

General Topics :: FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS**FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/19 17:16****The Toronto Deception****By a former Toronto Vineyard Pastor Paul Gowdy**

It has taken me nine years to actually come to the place where I would write this story. Part of the reason was because I was not fully convinced that it is appropriate to speak out against weaknesses in the body of Christ publicly. Another reason is because it has taken years of soul searching to become convinced that what happened in the Toronto Airport Church was actually all bad or at least more bad than good!

For the past number of years I have called it a mixed blessing. I think James A. Beverly called it this in his book Holy Laughter and the Toronto Blessing 1994. Today I would call it a mixed curse concluding that any individual good that came from this experience is far outweighed by much harm and satanic deception. I suppose that therein has been my dilemma. I have tried to live my life in the fear of the Lord and Jesus told us that the unforgivable sin was the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Attributing to Satan what was in fact a work of God. If pressed as to whether or not the Toronto blessing is all God or all Devil I will still be hedgy, but I am convinced that Satan has used this experience to blind people to the historical doctrines of God, to produce fruit in keeping with repentance, to failing to test and discern the spirits and failing to test prophecy.

After three years of being in the thick of the Toronto blessing our Vineyard assembly in Scarborough (East Toronto) just about self destructed. We devoured one another, with gossip, backstabbing, division, sects criticism etc. After three years of 'soaking,' praying for people, shaking, rolling, laughing, roaring, ministering at TACF on their prayer team, leading worship at TACF, preaching at TACF, basically living at TACF we were the most carnal, immature and deceived Christians that I know. I remember saying to my friend and senior pastor at Scarborough Vineyard Church in 1997 that ever since the Toronto Blessing came we have just about fallen to bits! He agreed!

My experience has been that the manifestation of spiritual gifts mentioned in 1st Corinthians 12 was much more common in our assembly, before January 1994 (when the Toronto blessing started.) than during this period of supposed Holy Spirit visitation.

During 1992-1993 when praying for people we would experience what I believe was genuine prophesy, deliverance and much grace and favour from the Lord. After the Toronto Blessing started, all ministry time changed, the only prayers were 'More Lord MORE ' , the shouting of 'Fire' the jerky shaking of the body with the 'ooh ooh OOH WOOOAAH' prayer. (I kid you not!)

On January 20th 1994 about 15 people from our church traveled over to Toronto Airport Vineyard in order to listen to Randy Clark, a Vineyard pastor from the USA. John Arnott had called our senior pastor to invite us. He communicated that Randy had been to the Rodney Howard Browne meetings and that the stuff had broke out in his church in the following weeks. John was hoping that something might break out with us too. We were only too happy to travel over. We were a

church plant out of the Toronto Airport and we started in 1992. In those days there were three Vineyard Churches in Toronto. One Down Town church, Scarborough vineyard church to the east and the Airport Church. We were one big happy family. Because we were small in number we did special meetings, conferences etc, together.

