings a snare, and this kind of talk, unless uttered prophetically, always amounts to an attempt to dominate by fear. If this kind of psychological manipulation is the common fare in Brownsville, there is good reason to

wonder about everything else that goes on there.

3. INVITATIONAL SALVATION

Hill is also a strong proponent of "invitational" Christianity. First, he suggests that he is the mouth of God to you, and then, (in every chapter) he dictates the prayer that you should repeat in order to get right with God. Here is one such prayer dictated by Hill:

"Dear Jesus, thank You for loving me. I am sick and tired of my critical ways and half-hearted attempts to be like You. I am ready for a radical conversion into a new creation. Jesus, I have sinned against You, and I've hurt others. Forgive me. I repent of my sins. Make me new and empower me to live a victorious life in You. From this moment on, I am Yours, and You are mine. I give You my life. Come live Your life through me. In Your precious name I pray. Amen."

I challenge you, dear reader, to find even ONE instance of this in the New Testament. You will not find a "sinner's prayer" dictated in your Bible.

There is only one instance of instruction in what and how to pray given by our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, and that was in response to their request. NEVER, does He or any of His apostles tell someone to "pray this prayer," in order to get saved, or as an act of repentance. Take note of the following examples of Jesus' ministry to men:

(Mat 8:19-22) *And a certain scribe came, and said to him, Master, I will follow wherever you go. (20) And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head. (21) And another of his disciples said to him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. (22) But Jesus said to him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*

Jesus Christ did NOT tell these men what to pray: He told them the truth and left them to consider their state before God, OR, He told them what they MUST DO.

Invitational religion, wherein men are called and prodded like cattle to "come down to the altar" and "repeat this prayer," with the promise of some great result, provides the insincere with the proof that "it's all in the mind" if nothing happens of any substance and permanence. Responding to an invitation to "come down to the altar" and/or "repeat this prayer" has become a de facto sacrament: as if some righteousness or transformation is necessarily effected upon the person that engages in this ritual. Far more reprobates than saints are produced by these kinds of shallow formulations. Hill's presumption that

most who fall at his feet in the heat of frenzied provocation are being truly converted is self-serving hype and fantasy.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating" they say, and whether or not a man has been truly converted will only be seen over the course of time. To make the claim that they received so many "confessions" would be honest: but to transform all of these into "conversions" is presumptuous. Therefore, I contradict Hill's tirade against those who have their doubts about the results of the Brownsville "revival". Many of Hill's critics may indeed be nothing more than sceptics and enemies of the Gospel, but many are rightly sceptical about the fruit of a movement that embraces so many false doctrines and makes a frenzied uproar into the proof of God's approval.

Here we have a commonly accepted and familiar practice in Christendom for which there is no warrant in the Bible. The most significant feature of the apostasy of Christendom is that "they" don't care very much about what the Bible says, anymore.

4. "EMPTY BAG" RELIGION

Although there are in this book, strong and impassioned pleas to get right with God, there is little, specifically, about what this means. You are left to "fill in the blanks". Hill reduces obedience to the Gospel of Christ, to little more than moral reform and increased church participation. Only once in the book did I see him bring up one of the actual teachings of Jesus Christ as a fundamental of our Faith, but then it seemed almost accidental that he did so. He wrote:

"I don't believe we 'earn a living' as Christians; we 'receive' a living. The things we need are 'added' to us when we seek first the Kingdom."

Jesus also commanded us, "don't work for the bread that perishes," so of course Hill is right on this point. And how much more useful and powerful his book could have been if the teachings and commands of Jesus Christ had been central rather than incidental. The faith once delivered to the saints is described primarily in the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Hill's book you are primarily confronted by threatening rants about the consequences of not doing enough, giving enough, praying enough, or attending church often ENOUGH...and it will NEVER be "enough". Hill also constantly implies that God is going to get you if you criticise the Brownsville "revival."

5. IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT SO MANY ARE LOST!

The author writes: "Millions of Americans remember the old hymns, but they

will go to hell if someone doesn't step into the gap."

This kind of preaching is all too common and not many care that statements like this are a direct contradiction to the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: (John 6:37) *All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and he that comes to me I will certainly not cast out.*

The absurd notion that someone's salvation is dependent upon anyone other than Jesus Christ ALONE is an abominable lie. Jesus Christ Himself stepped into the gap for every man that will be saved. You will certainly answer to God for your own disobedience or lack of service in His kingdom, but the idea that someone else's eternal salvation is in YOUR hands is to demean the importance of every other soul but your own, and to deny the sufficiency of Christ for every man. The fact is that if "millions" of lost Americans remember the old hymns, they have been preached to already, and unless they repent, they will be condemned for refusing to believe what they have known.

Hill would have us to believe that if we were really doing our job, that these "millions" would be saved! What does that say about Christ's preaching? Was there something flawed in it, that He was rejected by the majority? Jesus Christ said that we (His true and busy disciples) would be hated by most men for His name's sake, just as He was.

Furthermore, Hill's plea for someone to "step into the gap," suggests that we are not praying enough for this lost and dying world. This all sounds so convincing doesn't it? How many of YOU can say that you pray "enough", or that you have "enough" burden for the lost? Permit me to contradict this nonsense about the obligation that Mr Hill wants to lay on our shoulders.

Jesus said:

(John 17:9) *I pray for them: I do not pray for the world, but for those who you have given me; for they are mine.*

I'll leave it up to you to decide whether or not our Lord Jesus Christ was a good example for us, or not.

IN CONCLUSION

I tried to recommend this book because I was impressed by the passion and assertive style of Hill's preaching; the kind of preaching that I used to hear and appreciate in years long past. But finally, I could not recommend a book just for fervour. I had to ask myself: Who would I hand this book to, and advise them to read it? Would I hand it to an unbeliever? No, because I wouldn't want to convert someone to Hill's brand of heresy. Would I hand it to a backslider?

No, because although this book is most certainly directed towards those whom the author would consider backsliders, I vehemently disagree that the solution to their backsliding is to do more, or to journey to Brownsville in order to get blessed. Would I hand this book to a brother in Christ? No, because the spiritual substance which would make it worth the time to read it, is not there. Neither can I recommend this book on doctrinal grounds, since what doctrine there is in this book is seriously flawed. In fact, there is much more emotional appeal and threat than there is doctrinal content. I also cannot recommend a "Christian" book that purports to be one thing, a collection of sermons, while in fact it is something else: a tirade by inuendo against those who can't agree with the Brownsville "revival".

Okay, I can recommend this book to anyone who has a need to know just what kind of preaching goes on in the Brownsville "revival." Read it! Judge for yourself! This is far better than judging the Brownsville "revival" by third-party reports and rumours.

The really big problem, though, is not the Brownsville "revival", or the Toronto "blessing". As you read my comments on the substance of Hill's book, I am sure that you recognised how common, ordinary and unremarkable his errors are in these days. This is not surprising, because the main problem is that the great and final apostasy of prophecy is already well underway, and it's likely to have found some room even in your own church.

Think about it.

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