



Benny Hinn Ministries

MinistryWatch.com Recommends that Donors Withhold Giving to Benny Hinn Ministries

The Issues

MinistryWatch.com calls upon donors to prayerfully consider withholding contributions to Benny Hinn Ministries/World Outreach Church (BHM) in response to facts and allegations regarding reports that Hinn:

- Lives a lavish lifestyle with funds intended for charitable purposes;
- Preaches a self-serving prosperity theology message;
- Manipulates individuals at “healing crusades” for personal gain;
- Makes unsubstantiated claims of healings;
- Is nontransparent and lacks independent board oversight.

These facts, aired in March on NBC DATELINE – coupled with MinistryWatch.com’s previously stated concerns about Hinn espousing the self-serving “prosperity theology” message – has caused MinistryWatch.com to recommend that donors consider redirecting their gifts to one of the many biblically-based ministries that are not only more transparent in their dealings with the public but also treat donor’s funds as a sacred trust dedicated exclusively for the Lord’s work.

To read a detailed analysis of the DATELINE program, see the MinistryWatch.com Reflections article, “Not a Preacher’s Life” (http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Reflections_BennyHinn.pdf).

The Details

DATELINE interviewed a number of critics, including current and former BHM employees, who argued that Hinn, instead of modeling the sacrificial life lived by Jesus, is motivated by his own self-interests, hence turning the Gospel of Christ on its head. MinistryWatch.com has had a staff member attend a “healing” crusade of Hinn’s in Charlotte, N.C, and he, too, reports many of the same activities that have led to criticism of Hinn and his motives and methods.

Such claims are serious, especially for a man claiming to be a preacher of God’s Word. If true, they not only violate biblical admonitions, but also seemingly violate IRS regulations that govern churches. Hence, Hinn’s critics claim that his activities are an abuse of donors’ trust and, of even greater concern, misrepresent the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Hinn is founder, chairman, president and CEO of BHM. Through his crusades – which collect untold amounts of cash, as well as donations through checks and credit cards – and television program, “This is Your Day,” Hinn raises upwards of \$100 million annually, according to NBC.

Revelations from the program also include:

- Hinn’s salary is somewhere between half a million and a million dollars per year. He also gets royalties from the sales of his books;
- Personal perks for Hinn, family and his entourage include a \$10 million seaside mansion; a private jet with annual operating costs of about \$1.5 million; a Mercedes SUV and convertible, each valued at about \$80,000;
- What the church termed “layovers” between crusades included hotel bills ranging from \$900 per night to royal suites that cost almost \$3,000 for one night’s stay. Layover locations included Hawaii, Cancun, London, Milan and other exotic locations.
- Beverly Hills shopping sprees;
- Receipts showing Hinn’s daughter receiving \$1,300 in petty cash; her boyfriend getting \$2,550 for babysitting; \$23,000 in cash dispersed to Hinn and his wife; and, \$25,000 in cash for expenses for a crusade – 30 minutes away from Hinn’s home;
- Hinn continues to espouse the theologically-suspect self-serving Word-of-Faith or “prosperity” gospel. Jesus and his followers never amassed personal wealth through their ministry and instead lived a clearly sacrificial life. Hinn would be wise to follow this example and encourage his followers to do likewise as this would lead to much greater spiritual prosperity, the value of which far exceeds anything material;
- Hinn employs two primary methods to manipulate those that watch him – promising healings to those afflicted with chronic or terminal ill-

(Continued from page 1)

- nesses, and claiming that donations are “seeds” being planted by the donor that will result in the gift giver enjoying financial blessings;
- Television producer Nathan Daniel, a former BHM employee who was hired to improve the public image, instead reported to NBC, “There was never one complete record that would suit the criteria for documented miracle healing.”