The year before most of our leadership teams joined and had headed to Nicaragua for a short term missions trip. We had genuine love and fellowship with each other. Since leaving the Vineyard churches I have read a fair bit of analysis from the critics. Some make out that the Toronto Blessing was one huge conspiracy to lead the body of Christ into heresy. Heresy and apostasy I suspect may well be the result, but none of these destinations were intentional. I am honestly convinced that the leaders in the Vineyard churches are genuine born-again Christians who love the Lord, but have fallen into deception. They have not loved the Lord enough to keep His commandments. They have failed to obey the scriptures and have been led astray by our longing for something bigger and brighter and more exciting and dynamic. I am guilty of this sin also. I have preached renewal in Korea, the United Kingdom, the USA and here in Canada. I am genuinely repentant and in writing this story I would ask you the bride and body of Christ to forgive me. Especially the Pentecostal / Charismatic Christians among you, for you are my immediate family theologically. I am an evangelical Christian, I always have been but I do not believe in the cessation of the spiritual gifts at the end of the apostolic era. I believe that it was my evangelical roots (my family are Baptists and I was born again in the Presbyterian Church.) that started to open my eyes to problems with this so called renewal. In hind sight I look back and think how could I have been so blind? I laughed at people acting like dogs and pretending to urinate on the columns of the TACF building. I watched people pretend to be animals, bark, roar, cluck, pretend to fly as if they had wings, perpetually act drunk and sing silly songs. How I thought that any of this was from the Holy Spirit of God amazes me today. It was loud irreverent and blasphemous to the Holy God of the Bible. I suppose in my mind I reasoned that as long as they did not teach any thing in direct violation to scripture then it was what we called the exotic. This is a buzz word for manifestations that could not be justified from a biblical perspective. I was taught from the pulpit that we had two options. The order of the nursery full of life and messy or the order of the graveyard, very orderly but dead! As a young immature pastor I wanted life with mess. I failed to remember that God wants us to become mature and grow up in him. I became disconcerted by the prophetic words that came forth especially one by Carol Arnott in which she had her bride experience where she was taken into the very presence of Jesus and said that the love that she experienced was even better than sex! I was shocked in my spirit and thought how can one compare the love of God with sex? When we suspected that demons were running riot in our services John Arnott would teach that we should ask are they coming or going. If they are leaving then that is ok! John would defend the chaos by saying that we ought not be afraid of being deceived, if we have asked the Holy Spirit to come and fill us then how could Satan come and deceive us? This would make Satan very strong and God very weak! He said that we needed to have more faith in a Big God to protect us than in a Big Devil to deceive us. This sounded very convincing but was totally contrary to scripture for Jesus and Paul and Peter and John all warn us about the power of deceiving spirits and especially so in the last days. Again we did not love God enough to obey His Word and the result was that we opened ourselves up to lying spirits. May God have mercy upon us!

Finally the penny dropped for me as I was rolling around one night 'drunk in the Spirit' as we would say. I started singing and as I rolled around the floor the Nursery Rhyme 'Mary had a little lamb its fleece was white as snow.' came to mind. I sang this in a mocking spirit and instantly my heart told me this was a demon. Instantly I repented and was in total shock. How could a demon get into me? Did I not love God? Was I not zealous for the things of God? Was I not nuts about Jesus? I knew that an unclean spirit had just manifested through me and I was guilty of great sin. After this experience I stayed away from TACF. I did not go back there any more. I did not possess the conviction to denounce the whole experience but thought that we were failing to pastor the Blessing well enough.

Even after I stopped going over to TACF, I had to pastor the fruit of it. One example was when some of our people returned from a meeting there asking us if we had all received the golden sword of the Lord? I asked them what they were talking about thinking that it was some prophetic reference to the Holy Scriptures but they said, 'no, its not the Bible, it's an invisible golden sword that only the really pure can receive. If taken in an unrighteous fashion then the Lord would kill you. But if you are holy enough to receive it then you can wield this sword and it will heal aids, Cancer etc. and bring salvation. How one wielded this sword was by pretending to have this invisible sword in your hand and motioning to strike people with it when in prayer! I thought while even in deception at this time that the TACF had become Looney bins! This was purportedly first received by Carol Arnott and then given to the ones holy enough to receive it! Another thing was th

the golden fillings in the teeth. We had people in our assembly peeping down one another's throats looking for the gold fillings that God had placed there to show how much he loved them! In all my time there I only heard one message on repentance given by a visiting speaker from Hong Kong named Jackie Pullinger. It went over like a lead balloon. We were not there to repent, we were there to party in the Lord! After one year into the blessing I spoke out at a pastors meeting and said 'guys we have shaken, rattled, rolled, laughed, cried and bought the tee-shirt. But we have no revival, no salvation, no fruit and no increased evangelism so what's the deal?' I was soundly rebuked - who was I to expect to see fruit when the Lord was healing his broken people? We had been legalistic long enough and God was spending this time restoring his wounded and freeing us from legalism I was told not to push the Lord and the harvest would come in his time.

