

## 'Slain In The Spirit'?

Many Pentecostal ministries do their utmost to disown the heretical foundations, and endeavour to present as more 'moderate' streams of the movement. One of these would be the late Barry Smith's end-time ministry.

Their bi-monthly publication '*The Omega Times*' [Now published in Queensland by the *Reflections and Hay Family Trust* and edited by an Allan Rasmussen] December 2005 edition, features a letter to the editor. It reads:

*'What is your take on the 'slain in the spirit' phenomenon that is sweeping through Charismatic churches. I can find no biblical evidence of this and the need for 'catchers' and am concerned that the church I belong to is falling into error. I have done much research on this and would value your opinion, thanks'. Maurice Smith - UK*

The editor then attempts to answer this query, thus: [and in so doing continues the ongoing erroneous teaching emanating from these 'ministries']:

*'Firstly, this phenomenon is not new and there is biblical evidence. God has used it to demonstrate divine authority (John 18:5-6 when Jesus invoked the name 'I AM' at his arrest). Divine blessing (2 Chronicles 2:5 when the glory fell). Divine call (Acts 9:4-5 where Saul on Damascus Road was instantly 'born again' proven by Saul saying 'Lord what will you have me do') and Divine appearing (Revelation 1:17 & the apostle John). In the 19th century Charles Finney's huge evangelical meetings were marked by the majority 'falling down' under the power. In the 1948 Latter Rain revival the hundred or so ministers who attended spent most of the first day prostrate under the Spirit's power as God dealt with each minister personally. Out of that some of the most dynamic ministries the world has seen emerged. Such as Oral Roberts, A.A.Allen, Tommy Hicks, T.L.Osborn and Kathryn Kuhlmann. Confusion has come through many speaking against this experience, even blaming it on demon power. All this can be swept away and dealt with by one statement, and here it is; 'THERE CAN NEVER BE A COUNTERFEIT UNLESS THERE FIRST IS A REAL' (sic) just as there can never be a lie unless truth exists first! With regard to catchers, I am personally very unhappy with that, but in today's litigious society it is an absolute necessity, because sooner or later, we will find someone suing a church because of physical injury, and that could be a planned set-up by ungodly people. Wisdom must be exercised. (Editor)*

'Wisdom must be exercised' would have to be the only sensible teaching in this entire reply. To claim that those enemies who fell at the words of Jesus, or that Saul on the Damascus Road, or John on Patmos, were 'slain in the spirit' as is practiced in Pentecostal assemblies worldwide today, is an incorrect assumption of enormous proportion. And drastically diminishes the import of those occurrences.

They were sovereign, divine acts - not crazy phenomenon conjured up by the feeble will of man on Sunday mornings! Space does not allow for a complete refutation of this behaviour - but we have in the past written extensively on the subject (eg. the book '*Finding the Balance*' and *Diakrisis* Jan/Feb 2003). One of the earliest references to this phenomena dates back to 1770 when a Father Gassner would perform exorcisms on demon possessed people. During this ritual he would say '..may I be given the sign of supernatural magic; I admonish this thing in the name of Jesus'. The person would then fall in a trance and spasms would follow. Later a German

physician, Mesmer, considered to be the father of hypnotism, modified this technique to what is now called 'Mesmerism'. One thing is certain - the label 'slaying in the spirit' is not a term that supporters of this phenomenon should use, considering the nearest reference to this in the Bible is when Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by God for lying to the Holy Spirit!

Today's phenomena of 'falling in the spirit' can be seen not only in hypnotism, but also the New Age movement. The dangers of hypnotism should not be doubted. Anything bypassing the mind must cause alarm and caution. Some have died from the effects of hypnotism.

In scripture when any one healed, laid hands on, or prayed for people, (Matt.19:13-15 and including Pentecost-Acts 2), there is no mention of people falling down. No doubt many of the supporters of this practice see the roots of this phenomena in past revival meetings, where people did fall to the ground. These were called 'faintings'. The fact is that this was not a common thing and it was also under the influence of some of the most powerful preaching in history. John Wesley, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards wrote of people falling *on their faces in repentance* and crying out to God for mercy and salvation *from their sins*. This is a far cry from the falling backwards into altered states of consciousness! Today's 'falling in the spirit' is not under the preaching of the Word but rather from laying on of hands. Many of the revivalists such as Wesley stated clearly that many of the 'faintings' were, in their opinion, demonic or fleshly activity.

In all the scriptures where people fell to the ground, there is only one reference to them falling *backwards* - this is when the *enemies* of Jesus met Him at Gethsemane! In every other Scripture, (Dan.8:16-18; 10:7-11; Ezek.1:28; 2:1,2; 3:22-24; 2Chr.5:13,14; Matt.17:5-7; Rev.1:17-19; Jn.18:3-6; Acts 9:4; Acts 26:12-16), there is no evidence that any fell backwards. In six out of these eleven scriptures it clearly states that people fell *forward* on their faces. It must also be remembered that these accounts were rare and revealed a direct confrontation *with God, Jesus, or an angel*! They were human reactions to a divine encounter. Most were immediately told to 'stand up'! There was *no human agent mediating* and no 'catchers' as we see in Pentecostal/Charismatic churches today. They fell forwards and often with a *fear* for their lives! It was never an expected event but a sovereign act of God.

Using the old chestnut of a counterfeit first requiring the 'genuine' in an effort to validate the spectacle of people falling to the floor is simply ludicrous! On that basis any aberrant behaviour can be falsely labelled 'real'! 'Slaying in the spirit' is NOT a counterfeit of anything anyway! It stands alone as a Pentecostal invention!

To further confound and confuse the readers of this publication such demonstrable heretics as Allen, Roberts and Kuhlmann are put forward as testament to the correctness of the practice. Again, we've written extensively over the years exposing the errors taught by these apostates and false prophets, (Jan/Feb/2004, P.7; Jan/Feb/2001, P.4; Nov/97, P.2; March/99, P.6; Nov/99, P.5 July/Aug/2003, P.5)

We write to simply warn our readers of the unbiblical teachings in publications such as this. It's dangerous material and should be avoided at all costs...and quite a saving can be had...they require an annual subscription fee of \$A 45!

**Mike Claydon & Terry Arnold**