



Lakeland Outpouring continues

It began on April 2 when 32-year old Canadian evangelist Todd Bentley visited Ignited Church in Lakeland Florida. The “Lakeland Outpouring” is another outlet for the same spirit that manifested itself in “The Toronto Blessing” and “The Brownsville Revival.” Spectacular claims of healings are being made, resulting in tens of thousands of people visiting the site where it is said a new move of God is occurring. Having outgrown the auditorium at Ignited Church, the alleged revival is now being held at 8,000-seat Lakeland Center.

Todd Bentley, sporting tattoos that rival those of Ray Bradbury’s “Illustrated Man,” is a charismatic charismatic who states that the day after his initial evening of ministering at Ignited Church an angel visited him in his apartment. Now his mission is to teach about “the angel” who will usher in a new era of divine healing. He claims that God has said to him, “Todd, you’re a first fruits of a whole new era that’s being released in the Church concerning the coming healing revival.”

Bentley says that the angel would often visit him, up to thirty times in one year. He hasn’t seen the angel lately, but Bentley believes he still shows up in meetings where Bentley feels him standing to his left. He claims that people in the audience tell him that when he prays they see an angel with him. Says Bentley:

We will never see the impartation and the ministry of the supernatural that God is releasing until we’re willing to acknowledge his ministers – the ones that do His Word. God speaks the healing word; the angels do his word. They are actively involved because there’s such a demonic influ-



TODD BENTLEY

ence even in the Church today that causes infirmity and sickness, and we do not battle against flesh and blood; we do not battle with demonic powers; the angelic hosts do. And the moment we begin to have an understanding and a reality – and thank you, God, for your angels; that’s what we’re saying, thank you, God for your angels. They’re working with us. In fact, they have nothing to do in Heaven but serve God’s purpose in you.

Bentley believes that his healing ministry will flow throughout the churches and that it will become a revival that will take us into the second coming of Jesus. He has been endorsed by John Arnott, pastor of Toronto Airport Vineyard at the time of the “Toronto Blessing,” Paul Cain and Bob Jones from among the Kansas

City “prophets” and others associated with various alleged outpourings of the Holy Spirit manifested by bizarre conduct. At times Bentley has lost control of himself on stage, laughing hysterically, falling on all fours, and engaging in myriad gymnastics to get the people’s attention. He encourages his audiences to let go of themselves to where they bark like dogs, and exhibit the same behavior found in the aforementioned “outbreaks.”

Bentley states that he has been to Heaven on numerous occasions, once when he was operated on by four angels who removed his internal organs and replaced them with white boxes representing wisdom, knowledge, and character. This, he says, was a “prophetic experience” meant to convey that God is going to impart these characteristics in new coverts because He doesn’t have time to wait thirty or forty years for them to mature. This is so that the last-days “revival” could be accomplished and Jesus could return.

He claims that at another time he went to the third heaven and saw the apostle Paul’s shack where he lives. Paul told him the reason there is no definite author known for the Book of Hebrews is that he was aided by Abraham in writing it.

Angels (or what Bentley says are angels) play a large part in his messages. He says that it was an angel that stood fourteen feet tall who visited him one week before he was commissioned into full-time ministry. He was invited to a conference where Bob Jones, Bobby Connors, John Paul Jackson, and other Latter-Rain proponents were celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of William Branham and Paul Cain’s work in the Northwest.

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Bentley states that at that conference an old man who worked with John G. Lake approached him to say that he brought with him the same angel that was assigned to Spokane and Portland in the days of Lake's alleged ministry. This angel will see to it that Bentley will carry the same anointing that Lake carried.

Bentley relates several instances when he was instructed by God to wreak violence upon people who came to him for healing:

I said, "God, why is not the power of God moving?"

He said, "Because you haven't kicked that woman in the face."

And there was this older lady worshipping right in front of the platform. And the Holy Spirit spoke to me, the gift of faith came on me. He said, "Kick her in the face ~ with your biker boot."

