

Kenneth Copeland

Some Suspect Heresy: Evangelicals Question Copeland's Remarks

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Is popular television evangelist Kenneth Copeland a heretic?

A growing number of evangelicals who believe that he may have crossed over that doctrinal line are trying to arrange a series of talks with the Pentecostal evangelist to determine how he stands on such issues as the deity of Christ.

But the popular preacher--one of the few whose ministry has increased in the wake of the recent televangelist scandals--has not met with any of his questioners to discuss his beliefs.

Copeland said last year in New Orleans that he would like to meet with and straighten out critics such as Walter Martin, director of the Christian Research Institute in Irvine, and Dave Hunt, whose book, *"The Seduction of Christianity,"* criticizes several statements Copeland and other evangelists have made.

Some of the controversy began in February, 1987, when Copeland published a prophecy, which he claims was directly from Jesus, in his Believer's Voice of Victory magazine.

"Don't be disturbed when people accuse you of thinking you're God," Copeland claims Jesus prophesied through him. *"The more you get to be like me, the more they're going to think that way of you. They crucified me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God."*

More questions arose after Copeland's July 19, 1987, crusade, which was televised nationwide by TBN, when Copeland said: "I say this and repeat it so it don't upset you too bad. . . . When I read in the Bible where he (Jesus) says, 'I am,' yes, I am, too!"

After that effort, Copeland sent the Christian Research Institute a five-page treatment of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and maintained that critics of his February prophecy were mistaken. He added that he was going to publish the paper in an upcoming Believer's Voice of Victory. But when the Christian Research Institute found that the paper advocated an extreme view of the Incarnation--that Christ ceased being God while on Earth--it sent Copeland a five-page response detailing major problems with his view.