



Defining Deception: Freeing the Church from the Mystical-Miracle Movement

Costi Hinn , Anthony Wood

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The global movement of mystical-miracle enthusiasts have put a modern face on historical heresies. Men and women posing as prophets and apostles make millions preying on the sick, poor, and emotionally fragile. Behind a veil of glamour, many self-proclaimed pastors mask their spiritual abuse with claims of special power from the Holy Spirit. Defining Deception pulls back the curtain to reveal the truth behind this lucrative industry. Written with a unique blend of theology, history, and personal experience, Costi Hinn and Anthony Wood have lovingly, yet sternly, exposed the mystical-miracle fraud in the hope that Christians will unite against those who have turned Jesus into a commodity. It is also a call to all Christians of good faith to help those trapped by these corrupt leaders rediscover the biblical Gospel of Christ. Every Christian is called to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3) even when it's controversial-Defining Deception will equip Christians to do just that.

Defining Deception: Freeing the Church from the Mystical-Miracle Movement Details

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From Reader Review Defining Deception: Freeing the Church from the Mystical-Miracle Movement for online ebook

Stanley says

I purchased this book after listening to the interview of the author about why he wrote it. Although the focus is on the errors of Bill Johnson & Bethel Church, there is very useful information to guard against much of the deception that has infested the experience-base and Spirit-focused-church. There is very useful information in the appendixes, including FAQs, 'tongues' legitimacy, 'healing' etc.; I read this on a kindle app, but I would recommend getting a hard copy to refer back to often. If you claim to be a Christian you must know one of Jesus' commands was to not be deceived.

Zachary Houghton says

Wonderful

Excellent look at the excess and false teaching coming out of Bethel Redding and Jesus Culture. I would like to see a sequel expanding on some of the terrible false teaching and utter insanity we have seen from IHOP to AzusaNow to all the self-proclaimed prophets. My prayer is that those that are wallowing in guilt for being ill and misled by the Word-Faith Movement read this and are pointed to the true gospel and true Christ.

Blake says

This is an excellent book. I first heard of a guy named Benny Hinn when I was with a group of men in Southern California for a conference and we were hosted by a firefighter (who later lost his life fighting a fire), and the first evening we were in his home, he said, "You men ever heard of Benny Hinn?" We answered that we hadn't and he said, "You guys need watch this guy. He's crazy." We sat there watching Hinn and his crazy, demon generated antics. We repeatedly uttered, "No Way!" Over the years since, I have read much about Benny Hinn and others who fall into the False Teacher camp. Those things were very helpful. What makes "Defining Deception" equally, if not more, helpful is that one of the authors is Benny Hinn's own nephew who once was involved within the Hinn crusades. Yet, God in His infinite mercy and grace, saved Costi. One of the things that Costi and all others never did and never will hear within the crusades like Benny Hinn's is the true gospel, but through another avenue, Costi heard the gospel for the first time, was saved by Jesus, and soon after left the Benny Hinn crusades.

Now, years later, Costi and another pastor have come together to write a very important book, exposing the false teaching of, not only Benny Hinn, but more so, of Bill Johnson, pastor of Bethel Church in Redding. This book is critical to read because one gets a glimpse behind the scenes of the corruption found within the NAR (New Apostolic Reformation)/Third Wave movement.

I find this book to be a very valuable read for any who are concerned about the false teaching propagated by Johnson, C. Peter Wagner, Benny Hinn, etc., etc. It's really worth your time to read through this very informative book.

Mike says

I could relate to most of what is in this book, as the Lord rescued me from the Word of Faith movement in early 2005. The history of the many famous false teachers from throughout the 20th and 21st centuries was very enlightening. As a charismatic I had heard what a "great man" Smith Wigglesworth was. Little did I know that he was violent in hitting and kicking people while "praying" for them, just like Todd Bentley does today. This book gives true believers a solid reference to use when friends or family who are caught up in the Word of Faith heresy/scam question them.

Kyle Steele says

One of the Most Important Books You Should Read

"Defining Deception" is one of the most important books you should read this year. My wife and I were once in a Third Wave/NAR Church & experienced it firsthand. Our hearts break for the lost & deceived. This book sheds light on the darkness.

Rick Perez says

Really good read...I read about Costi Hinn (nephew of Benny Hinn) and wanted to find out more about his history and involvement with the prosperity health and wealth movement. Very informative, instructive and engaging. Costi was converted to Christ while studying the Bible during that time...He is now a gospel-centered reformed pastor...He carefully corrects the errors of the health/wealth prosperity and the NAR with the Truth of the Gospel.

Devon Groner says

Defining Deception calls out the false teachers and false prophets of our day and their doctrines of demons boldly while also being both genuine and loving, calling these false wolves to repentance and being winsome. Truth is proclaimed, the gospel is preached, help is offered, and God is glorified by this work. It is clear that the authors are well trained and learned pastors with the pastors heart. The work is scholarly and intelligent but extremely readable for the layman. A must have book for our times.

