



Volume 7, Number 1 January/February 1996

"JUST A FLY ON THE ELEPHANT"

Jewel van der Merwe

The last newsletter was an introduction to ""The Toronto Blessing" as observed at the Metro Vineyard in Kansas City, October 13-15, 1995. This issue is a continuation. What is happening in relationship to Toronto and now the resulting separation from the Vineyard, is of vast importance to not only Charismatic/Pentecostals, but to multitudes of Christians whose spiritual life may have been impacted by the "so-called" blessing. Please keep in mind that it is doctrinal issues we are dealing with and not personal attacks. Our prayer is that we will soon have open forums where these important issues can be discussed and the truth of God's Word can dispel the confusion caused by aberrant teachings based on experience and mysticism.

Soaking Prayer. "Soaking Prayer" seemed to be of utmost importance in the services in Kansas City. People lie "soaking in the Holy Spirit" on the floor having their lives "revolutionized". John Arnott said, "As we soak people continuously, they will react". He continued by saying that everyone is "wired differently", meaning that the responses to the Spirit, or "manifestation" would therefore be different. This serves as the justification for performing the soaking prayer.

After reading about the "soaking prayer" a friend of this ministry wrote the following:

"When I read that 'soaking prayer' was performed at the Metro Vineyard through the laying on of hands. . . this brought back recollections of when I was in the occult. . .

We did the same technique for people to receive healing. Hands were laid on them for lengths of time for our 'energy' (soaking prayer) to permeate their bodies and the people also did 'carpet time' as they received this energy.

When I became a Christian, I renounced my occultic practices. To my amazement, within a few months the 'soaking prayer' was resurrected in Charismatic circles. I was involved with Christians who were in 'inner healing' ministries. Our motives were sincere in that we wanted to reach out to those who were in need of physical healing or to be healed from past hurts. Again, we were taught to lay hands on these people and 'soak' them in prayer. Sometimes this took hours for each person. I thank God that the Holy Spirit showed me that these methods and techniques were not of Him. I repented from my ignorance. . “ (Letter from Mary Titeca).

According to "Webster's" Dictionary "to soak" has several meanings: (i) to lie immersed in liquid (as water); (ii) to penetrate or affect the mind or feelings; and (iii) to drink alcoholic beverages intemperately.

"Reader's Digest Illustrated Reverse Dictionary (1990) had an added interesting definition: to impregnate, saturate (emphasis added).

The only scriptural reference to "*soak*" is Isaiah 34:7 which speaks about the Lord's wrath upon the nations and "their land shall be soaked with blood".

In referencing to this type of prayer, John Arnott says his wife Carol can tell when the spirit is flowing in and can also tell him when the recipient has his mind on something else because "it" (which is "the power") will back up and hit his wife.

Something Being Conceived? With the prevailing emphasis (at this meeting, and with the Toronto experience in general) on a "feel good" relationship with God, one almost naturally recalls the admonitions of Rodney Howard Browne to "Drink at Joel's Place." We are observing a marriage of sensuality to spirituality, of so-called new wine to deepening spiritual revelation. Mark, if you will, the trend of recent Charismatic teaching (over the past fifteen years) with its emphasis on "new wine" being poured out. In the wake of this "pouring" comes the more recent emphasis on drunkenness. Never before in Christianity has there been such an emphasis on lowering ones (spiritual) inhibitions. What will be the result of this?

This question can be answered, in part, as one re-examines historical evidence of mixing drunkenness with spirituality. The precedence for it is not found with the Christian church, but in Greek & Roman mythology, in particular the Bacchus festivals.

It is important to note that the Bacchus festivals (Bacchus also being known as Dionysus) were the festivals of Wine. When Paul visited Athens, this god was among the 12 gods on Mt. Olympus. Paul preached against the backdrop of these man-made gods. He directed the Athenians, who were always looking for a new experience, to the Living God.

Every year there were festivals held in Dionysus' honor. These festivals were often orgiastic and the worshipers sometimes overcome with ecstasy, enthusiasm and religious fervor. Plays were staged at these festivals and this was considered to be the "Mother Church" of Western Drama.