I inched closer, and I went like this [he demonstrates a hard kick to the facial area]: Bam! And just as my boot made contact with her nose she fell under the power of God.

In another case he speaks of jumping on a man, "full mount," pounding on him and then choking him in order to get a devil out of him.

He speaks of charging a Chinese man and hitting him so hard that when the man hit the ground a tooth popped out of his mouth.

In one instance he claims God told him to "leg drop" a pastor who was lying on the platform.

He claims to have healed a woman by violently banging her legs on the ground like a baseball bat.

COMMENTARY

This is sad enough, if true (his actions, not some alleged "healings"). But what is truly sad is the laughter and acceptance by the audiences hearing these idiocies.

Bentley says these are "winds of change." I call them winds of doctrine. I've seen extensive videos of Bentley. He does not

minister Scripture, but he talks incessantly about himself. Just like his predecessors, he promises a great revival that never takes place. It's the same old false teaching emanating from the debunked Latter Rain Movement of the 40s and 50s.

These people are nothing but hot air, conning people out of their hard-earned money while tickling their ears with foolishness. No sooner does one bite the dust from scandal and/or exposure of false doctrine and faked "healings" than another takes his (or her) place.

So I'm not going to rehash what I've said in the past. Those who are interested will find it all detailed in my book, *Vengeance is Ours: the Church in Dominion*. But let's consider just a few relevant things.

Bentley says, "It's all about Jesus." But it's not about Jesus – not the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible didn't work his listeners into a frenzy and drop false hopes on them. And that's about all these false teachers do. They tout their miracle-working powers through angels, but no true miracles are to be found among them. They practice psychic reading on people under the pretense that they have a word of knowledge. Yet their pronouncements are vague and unverifiable, and most of the time they are wrong. They claim healings under their anointing, but there are no verifiable healings to be found. Their testimonials are akin to those found among New Age practitioners, mind science teachers, and witches. But if there is any healing it isn't of God unless by His mercy He grants something in spite of, rather than because of, these people.

Although Bentley claims to constantly be in the presence of angels, he can't really tell whether or not a particular angel was Jesus. After reading from Revelation 10:1 about an angel with feet like pillars of fire, Bentley says:

This angel that has feet like pillars of fire has come to me on several occasions. I don't know if it's this angel, but I'm telling you there are angels in Heaven that have feet that are like pillars of fire. This might not even be an angel; it might actually be Jesus – the angel of the Lord. So maybe it wasn't an angel that came to me; maybe it was actually Jesus, but let me tell you the experience.

This is incredible. He didn't know if it was Jesus or some servant angel? Where do we find such uncertainty in Scripture?

What did this "angel" tell him? He doesn't say. Rather, as usual, he focuses on one of his weird experiences. There is no real teaching of Scripture. His messages are virtually all anecdotal recountings of his personal experiences. And we are to believe him because he tells us what he says is true.

According to Bentley it is not the Holy Spirit who administers the healings and miracles; it is "angels." But Scripture tells us it is the Holy Spirit who works God's true miracles through those whom He has gifted (1 Corinthians 12).

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of anti-Christ, which you have heard should come, and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:1).

Let no man beguile you of your reward through a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding onto the Head [Jesus Christ] (Colossians 2:18-19)

Some may say that these false prophets preach Jesus, so they are holding onto the Head. Or because they say that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh they must be of God. Not so. Those who teach and act contrary to Scripture, or who insist that their extra-biblical ideas (new revelations) are of God, are not holding onto Christ. And while it was true in ancient Israel that only those who were of God would say that Jesus Christ (the Messiah) had come in the flesh, today any devil may make the same proclamation to lead people astray.

If such fantastic claims as those found in the "Lakeland Outpouring" cannot be supported by Scripture then they must be discounted. And if they are not of God they must be the trickery of man or manifestations by the devil himself. ❖