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Hinn and Woods' "Defining deception: Freeing the church from the mystical-miracle movement" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Hinn, C. W., & Wood, A. G. (2018). *Defining deception: Freeing the church from the mystical-miracle movement*. El Cajon, CA: Southern California Seminary Press. 177 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 9780986444241

Costi Hinn, executive pastor of Mission Bible Church, Orange County, CA, is the nephew of the notorious televangelist and mystical-miracle healer, Benny Hinn, who has drawn countless numbers of well-intentioned people to the signs, wonders and Word of Faith movement that is the core of his far-reaching ministry. Along with Mission Bible's, preaching pastor, Anthony Wood, Hinn scrupulously explores the dangers of the Word of Faith industry and how it not only undermines the stability of the Christian churches orthodoxy, but negatively affects the attitudes and opinions of those outside the church towards the Christian community as a whole.

Hinn and Wood provide a historical account of the key personalities that were responsible for the inception of the Word of Faith teachings as well as those who have carried these teachings into the modern day. They emphasize the importance for the Christian community to avoid partnering with those who preach a false gospel; a gospel that is based on glorifying the works of people rather than on the work of Christ. The authors touch on the abuses suffered by followers of the British faith-healer, Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947) and evangelist, Todd Bentley (1976-); men who are celebrated as gifted, Holy Spirit filled, healers, yet known for using violent tactics such as kicking or hitting people as a means to effectuate healing. Hinn and Wood are careful to furnish us with an expose absent of personal attacks against individuals that propagate Word of Faith doctrine while using scriptural support to disclose false practices. They effectively communicate their concern for those who have been victimized by the Word of Faith industry and the importance of protecting the message of the gospel from becoming a commodity.

This book is an effective tool to inform Christians of the prevalence of deceptive teachings that manipulate well-intentioned, people lacking biblical understanding, into giving their resources to a gospel-less industry. It includes an appendix of anecdotes of former Word of Faith members and their experiences as well as appendices addressing questions about Word of Faith ideology.

Reviewer

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