

Benny Hinn Responds to Dateline Report

Hinn said he is careful with ministry funds.

Televangelist Benny Hinn says a Dateline NBC report about his use of ministry contributions was distorted and filled with half-truths.

In a nine-page statement posted on TheTruth , a Web site Benny Hinn Ministries (BHM) launched in response to the March 6 broadcast, Hinn said he was falsely characterized by a secular news outlet that is “hostile to the gospel” and motivated by ratings.

While Dateline reported that Hinn paid as much as \$10,000 each night for a hotel suite in Milan, Hinn said his ministry spent an average of \$129 per night on hotel rooms last year.

He said international stopovers in London, Italy and Mexico allowed him to rest and refresh. “I only have one body to use for [God], and I will not let the work of the Lord be sacrificed by lack of rest or taking unnecessary risks,” he said.

Dateline reported that it could not document miracles or that BHM helped feed and care for 20,000 orphans overseas as the ministry claimed. Hinn described the latter report as “a tragic disrespect to the precious little ones receiving generous love and care, made possible by this ministry,” adding that BHM does in fact support 20,000 children worldwide.

Though some consider Hinn's lifestyle lavish, he said he is cautious with ministry funds and that his organization submits to an external audit each year. "I love my precious Lord too much to ever trifle with the money entrusted to me by His dear people," Hinn wrote in a letter to partners.

Before the Dateline report aired, Hinn sued NBC and the show's producer seeking an injunction to prohibit the use of allegedly stolen documents. BHM spokesman Ronn Torossian said the ministry is examining the segment and will consider taking action against "anybody who has done harm to Benny Hinn Ministries."

Both charismatic and non-charismatic critics of Hinn have cautioned Christians to use discernment when choosing ministries to support. BHM is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and has frequently received low grades by Wall Watchers, a watchdog group that monitors how open various Christian ministries are with their financial statements.

Hinn, however, remains optimistic about upcoming crusades expected to draw historic crowds. Torossian said Hinn is "committed to demonstrating religious good" and "will continue to fight for the work of the Lord."

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