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The Needed Closure on Todd Bentley

(Note from Jan: Pastor Chris Elrod, Sr. Pastor, Compass Point Church, Lakeland, Florida, sums up the Todd Bentley scenario. None of us who were sounding warnings take delight in this closure. Yet we are relieved that fewer will now be harmed by another "counterfeit revival." - Jan Markell)

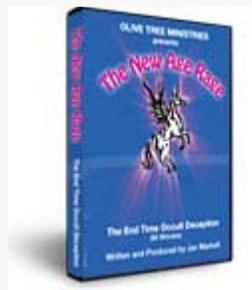
As I was on my way home from South Carolina last Thursday night, I got "the call." My friend and fellow Lakeland pastor let me know that the news about Todd Bentley -- the news that had circulated around Lakeland for weeks -- was finally about to break. For months it had been rumor with very little hard facts to back it up. Local church leaders had been hearing things about Todd and Ignited Church that caused us to question even more the validity of the "revival."

Then the truth began to come out bit by bit, first to Lakeland and then to the world, and now Todd's wife was in Canada getting help while he was "floating around" the United States trying to get his head together. Yes, Todd was legally separating from his wife. Yes, there was another woman involved. Yes, this was not the first time Todd had been involved with another woman.

Yes, Todd and Ignited Church had failed to address concerns -- many being voiced by their own denomination and people who support such outpourings -- about the heresy being preached and displayed at the "revival." Yes, there was not one single medical document to prove that any healing had actually taken place.



Jan Markell



any healing had actually taken place.

As the fallout continues and more facts are beginning to emerge about everyone involved with this mess, I have begun to ask myself some pretty hard questions. Did I handle this correctly?

When the first news began to break around here about Todd, healings, and the revival, I went to see it for myself. In all, I attended four separate "revival" meetings over a two-month period. I also watched countless hours of the events on the Internet. I witnessed Todd hollering "BAM" a lot. I witnessed "verification teams" in the parking lot carefully choosing people deemed candidates for "healing" while turning many others down. I watched ushers push ill children away from the stage area because they had not been preapproved for "healing."

I heard stories about pixie-dust-spreading angels and conversations with the Apostles in some abstract heavenly cabin. I saw leg drops, high kicks, head punches, and every other Wrestlemania cliché under the sun. I heard anonymous crazy stories about people being healed and others being raised from the dead. I heard and saw many strange things -- but nothing that even remotely kept with sound doctrine. Every biblical-discerning bone in my body showed me that there was nothing going on at the "revival" that was in keeping with God's Word.

I began to speak out against the revival, Todd, and Ignited Church, to our people. Mainly it was through our Journey Groups, one-on-one conversations, phone calls, and e-mails. However, I was advised by several other pastors not to speak out against it publicly because "I might be speaking against something that God is actually doing" (I wasn't questioning God -- I was questioning Todd). I never addressed it from the pulpit because our podcast is heard by hundreds of people all over the world. I never blogged about it because I get a 1,000+ hits on a normal day.

I dodged the questions about the revival in recent radio interviews I did in other parts of the United States. Finally, I refused to answer the hundreds of e-mails I got about the "revival" from other folks all over the world. In essence, I protected my flock from the three-ring circus and hoopla but did nothing to protect the Body of Christ as a whole.

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Hindsight they say is 20/20. It now turns out that all of the rumors were true. It now turns out that the scriptural discernment was correct. It now turns out that this was the same craziness without accountability that the leadership of the sponsoring church is known for. The three-ring circus has been packed up, the tents have been taken down, and the moral failure has been announced. Everyone involved is pushing back, and thousands of hurting people are left questioning God and their salvation.

The question that I now have to ask myself and the question that will haunt me for quite a while is this. Did I sit on the sidelines while the playing field burned? Should have I blogged about it and spoken out about it publicly -- done more to get the word out to the rest of the world that this whole thing was about Todd and not God? I took care of my own house -- but should I have done more to take care of the entire neighborhood?

Charismatic leader Dutch Sheets also humbled himself stating, "My assignment from the Lord is to repent on behalf of the leadership of the Charismatic Body of Christ. We have failed the Lord and His people in many ways. We must repent if we are to be trusted in the future. We, the leaders of the Charismatic community, have operated in an extremely low level of discernment. Frankly, we often don't even try to discern. We assume a person's credibility based on gifts, charisma, whether they can prophesy, or work a miracle."

NOTE FROM JAN: I am glad that these two leaders have been brave enough to speak out. Let's hope that many other leaders will follow in their steps and lead their followers to test ALL things and not just follow every wind of doctrine.

Remember to pray for Todd and his family.

My two hour program on this issue is posted at my ["Radio Archives"](#) for July 19, 2008. Numerous guests spoke into the issue, long before all the details came out. For podcasting information, click [here](#).

Awaiting His return,

Jan Markell

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Box 1452
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763-493-3010 or 763-210-8291