In Athens *"the whole city would participate in the festivals - business, government, commerce - came to a halt. . . on the first day of the festival, the city held a parade in honor of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility. . . In the amphitheater itself the stone seats on the front row were assigned to the priests of Dionysus.*

Everything in the festival, from the bloodiest deeds in the tragedies to the bawdiest, most sexually explicit material in the comedies, was in the framework of a religious observance. Art and religion were indissolubly linked." Detroit Free Press, Thomas J. Bray, 12/17/95.

In the preceding issue of Discernment, a quote from Standard American Encyclopedia, (Cuneo Press, 1937) described these festivals as:

"Feasts in honor of Bacchus, or Dionysus, characterized by licentiousness and revelry and celebrated in ancient Athens. In the processions were bands of Bacchantes of both sexes, who, inspired by real or feigned intoxication, wandered about rioting and dancing. . . "

At this October meeting we observed behaviors akin to intoxication, wandering, mindless dancing and the like. We also heard about something being "birthed". If something is being "birthed", then obviously something had preceded this birthing. Therefore, we were not too surprised at what we witnessed on Saturday morning.

The wife of Mike Sullivant (one of the Metro Vineyard pastors) testified that Jesus' love was different than the love of the Father. She said she had been "kissed by Jesus' passionate kisses" and the Holy Spirit screamed into every part of her body, "I want you." This made one wonder if this were a revival of Incubi and Succubi. "The latin-derived incubus means 'that which lies upon! Succubus means 'that which lies beneath! These terms were used by the medieval church to refer to demons said to engage in sexual intercourse with mortals." The Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends, Stuart Gordon, Headline Book Publishing, .1993.

St. Augustine also wrote about this demonic activity. (Interesting enough, similar stories are circulated today, but substituted with UFO related activity).

It was very difficult to stay in this service and observe first hand things that we were afraid to believe were actually happening. Mrs. Sullivant stated she had been to St. Louis for "renewal" meetings and testified that, when she was there, it was a transformation period. But, she said that what had happened to her in Kansas City the preceding night (Friday) was different. Mrs. Sullivant gave this "testimony" at the request of John Arnott, prior to his message that Saturday morning. He asked his wife Carol to "soak" Mrs. Sullivant and eventually she ended up doing "carpet time". John Arnott stood in front of her and continued speaking. He said, "There is a need for midwives to facilitate and release birthing. . . "

It was not long and Mrs. Sullivant began groaning and her body pulled into contractions. She sounded exactly like a woman giving birth. Several in the audience began manifesting that same activity. Two young women fell on the floor and lifted their legs in a stirrup position, also appearing to be having contractions. (This continued well over one hour).

The trend continued on into the afternoon session when Carol Arnott spoke of a dream where she was at a wedding feast with *Jesus* as the bridegroom. Naturally, she was the bride. Jesus asked her to dance with Him and He held her in His arms. But, alas, her dress and veil were

too long. Suddenly little birds appeared and picked up the train and flew around the happy couple, merrily singing. Just like Cinderella - a la Disneyland!

While John Amott was speaking later that day, a neatly dressed man marched to the front of the auditorium and shouted, "Thus said the Lord thy God. You brought this Christless move of God by your pretense and your arrogance. Judgment is going to come upon you."

Needless to say, he was quickly hustled out. The man in front of me, for no apparent reason, turned to us and said the young man had attended the Metro Vineyard for some time and he was "full of anger".

It was difficult to observe all this activity and not draw conclusions based on our observations.

Bill Jackson, a Vineyard pastor from Illinois said, "In talking to John Arnott. . . the overriding theme has been joy. . . God's people are simply having fun in Him. . . the apostles traveled throughout the ancient world preaching that the day of God's party had come" (Article entitled, "What in the World is Happening to us?").

The Day of God's party had come? To determine the "truth" of what we were witnessing and hearing, there were two criteria laid out: (I) historical precedence and (ii) reliable witnesses.

As stated earlier in this writing, historical precedence was established far and away from Christian truth. Reliable witnesses abound, as one cannot imagine anyone claiming to be a believer, publicly testifying to the aberrant experiences they have had unless they are quite real.

Parties usually bring to mind frivolity, drunkenness and debauchery. Is there a type of spiritual licentiousness being unleashed? When the Word of God is no longer the standard, there are no guidelines for conduct and the flesh is manifest. As a result there naturally will follow ungodly spiritual activity and strange manifestations.