Mitch Bedzyk says

I have to admit, I never thought I'd own a book by someone associated with, let alone related to, the infamous faith-healer, Benny Hinn! "Defining Deception" is written by Anthony Wood and Costi Hinn, who worked with his uncle Benny for many years. This book documents the recent rise of the Word of Faith and New Apostolic Reformation movements (hereafter WOFNAR) and provides a bold, polemical, and biblical response to this aberrant movement and its incredibly pernicious influence within evangelicalism.

The book begins with an overview of the rather short, 100-year history of WOFNAR, or as the authors call

it, the "mystical-miracle" movement. They highlight its founders and influential leaders (Branham, Kenyon, Hagin, Wigglesworth, Wagner, et al.) as well as the heretical doctrines at its core. Rather than focusing on prosperity gospel preachers who are now widely established as unorthodox, the book makes readers aware of many leaders in the mystical-miracle movement who have been gaining ground almost under the radar and in the shadow of the Word of Faith (prosperity gospel) movement, such as Bill Johnson, Todd White, Todd Bentley, and Heidi Baker.

As they move to the present day, the authors focus primarily on Bill Johnson of Bethel Church in Redding, California, because his popular ministry is a central hub for New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) teaching and is largely responsible for the proliferation of NAR ideas into the evangelical mainstream. It deals with the movement's modern-day "Apostles," the manipulative tactics employed by its leaders, the Christological and Pneumatological doctrines at its heretical core, and several other important issues. It also contains several appendices which include testimonies from those delivered from the mystical-miracle movement, being "Slain in the Spirit," speaking in tongues, and whether or not you can actually be healed by someone in the mystical-miracle movement.

The case against WOFNAR provided by Hinn and Wood in this book is not like typical responses to WOFNAR in two very important respects. First, it is presented in a loving, gentle, and winsome manner, coming from two people with firsthand experience, which is almost complete opposite approach from online discernment ministries and stereotypical "heresy hunters" with little or no credibility and compassion. Second, they carefully make a distinction between WOFNAR and the modern Pentecostal/charismatic/continuationist movement that largely remains within the bounds of historic, orthodox, Christianity. They make it very clear from the beginning that this book is NOT about the debate over the continuation/cessation of the sign gifts, but specifically about the WOFNAR movement and its extreme, heretical teachings that fall well beyond the bounds of orthodoxy.

"Defining Deception" is a timely work that is a welcome addition to the growing number of resources dealing with the WOFNAR movements. I can only pray for more books, essays, and resources from credible pastors and scholars that can provide serious and formidable interaction with WOFNAR and its heretical doctrines. While this book is a great start, there is still much more work to be done, more leaders to interact with (especially Bethel's Kris Vallotton and Shawn Bolz) and more heretical doctrines to discuss, like Todd White's perfectionism, Shawn Bolz's communication with the dead, and Kris Vallotton's ecclesiology, etc.

This is an excellent resource to give to friends, family, and church members who have been sucked into the WOFNAR movements.

Crystal K Bashore says

Stark and revealing

Thank you To the authors for putting themselves on the line before God to expose the corruption and deception pervasive in the church today. My own church suffered a split because of Bill Johnson's influence, Nar, Third Wave, Word of Faith movement, seven mountain mandate, etc. we were so broken many of us could not even read scripture or sing worship songs until the grief began to wane. Even nearly a year after, we have remnants still of the grief because we were so fractured by this deceptive theology. Thank you Costi and Anthony, I needed this!!

Bob says

Defining Deception is a book for today's church. Throughout the history of the church there has always been manipulation and doctrinal deception.

I have read a lot on the NAR & on the Word of Faith movement - the authors of this book have done an excellent job of pleading for discernment from the followers (potential or otherwise) of this movement with compassion & understanding, but without pulling any of the necessary punches on its heretical & often blasphemous nature.

Defining Deception calls out the false teachers & false prophets of our day & their doctrines of demons boldly while also being both genuine & loving. Truth is clearly proclaimed, the gospel is preached, help is offered, & God is glorified by this work. The work is scholarly & intelligent but extremely readable for the layman.

Please note that this is not a continuationism vs. cessationism issue or a charismatic vs. non-charismatic issue - it is a sola scriptura issue.

The reader will also find the Appendix's to be very helpful

Nicky Bullimore says

After seeing so many deceived by the word of faith/name it and claim it teaching, it was refreshing to read this book that tackled these false teachings without compromise. There are still so many people deceived by these teachings that I pray they will find themselves with a copy of this book where God can use it to set them free from this deception. I hope in the future more books will be written from others whom God has opened their eyes to encourage others to live the life that God intends...to work out their salvation with fear and trembling to store up heavenly riches rather than earthly fodder.

J.D. White says

Every professing Christian in the U.S. should read this book. It is concise and easy to read - by far the quickest read I have ever found on the subject.