I knew this was wrong because the Lord had commanded us to go into all the earth and make disciples! Not, that everyone should take a sabbatical for who knows how long, while God does some strange new thing! Ultimately I left over something as controversial as the ordination of women. Personally I believe from scripture that women should not be pastors / elders in a local assembly. I could be wrong on this and there is much debate in the Church today but that is my conviction and in the Vineyard churches they were ordaining all the pastors wives to co pastor with them. I am certainly for women in ministry but believe that the Elder/ pastor role in a local assembly has been reserved for men. I did not write scripture but God willing I will have the grace from now on to obey it.

So there is my story. I could go on and document much excess, folly, sin and latter day reign teaching that manifest from the prophetic end of this Blessing but others have already done that. We sang about Joel's army and the billion soul revival as if it were one of the Ten Commandments, and as always it was just around the corner. Next month, next year etc. Jesus said that when the son of man returns will he find faith upon the earth? And if he does not return when he does no flesh would be saved but for the sake of the elect he comes. This is a far cry from the dominionism that is being taught all through the vineyard / prophetic/ spiritual warfare movement. I honestly think that they think they are going to take over the whole world! While in the Vineyard I embraced a life verse from the Apostle Paul the phrase do not go beyond what is written!

To finish I just want to say sorry for the damage, that I have personally done by teaching things that are not correct biblically. I repent before men as I already have before God. I will not excuse my falling into deception. I did not bother to test things when the scriptures commanded us to do so. Everyone who was there when this thing started knows that what I write is true, they would just come to different conclusions especially if they are still promoting the 'river'

To those in the river I would say swim out, there are things living in the water that will bite you real good! I love the people of TACF and the Vineyard movement but I think that we have much to answer for and may the Lord open your eyes sooner rather than later. I suspect that when this letter goes online I will get bombarded by emails from both camps, some damning me for still believing in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and still walking in deception and some old friends damning me for exposing dirt or being negative about the Lords anointed! Well, the Lord knows my heart and by his grace he will guide me into all truth as I seek to know Christ and him crucified! If you believe that I walk in sin and error please pray for me that the Lord would forgive me and open my eyes. I will study the word to show myself a work man approved! I would call on all who read this to pray that the Lord would open the eyes of all who have been involved in this deception. Whether leader or follower, we are loved and the Lord is a forgiving God. He says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I believe we are like the church in Laodicea, we think that we are rich, have prospered and need nothing, we do not realise that we are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. We must take the Counsel of Jesus and buy gold refined in the fire (which is his suffering, not a false spirit!), white garments to clothe our shameful nakedness and salve for our eyes that we might see again. Jesus is calling us to repentance and thank the Lord that he is, for it will lead us to true restoration with our Father! If God has forgiven me and opened my eyes then he can do it for all those caught in deception too. I will finish with a warning from Paul, he says if you think you are standing firm be careful lest you fall.

Sincerely Paul Gowdy.

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<http://www.discernment-ministries.org/TheTorontoDeception.htm>

Re: FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS - posted by mamaluk, on: 2006/11/19 18:32

incredible, scary stuff..glad he got delivered

i think we have a lot of them here too

Re: - posted by tinluke (), on: 2006/11/19 22:13

This is amazing! I'm very tempted to copy this and pass it out at church! But I can't do anything that the Lord has not told me to do. I'm definitely going to pray about it though.

I'm just so humbled by God's endless love toward us. Even in this man's deception and complete mockery of all that is Holy and Pure, God still called out to him and restored him. We serve an awesome God!! I praise Him for His endless mercy and love. I would have given up on that entire church long ago, but Jesus is so merciful!! He is always looking for those who will come out and come to Him. Praise Him for His endless mercy!!

Re: FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS - posted by Chippy (), on: 2006/11/19 22:58

Thank you Paul for your courage in sharing and the gracious manner in which you have. I am sure your testimony will prove most helpful to many.

God bless you and your family richly.

David King

Re: FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS, on: 2006/11/19 23:14

Would to God that some of these open air preachers who stand outside bars and college commons and gay pride parades pray to the Lord and seek His will and see if He doesn't want you to head out to the Toronto Airport and go give 'em all a month long scourging in the Holy Ghost..