Manifestations. These strange manifestations certainly are not limited to the Toronto based church. For years they have been fostered in the Vineyard circles as the Holy Spirit has been viewed as a type of, 'energy" or "power" that is called forth. The results can be very bizarre when tapping to this "power". Recently "laughter" has been the most pronounced. The hilarity is interpreted as 'joy" and again a result of God throwing a party. Resulting ecstasies and abnormal behaviors can be found by applying the same techniques whether through hypnosis, eastern religions or even Islam. Among the Moslems are S\ms which are comprised of fakirs or dervishes. It is interesting to note that they are regarded as MYSTICS, "some of whom howl, bark or whirl to induce the ecstasy in which they believe they know God." The World's Great Religions, Time, Inc. (The World of Islam.)

Within the present "move" there are many more examples. The gamut runs from "roaring", "barking", "clucking", a "rotor- tiller", etc.

The animal noises are explained as a way to make a statement. In the estimation of their leadership, the manifestations have a decided prophetic edge. They obviously believe the manifestations are the sign of being "filled with the Spirit" They do not place value on speaking in tongues as do the "classic pentecostals". In fact, at this particular October meeting,

praying in the spirit was described as being a "block" to receptivity (Sept.-Dec. Issue Discernment, pg. 3). Some of the unusual "prophetic" interpretations were:

Roaring: This represents a lion which puts a person in a warrior mode. Usually high profile leaders have this manifestation. One Vineyard pastor who roared felt God put a shield and spear in his hand and an eagle feather war bonnet was placed on his head. He ran around doing Indian war dances making whooping sounds. He said that God told him to "rise up and pursue your enemies". He felt himself breathing out fire, water, winds and growls. Naturally there would be an interpretation to all of this. The eagle feathers were the prophetic "seers" and a new realm of authority is being released. The analysis of this pastor's experience was that he would have his inheritance, and his enemies necks, so it's time for war!

Barking. This represents a dog and some who are involved in the "renewal" will say that if people bark, you know it is demonic and there needs to be deliverance. In a special meeting with pastors, John Arnott said that actually barking can be prophetic. Dogs bark when someone is coming. He asked the pastors, "Do you know someone who is coming?" Then he decried those who said that barking is not in the Word. His response was, "Do you have pianos in your church?" which was implying that pianos are not in the Word either. He then said,

"God is much bigger than the Book. Much of what we do is not there!"

Dogs are in the Word, but they are not in a positive light. However, they are prominent in mythology (historical precedence). The dog guards the door to the secrets of the underworld. "Jackal-headed Anubis, the dog that attends Melbarth, three-headed Arberus in Greek myth, the dog with Asclepias - all symbolic entry to the underworld. . ."

Other mythic wild dogs are capable of destroying worlds. The Fenrir Wolf (or his cubs) in Norse myth chases the sun, and at Ragnarok, devours it. Garro, another terrible dog, howls furiously, calling all men to war. . ." The Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends, Stuart Gordon, Headline Book Publishing, 1993.

Crowing and Clucking: These chicken sounds are also given a prophetic meaning. The rooster always crows announcing a new day. Arnott referred to the fact even the world knows that, as WINDOWS 95 has a rooster on the back of its new software package. The clucking sounds can remind of a mother hen - and on and on it goes.

A recent article on the Toronto Blessing from the Washington Post (11/18/95) by Carol McGraw made the observation that, "*The blessing looks like the evangelical version of primal-scream therapy*". People who are normally reserved find themselves caught up in the most unusual demonstrations.

The same article also observed that James Ryle (Bill McCartney's pastor and active leader of Promise Keepers) was also making animal noises and "*snaps his fingers, bangs the podium, paces and tells how God will appear here in suit of fire, oil, water. . .*"

The mind reels. Could this be the result of several decades of Disneyland? Somehow the Kingdom of God is being replaced by the "Magical Kingdom". In Disneyland there are certainly no limitations on the fantastic because that is of what the Magical Kingdom is made.

The influence of our television age was apparent in a message by Todd Hunter (Vineyard) imploring a congregation in Mission Viejo not to be Clark Kent, but to put on your "Superman suits".

Back to Kansas City. At a meeting later in the same Saturday evening, after the Arnotts had departed, we observed the audience holding hands to "connect the anointing". We then heard the leader telling the people to imagine they were "Indiana Jones in the Spirit". Later they were instructed to pass imaginary balls of "power" from hand to hand. It immediately brought to mind the image of Walt Disney of Fantasia where Mickey Mouse, as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, has the magic in his hands, and passes it from one hand to the other.