MinistryWatch.com Take

Hinn’s refusal to be accountable to anyone – rooted in a conveniently defiant view of accountability (he is to answer only to God since he receives extra-biblical words, hence the Word of Faith moniker) – is the primary precipitant for each of the critiques amplified above. MinistryWatch.com believes donors are entitled to make an educated and knowledgeable giving decision based on all the facts about a church or ministry. The disclosures noted above raise issues of concern to MinistryWatch.com and the donating public it serves. Concerns include, but are not limited to:

- DATELINE, through its well-documented investigation, has raised serious questions as to whether the benefit and compensation package for Benny Hinn and many of his family members diverts funds intended for designated, charitable purposes.
- The same investigations raise questions about BHM’s board composition and whether the influences Benny Hinn enjoys on the board compromise its independence.
- Because book royalties are made possible in part by the work of ministry and employees, and in keeping with the best practices of other published church and ministry leaders, all royalties should be returned to the ministry to be used for the ministry’s designated, charitable purpose.
- Hinn is in a position to exercise not just substantial influence over the affairs of the organization, but total control. He is pastor, president, and chairman for life, he appoints the vice president (who is also a board member), Hinn picked the board, and he can suspend any board member.

MinistryWatch.com Recommendation

MinistryWatch.com recommends that donors prayerfully considering withholding contributions to Benny Hinn. Those that oppose such action should consider that the reported exorbitant spending of the Hinn family reveals that BHM has far more money than it needs to carry out its ministry. MinistryWatch.com also recommends that all Christians join with it in praying specifically that Benny Hinn and his family acknowledge their failures in the stewardship of the money entrusted to them by donors, and humbly submit themselves to a process of personal repentance and restoration. As part of this restorative process, Hinn should definitively repudiate prosperity theology and balance his teaching with the whole counsel of the Bible, including the fact that Christians are often called to acts of sacrifice where rewards will be received in heaven and not on this earth.

Should corrective actions on Hinn’s financial dealings not be taken by BHM within a reasonable amount of time, MinistryWatch.com would regrettably have no alternative but to recommend to the IRS and the relevant state authorities that a full government-led investigation of the charity be undertaken to ensure that donors are being treated fairly and that the ministry’s charitable purpose – rather than the Hinn’s reported lavish lifestyle – is being diligently pursued. Should Hinn continue to misrepresent the Bible in his teaching and healing services, MinistryWatch.com will continue to call on donors to reconsider their support for his ministry.

Meanwhile, donors should look for other worthy ministries to support until BHM takes actions that can provide donors with confidence that donated funds are being used for designated charitable purposes, that biblically sound theology is being taught by the ministry, and that improved governance is in place. Hundreds of alternative worthwhile ministries, with detailed financial and theological information, are profiled on www.MinistryWatch.com. The information is offered to the donating public for free so that donors might equip themselves with appropriate information and be the best possible stewards of their giving to the Lord’s work.

-30-

Links

MinistryWatch.com related articles:

BHM Summary profile and Analyst Comments: http://ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/F_SumRpt.asp?EIN=591245704

Reflections article

“Word of Faith – A Critical Look”

http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Reflections_WordFaith.pdf

Word of Faith commentary

“A Word of Faith Can Be Deadly”

<http://www.thegoodsteward.com/article.php3?articleID=1990>

Contact Information and Resources

Government Contacts

Internal Revenue Service

Exempt organization customer service address:

Internal Revenue Service

TE/GE Customer Account Services

P.O. Box 2508

Cincinnati, OH 45201

- Tax-exempt assistance: 1-877-829-5500
- General tax questions: 1-800-829-1040
- Order forms and publications: 1-800-829-3676
- Website: www.irs.gov
- Verify tax-exempt status
- Verify tax deductibility
- Obtaining federal tax-exempt status
- Completing federal tax forms
- Specialized assistance to tax-exempt organizations

Attorneys General offices, or Departments of Justice, Charitable Activities Section

Most states have an active unit of the Attorney General's office that are willing to help consumers. Check with NASCO (National Association of State Charities Officials) at www.NASCO.net.org, look under US State Charity Offices and click on the state of interest.

- Reporting illegal activity by nonprofit organizations
- Information about charitable organizations and copies of annual reports
- Questions about professional fundraising reporting requirements
- Registrations of charitable corporations or trusts
- Questions about annual reports for charitable organizations
- Merging nonprofit organizations
- Serving as a board member of a nonprofit organization
- Dissolving nonprofit organizations

Secretary of State, Corporation Division

Check phone number on the Internet or your local phonebook under state government.