I'm not kidding..

Couple of weeks ago I took a cyber visit to the TACF site and watched a "service", and saw "elders" peeping into people's mouths looking for "gold teeth" that God "put" in their mouths.....

oh, this is all so discouraging, between Ted Haggard and this kind of stuff, I'm telling ya, all I want to do is to get five sold out to Christ believers and just hold intercessory prayer meetings in my living room, and ask, beg, the Holy Spirit to lead the meeting, no funny stuff, no barking, no drunkenness, just praying out as the Lord leads.

I'm so weary.

Thank God this man had the courage to denounce this kind of theo-feces from within the "movement".

bartle

post deleted by poster, on: 2006/11/19 23:42

post deleted by poster.....

Re: FORMER TORONTO VINEYARD PASTOR REPENTS - posted by enid, on: 2006/11/20 6:11

I think most Christians know that the Toronto Blessing was deceptive from the word go.

However, some bought into it, especially as time went by.

Here, however, we have an account from someone who was there from it's inception, and was in it for years.

As it is, some will ignore what he has said and done and continue in the deception.
Hence his appeal of others to pray for the followers of this deception.

We are to be careful that we don't fall. Fall from grace into the same deception, or anything else for that matter.

Seek the Lord, while He may be found.

God bless.

Re: - posted by Marsupial (), on: 2006/11/20 17:26

This blew me away it's good to see what "The Word Says" I seen some things happen the short time I been a Christian that really didn't sit right with me, When I questioned a few things I got rebuke that I can't judge the Lords work. All I have to say what about Paul correcting the churches he wrote to? The only thing with taking on something that you know is wrong it you have to be 100% right or be hummbel enough to admit your wrong (even the best of us could be miss informed) No matter what If we as christians don't research the Bible it is easy to fall into false teachings

Re:, on: 2006/11/20 18:18

Quote:
-----oh, this is all so discouraging, between Ted Haggard and this kind of stuff, I'm telling ya, all I want to do is to get five sold out to Christ believers and just hold intercessory prayer meetings in my living room, and ask, beg, the Holy Spirit to lead the meeting, no funny stuff, no barking, no drunkenness, just praying out as the Lord leads.

Hmmm, Squid... sounds like you're primed and ready for house churching!! Why dont you start one?

I commend this guy for taking a stand. It's simply not enough for people who are involved in this stuff and then delivered from it to leave quietly. I firmly believe they need to stand up and warn others... **loudly**.

I was involved in churches that were TACF and Brownsville wanna-bes when I was first saved. I've been to B'ville. John Kilpatrick himself prayed over me and pushed me to the floor. I was all for it, man. I bought into it hook line and sinker for 4 or 5 years after being saved. The only difference is I was a babe in Christ and didnt know any better, and so was my wife.

One thing that happens in these "fellowships" is (and those who have been there, done that can confirm this) there is a huge emphasis on reading books, and getting teaching tapes. I had every book available pushed on me... Benny Hinn, John Arnott, Kenneth Copeland... you name it. We listened to different teachers, etc.

But there was one book that was not pushed on us, at least it wasnt pushed on us as if it were something we needed to study and research and dig into... The Bible.

Oh, if you ask anyone in that deception if we should study our Bibles, they would say "yes, of course!"... but they spend so much time reading these teachers books, and watching them on **The Blasphemy Network** that they dont have time to study the Word. They **think** they are studying the Word cuz they watched Joyce Meyer this morning, but very few people in that mess actually rip into their Bibles.

And thats how deception comes in.

When it comes to teachers, trust no one. Treat each one, even your pastor, as if they could lead you into deception. Like when I teach in our house church, I tell everyone "Dont take my word for it... you need to take what I teach and compare it with scripture." And several times I've had to repent for getting something wrong, and I was glad for people in our fellowship being Bereans.

Thank God for this brave soul who has come forward with this. I'm sure he's taken some heat and has lost a lot of friends. I would rather lose all my friends than to lose Jesus.

Krispy