?Costi Hinn and Anthony G. Wood have done a fine job of objectively examining Bill Johnson's neck of the Word-Faith / NAR woods and condemning (and/or pointing out) problem areas without going on a "slander campaign." They display their Christian concern many times in explaining their intent before continuing with the hard truth - here are a couple quotes as examples:

?"Any man who dares to raise the charge of unintentional or intentional heresy against another must do so with humility and biblical evidence, ultimately requesting others within the true circles of Christian belief to carefully consider the assessment..." - Costi Hinn & Anthony Wood, Defining Deception (Preface, page ix)

?"...Christians must not stand idly by while God's Word is maligned. No matter our attachments and no matter how much we love someone, the most loving thing we can do is tell the truth and stand with Christ. All have sinned and no one is perfect, but those claiming to be teachers are held to a higher standard (James 3:1), and those teaching falsehood about Christ are to be called out (Rom 16:17-18)..." - Costi Hinn,

Defining Deception (page 57)

?Side NOTE: This is definitely a book where every reader who picks it up should start with the Preface - it's subtitle speaking for itself: "Heart of the Authors."

?I have read a lot on the Word of Faith movement (and some on the NAR) - and I believe the authors of this book have done the best job yet of pleading for discernment from the followers (potential or otherwise) of this movement with compassion and understanding, but without pulling any of the necessary punches on its heretical and often blasphemous nature.

?One example of the easy to read nature of this book is that it's main purpose - namely thoughtfully examining the doctrine and practice of Bill Johnson and Bethel Church - is covered in the course of 7 chapters that cover only about 117 pages. The last quarter of the book subsists in appendices that address errors common to all of "charismatic" Christendom.

?In particular I found Appendix 4: The Myth of Being Slain in the Spirit (page 151) to be very helpful in articulating why that particular practice is not truly based in the Bible.??I would urge the reader - if you know anyone who is or are yourself familiar with and/or influenced by Word-Faith or "New Apostolic" teaching - to look into this resources.

Wayne Nowacki says

An Excellent and needed resource for today's church.

This is a terrific overview and primer of the New Apostolic Reformation, and Word of Faith movements running rampant in the professing body of Christ. Both Wood and Hinn do a masterful job at pointing towards the truth of scripture and defining error out of love. They are looking to protect and preserve the faith once for all delivered to the Saints. If you are either part of these movements it know someone who is, you would not go wrong in reading this book as a thorough baseline interaction into what caused the birth in these movements and why they flourish as they do today. Take what is said in the material back to the scriptures, as we are each told to 'test the shirts, to see if they are from God' and to 'hold fast to what is true'. Yes, names are being brought to light and so did Jesus and the Apostle Paul so people do not fall prey to deception within the church. This is a loving act and not one of harsh judgment. Only real examples and not opinion are introduced in this material so as to not be sensationalist or just bashing others professing Christ.

You will find this book helpful in your journey of discovery from either movement or to point to biblical truth for those trapped within. The website/ blog SpiritOfError (Google) by Holly Pivek comes from a Biola researcher who co-wrote 2 companion books that more deeply flesh out the NAR /Third Wave doctrines again without a critical spirit and would be an excellent second resource to anyone wanting to learn more about the spirit behind what is now encroaching every denomination of Christianity.

Callie says

This book piqued my interest because it was co-authored by Costi Hinn - as in the nephew of Benny Hinn. In this book, Hinn and Wood address the history of the charismatic movement and then confront the error of the modern false teachers that are propelling the Third Wave Charismatic movement and New Apostolic Reformation - including people like Bill Johnson (Bethel Church) and Costi's own Uncle Benny.

A few of the practices covered in this book: being "slain in the Spirit", supposed healings (and if you aren't healed, it's your fault for not having enough faith), the use of "tongues" as a non-human "language", pronouncing people as new "apostles" (for a fee of course), and Johnson's "glory clouds" (complete with

glitter and angel feathers). Hinn and Wood dissect where things started to go wrong and call people in these churches back to the Scriptures for the truth.

I found the appendices particularly helpful (so if you read this one, don't skip those!), especially Appendices 2 and 3 where they discuss the proper interpretation of Scriptures that are often mistakenly used to promote some of these errant teachings.

What I liked about this book was that it was NOT a prolonged bashing-session. Hinn and Wood present a very thoughtful and biblically solid critique of many of the excesses and unbiblical practices in these movements, as well as addressing the false teachings that are espoused by Johnson and Hinn and others. Costi Hinn has a lot of inside knowledge of Hinn and his "ministry" that he could have dumped out for everyone to see, but instead he uses this insider knowledge of the Word-Of-Faith and Third Wave movements as support for his very biblical arguments against these false signs and teachings. It was written from a very respectful, loving perspective, with the hope that Hinn and others will repent of their false teachings and turn to Jesus for mercy and the salvation of their souls.

That Jesus died and rose again, not for our earthly comfort but as a payment for our sins, so we could have spiritual healing and eternal life in Heaven someday when we trust in Jesus for our salvation - the true Gospel of Christ - was proclaimed throughout this book, while biblically challenging false teachers in a loving manner and calling heresy what it is. It was so well done. Highly recommend!

Jay Lloyd says

A view from inside charismatic freak show

The Lord by His Grace, pulled Costi Hinn out of the snake pit of the blab it and grab it to have your best life now fake church, to reveal the truth about these so called ministries. Great read easy read that is straight forward. Many that are in the Charismatic Movement, and word of faith crowd must read and having read have no excuse.
