

## Reinhard Bonnke

Reinhard Bonnke is a German Pentecostal evangelist with a large ministry mainly to African and European countries. His crusades feature crowds of hundreds of thousands. Miracles, healings and multitudes of 'conversions' are reported.

On 6th October, 14 people were crushed to death in Nigeria when they attempted to rush the stage to try to touch Bonnke. The parents of one of the dead, a little baby girl, tried unsuccessfully to get the body to Bonnke hoping he would raise her from the dead. The family then did the next best thing and laid the body on Bonnke's Mercedes Benz in the hope of the baby coming back to life. Apparently they were putting their faith in the 'anointing' of the faith healer.

Yet Bonnke claims, '*When I step on a platform, often without any touch of mine the blind begin to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak and the cripples to walk...Miracles happen as if copied from the Gospels and the Book of Acts*'. The crusade chairman in Onitsha, Nigeria, boasts: '*We know that when Reinhard Bonnke comes to preach, we will see the...healing power of God in action...Each [person at the crusade] was expecting the miracle that would transform their lives; they looked desperate enough to pursue it...the healing power of God flowed each day as countless numbers reported evidence of the miraculous*'.

As with most of such healing claims, when pressed for evidences, there is either silence...or castigation that any should question such an 'anointed one' as Bonnke. In 1999 we were able to view a video produced by Bonnke's ministry. It detailed what many believe is the most convincing miraculous healing of modern times. The 'healing' of a Jean Neil appeared to be well documented until an investigation by a British Christian surgeon exposed gross inaccuracies, (see *Diakrisis*, Dec/99, P.5,6). Bonnke was asked to take the video off the market but today this fraudulent video still deceives many.

Bonnke has not produced one verified authentic documented healing. Yet the amazing claims continue unabated.

Jesus Christ shunned acclaim and let his miracles speak for themselves. His miracles were to prove He was the Messiah and that His message was from God. '***But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...***', (Jn.20:30,31); '***...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you...***', (Acts 2:22). When John the Baptist asked the disciples for proof of the Messiahship of Christ, Jesus said to His disciples: '***Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached***', (Lk.7:21-22).

Compare the claimed miraculous 'healings' of Bonnke with those of the time of Christ and the apostles. In the Gospel of Matthew alone it is clear that Jesus healed '***all***', (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36; etc.); and '***every sickness***' that came to him were *completely* healed, (12:13; 20:34;). Jesus healed '***all***' whether they had faith or not! (Lk. 17:11-19; Matt.8:1,14; 12:10; 13:58). Many healings were to do with *organic diseases* which cannot be healed psychosomatically. To sum up the healings of Jesus Christ, Richard Mayhue in his book '*The Healing Promise*' writes that the miracles of Jesus Christ were '***undeniable, successful, spectacular, without any recovery period; permanent, overwhelming, abundant, awesome, instant, authoritative, without limitations, total, and convincing all without any major medical attention that could possibly have taken credit for healing in any way.***'

Bonnke often boasts of his power. His fraudulent claims of

healings have proven without a doubt that he is one of many who make merchandise of God's people, (2Pet.2:3). The fanciful and exaggerated claims of Bonnke are sometimes more occultic than Christian. Bonnke once boasted that '*Locals brought sacks full of witchcraft items to the crusade grounds for burning each night.*' His workers wrote: '*This is the greatest number of witchcraft items we have ever seen. People surrendered their idols by the sack full...we started burning the witchcraft items from the second night of the conference, when Reinhard preached on the Blood of Jesus and took authority over the powers of the enemy. The strongholds in the city were demolished and the people released...Looking at the crowds, it was if fire from heaven had fallen on top of each head and burning hot coals had suddenly been rolled onto the tip of each tongue. The fire seemed intense - almost excruciating - judging by the painful expressions on many faces. The fire caused many people to shake their heads uncontrollably, while speaking non-stop in other tongues*'. These kind of manifestations are never once found in the New Testament and are unbiblical in their nature.

Why do huge crowds follow after the likes of Bonnke? Anthony Thomas, who wrote and directed the recent TV documentary '*Miracles*', believes Bonnke is popular in Africa because he taps into the continent's old religious superstitions. '*Bonnke is [like] the 'voodoo priest', casting spells on his enemies and summoning up good and evil spirits as he dances to the beat of the drum,*' said Thomas.

Jesus Christ warned his believers to '***take heed that no man deceive you...For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect***', (Matt.24:4,24). The word '*Christs*' means '*anointed ones*'. Bonnke and his ministry claim a special anointing.

Bonnke claims to preach the 'full gospel'. However, there is no 'full gospel' or 'half gospel' but only the true Gospel which Paul preached in 1Cor.15:1-4. This Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ on our behalf (substitution) because we are vile sinners. The 'full gospel' that Bonnke preaches is actually a gospel full of extra biblical teaching such as second blessings, unknown tongues, etc, and arguably lacks any real preaching on 'sin, righteousness and judgement to come'. These additions to the Gospel produce 'another gospel' as Paul warned against. With this gospel Bonnke preaches, '*Raise your hands and wave to me if you want to receive Jesus Christ.*'

Many come to see Bonnke's 'signs and wonders' yet Jesus warned: '***An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign***', (Matt.12:38). Sadly, when we in this ministry have investigated such healing claims, the *delusion* of the modern signs and wonders movement becomes more frightening. The major signs and wonders leaders have failed to produce real evidence for their claims of healing of organic diseases.

Jesus' offer on the cross of Calvary has no emphasis in bodily healing but rather in the deliverance from the horrific consequences of *sin*. The offer is not the redemption of our bodies in this life (Rom.8:23; Eph.1:14), but *eternal life* through the imputed (credited) righteousness of Christ.

Reinhard Bonnke may appear sincere but one must question why he continues to produce the fantastic claims of healing when Christian doctors, researchers and the media have uncovered sheer fraud. Bonnke is deceiving millions of poor Africans and making merchandise of God's creatures.

We pray that this information might be used to warn many who might be ensnared by such delusions. **Terry Arnold**