

What is Grave Sucking?

By [Jim Allen](#)

The church today with its many denominations and doctrines is in a sad state-of-affair. Much of the world looks upon the Christian community as a three-ring circus. While charlatans have hijacked the Gospel, hyper-charismatics have added their own unique amalgam of error while claiming to have a corner on truth and the anointing.

I have experienced these movements firsthand and openly attest to the growing loathsome impact a wayward organization can inflict on innocent souls seeking truth. While it is truly appalling, it should not surprise any of us because Jesus tells us in Revelation 2 and 3 that most churches, in the end, would apostate from the faith, and herein our indefensible woeful shame. Frankly, many are troubled and embarrassed by all they see in the church.

The latest false anointing in the church is so embarrassing I am almost at a loss for words to write about it. A few years ago a "new thing" emerged from within the culture of hyper-charismatics called grave sucking. "Surely no one would buy into something so silly. Well my friends, this is for real. Grave sucking or mantle grabbing is the belief and practice of pulling the supposed Holy Spirit powers from the dead bones of a previously empowered believer. It is taught that when a Spirit empowered individual dies their mantle or mission dies with them. In other words God's mission for that believer was thwarted when that believer died." [1]

The deception being put forward is that by visiting the grave of a famous preacher or evangelist you can suck up his or her mantel into your spirit, like a sponge absorbs water. This practice is so peculiar and distant to what the Bible teaches I had difficulty finding a working definition to explain any of it. So, let's begin with the mantel and why a believer would want to have one.

A mantle is "A robe, cape, veil, or loose-fitting tunic worn as an outer garment. Many of the prophets wore them (1 Samuel 15:27 ; 1 Kings 19:13), as did women in Jerusalem (Isaiah 3:22) and Job (Job 1:20). The transference of the mantle from Elijah to Elisha signified the passing of

prophetic responsibility and God's accompanying power. These garments have been worn from at least the time of the Exodus until the present." [2]

A desire to carry on with the prophetic ministry of a deceased believer is similar in idea to Elijah passing his mantle to Elisha (2 Kings 2). Jesus carried this idea forward when he commissioned the apostles to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20) but not until the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2). While the idea of transferring the mantle is biblical, it needs to be done within the context of the New Testament setting. Since the work of the Great Commission is still in effect, the church is called to continue the work of Christ. The church continues the work of Christ when born again believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who is our mantle and anointing (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The anointing described in the Bible and the anointing sought after by hyper-charismatics (and others practicing the same) are not one in the same. "The Bible says that Jesus Christ was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit to spread the Good News and free those who have been held captive by sin (Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:38). After Christ left the earth, He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). Now all genuine Christians are anointed, chosen for a specific purpose in furthering God's Kingdom (1 John 2:20)." [3]

Seeking after a special anointing from God is both unbiblical and unnecessary when it is already ours by faith. A born-again believer walking in the Spirit is anointed of God (Galatians 5:16) having put on Christ (John 14:12).

Aside from the biblical view of passing the mantle from one to another in 2 Kings 2:1-15, where did this grave sucking idea originate? Years ago when I briefly watched Benny Hinn on television he spoke about feeling a terrific anointing, shaking from the power of God while visiting Aimee Semple McPherson's* gravesite. Hinn also spoke about the anointing he felt listening to Kathryn Kuhlman** during her crusades. "This is the woman that Benny Hinn received his 'anointing' from and whose grave he visits to receive more 'anointing' on occasion. She is the same woman who was a mentor for John Arnott at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, where the Toronto 'Blessing' subsequently began." [4]

The kind of anointing experienced by Hinn and his famed and now departed

mentors is controversial because it too excites the emotions apart from faith and herein the biblical warning about this powerful deception (Matthew 24:4).

God desires his children to avoid sensuousness, often leading to a state of uncontrollable behavior. When a pastor waves his hand over a crowd and the worshipers fall like dominos, you need to wonder about the source of that power and its purpose. Jesus did not perform showmanship antics by waving his cloak at the crowd; He did not cause people to fall uncontrollably from the electrifying power of His touch; nor did Jesus become emotional and roll in the dirt or babble an unknown tongue under the anointing. Jesus was anointed and spoke the truth and healed the infirmed to prove He was indeed the Son of God (John 20:31).