- Verifying that a nonprofit corporation is in fact incorporated and current in its filing
- Obtaining copies of filed articles of incorporation and amendments
- Forming a new corporation
- Obtaining state identification numbers
- Merging nonprofit corporations
- Amending articles of incorporation
- Dissolving nonprofit corporations

Federal Trade Commission

Consumer Response Center

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20580

1-877-382-4357

Website: www.ftc.gov

- Information on fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices
- How to file a complaint

Christian Ministry Marketplace

MinistryWatch.com

1 (866) 324-7097

www.ministrywatch.com

A free donor advocate service. Aid donors in understanding the key issues concerning a ministry's operations.

The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)

1 (800) 323-9473

www.ecfa.org

A membership ministry advocate. A peer accountability membership group. Primary responsibility to the ministries that pay dues to the ECFA and thereby fund its operations.

WWW.thegoodsteward.com

Growing source of information on all areas of stewardship.

Generous Giving

www.generousgiving.org

Nonprofit that seeks to encourage givers of all income levels to experience the joy of giving and embrace a lifestyle of generosity, according to God's word and Christ's example. It was launched in 2000 by the Maclellan Foundation.

Royal Treasure

1 (770) 977-4502

www.royaltreasure.org

Nonprofit teaching Biblical Stewardship to women.

The Gathering

www.gatheringweb.com

Conferences, email forums, conference calls and other activities for those that give a minimum of \$200,000 annually to Christian ministries or have the capacity to do so.

National Christian Foundation

1 (800) 681-6223

www.nationalchristian.com

Facilitates Christian stewardship. Helps donors set up a Stewardship Fund, a donor advised fund, liquidate assets, provide gift annuities, trusts, scholarships, and endowments.

Calvin Edwards, & Co.

1 (770)-395-9425

Info@calvinedwardscompany.com

For profit organization providing philanthropic counsel to high-capacity Christian donors.

Geneva Global

1 (610) 254-8202

info@GenevaGlobal.com

www.genevaglobal.com

For profit organization assisting individual donors.

Excellence in Giving

1 (719) 329-1515

www.excellenceingiving.com

For profit organization with tailored services of affluent families and individuals.

The Legacy Group

1 (262) 789-3160

www.philanthropyatwork.com

For profit organization to assist private wealth management and those to achieve charitable goals.

The Eternity Portfolio

www.eternityportfolio.com

Book by Alan Gotthardt that shows how to get the ultimate return on your investments through investing in eternity.

Secular Resources

GuideStar

www.guidestar.org

Largest public search engine of nonprofit organizations.

Provides access to many tax-exempt organization's IRS Form 990s. Some knowledge of accounting may be necessary to understand the documents found on this site.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance

www.give.org

A charitable watchdog site. The Alliance reports on nationally soliciting charitable organizations that are the subject of donor inquiries. These reports include an evaluation of the subject charity in relation to the voluntary BBB charity standards.

Charity Navigator

www.charitynavigator.org

Helps guide intelligent giving by evaluating the financial health of each charity in its database.

Charity Channel

www.charitychannel.com

Known best for its nonprofit email arena discussion forums.

The American Institute of Philanthropy

www.charitywatch.org

A charitable watchdog group that rates US charities in different categories. Fee for reports. They also provide tips to insure safe giving.

The Charities Review Council

www.crcmn.org

Conducts detailed reviews of national and local charitable organizations soliciting in the State of Minnesota. They also provide tips and guides for donors to help them make wise giving decisions.

Internet Nonprofit Center

www.nonprofits.org

Provides an extensive array of nonprofit topics.

Independent Sector

www.independentsector.org

A national leadership forum, working to encourage philanthropy, volunteering, nonprofit initiative and citizen action that help to better serve people and communities. There is a section on ethics and accountability, including donor's bill of rights, related publications, articles and other resources.

Chronicle of Philanthropy

www.philanthropy.com

Biweekly newspaper of the nonprofit world.

The Nonprofit Times

www.nptimes.com

Articles and topics related to nonprofits.

© MinistryWatch DonorAlert, 2005

2514 Plantation Center Drive

Matthews, NC 28105

1 (866) 324-7097

www.ministrywatch.com

www.wallwatchers.org

www.thegoodsteward.com