Having witnessed these sensuousness church experiences, I must say there is a spirit at work in the church that may not always be the Spirit of Christ.

The author of Hebrews writes, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried (led) about with various and strange doctrines... (Hebrews 13:8-9)." The ongoing capers by hyper-charismatic leaders are many and strange to be sure. To teach and then encourage believers to chase after strange practices is to ignore Ephesians 4:14 that also warns against chasing every wind of doctrine. In other words, a believer who knows the true Gospel will not be led into a false practice that denigrates, shames, and dishonors the Lord of Glory.

To visit, lie down, or sit on a grave in expectation of receiving the anointing is unbiblical for the following reasons:

- First, the Holy Spirit does not abide in dead people nor in those who are dead and buried. Wherever the Holy Spirit abides there is life and resurrection. "The idea that dead people's spirits can be contacted for information (*or to receive the anointing of his or her mantle*) is false. Those who attempt such contact inevitably contact demonic spirits, not the spirits of dead loved ones. Those who die go immediately to heaven or hell... There is no contact between the dead and the living. Therefore, seeking the dead is unnecessary and very dangerous." [5]
- Second, the Bible is the inspired word of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and living holy before the Lord (2 Timothy 3:16). "God

has no tolerance for sorcery (Galatians 5:19-20). In Deuteronomy 18:10-12, sorcery is listed among the sinful practices of the nations surrounding Israel. God calls it an abomination: "There shall not be found among you . . . anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you." [6]

- Third, no believer is above another believer. A growing number of evangelicals believe some believers are given special anointings (or mantles) to carry on the work of famous, departed believers. This is error. We are to carry on the work of Christ. At the foot of the cross everyone stands on level ground, not one more esteemed than the other (Galatians 3:28). Of course, we recognize some believer's will have greater reward for faithfulness than others (1 Corinthians 3:12-14) but, if anyone is due honor and glory for exceptional faithfulness it is because the Savior made it possible. The apostle Paul says if we are to glory it must be in the work of Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:3).

The problem in the church today is the unwanted consequences of following after an unknown spirit that places experiential sensation over truth. Would the Holy Spirit promote false and embarrassing doctrines and practices not found in the Bible (Hebrews 10:29)? Did Jesus ever act out His anointing in such unorthodox ways?

There is absolutely no need to seek after the anointing when the Bible says, "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him (1 John 2:27)."

In closing, grave sucking is grave error. Those who practice it have been deceived by those who should know better. They wrongly believe this is how a believer receives the anointing to do a great work in the church. They have never discerned that a born-again believer already has the anointing (Galatians 5:16).

Seeking after a mantle from a living or deceased believer is without question unbiblical. A genuine believer walks in the same Spirit Jesus walked in

during His ministry on earth (1 Corinthians 6:17). The only mantle we need abides in us who is the power of God at work in us for all ministry (John 14:12; 2 Corinthians 4:7).

1. <http://youthapologeticstraining.com/grave-sucking/>
2. <http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T4090>
3. Read more: <http://www.gotquestions.org/anointed.html#ixzz2trMUQorF>
4. http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Wolves/benny_hinn_exposed.htm
5. Read more: GotQuestions.org; "[What does the Bible Say about Necromancy?](#)" Italics added.
6. Read more: GotQuestions.org; "[What does the Bible Say about Sorcery?](#)"

* According to Wikipedia, Aimee Semple McPherson was a famous but controversial Pentecostal evangelist during her ministry in the 1920s and 30s. McPherson conducted public faith-healing demonstrations before large crowds, allegedly healing tens of thousands of people.

**While Kathryn Kuhlman was also a well-known evangelist, she was like McPherson and controversial during her ministry that began in the 1940s. She passed away in 1976. Coleman, charismatic in practice, led public faith-healing and claimed the Holy Spirit healed thousands through her ministry.

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