It is very difficult to accept that this could even remotely be the Holy Spirit. The precious Holy Spirit of God (according to the Scriptures) is the third person of the Trinity whose work is to exalt the other two members, God and His Son, Christ Jesus. The Spirit came as the Comforter, per the promise of Christ. As the Comforter, He leads us into all TRUTH.

What I am observing is a treatment of the Holy Spirit as an "it" or a "force" that comes upon people and makes them experience something quite real, then manifests in a peculiar manner. This phenomenon is interpreted as "power" and one must just get "connected" to it. What makes this concept any different than the Kundalini? According to a report in Battle Lines, Christian Research Ministries, P. O. Box 18600, Spokane, WA, 99208, December, 1995, the comparisons were striking. Both had: Rolling on floor, twisting body, unable to speak, heat sensations, energy flows through body, tingling, pressed to floor, sexual excitement, visions of angels, laughing, emotional releases, clenched jaws, increase in saliva, eyes rolled back, face wrinkles up, experiences of love and peace or (bliss) and we could go on and on.

When the Word of God is no longer the authority and standard, seducing spirits abound. Have you wondered about the increase of the popularity of angels? Some advertisements in the supermarket are inviting shoppers to learn how to communicate with their own angel. The health food stores are full of "new age" spirituality. Even pastors, their wives and members of the Deacon Board are peddling products that are new age in origin. When confronted and shown the evidence, most times in a scriptural manner, those involved become defensive and unwilling to see the error of their ways. They proceed as the blind who lead the blind.

Shamanism is being made a part of "spiritual life" today. A Shaman is a "priest who uses magic for the purpose of healing the sick, divining the hidden and controlling events". Without the authority of the Word of God, how are we going to know the difference? Shamanism is actually *"a religion of the Ural-Altaic peoples of northern Asia and Europe, characterized by belief in an unseen world of gods, demons, and ancestral spirits. ..."* WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, G & C Merriam Co. 1975).

The New World Orderers of today reach back to pantheism in the re-packaging of Shamanism.

"As children, we spontaneously communicated with animals, birds, flowers and toys. . . the memory of these experiences survives on some unconscious level and surfaces into awareness when we are introduced to shamanism for the first time. . . our innate mysticism, which seems to fade during the long arduous route to adulthood is never totally quenched. . ."

The "Spiritual" companions were designated as:

Elves, fairies, guardian angels, patron saints, cartoon and comic book characters, and the fictional heroes we met in books or movies whom we admired and wished we could be like. All these were our spirit guides when we were young. . . as shamanic practitioners, we should reconnect with the visionary experiences we had as children for several reasons. First, they were our first mystical experiences and those most natural to us. . . , Second, the personal spirits with whom we had intimate, ongoing relationships might still be playing active roles in our lives today and it would be helpful to realize how they stayed with us over the years, or returned once we began our shamanic practice. . . one of the reasons to explore our shamanism: to recover the fearlessness, the sense of communion, and the innate wisdom with which we were born." SHAMANISM AND THE SECRETS OF CHILDHOOD, phenomeNEWS, Jan. 1996.

Something Being Birthed.. Leaders throughout Christendom are joining together in unity as never before, excited about a new revival or a new thing that is going to appear. This drama will intensify as we move toward the year 2000. In fact, it will be almost impossible to resist the dawning of the Planetary Pentecost that is bursting upon the horizon. There are those who believe God is getting ready to "rescue the planet". This unity is their last hope.

Jack Hayford in Charisma, December 1995, challenged regarding unity, ". . . maybe you can fund the first breakfast so he [your pastor] can invite a dozen or so fellow shepherds to meet together. The Holy Spirit just might birth a prayer partnership among them."

In our area we had a type of "infomercial" on our local Christian radio station by Jack Hayford. It was regarding the "*Mary Miracle*". He said, "The Holy Spirit comes to us to give Jesus to us, to grow Him in us to change the world around us." He said that he got this understanding, not through study, but further inspiration. (Emphasis added).

There is an escalation of something which will increase as we rush toward AD 2000. Yes, something is being birthed.

M Scott Peck, a New Ager captures this "something" for us quite clearly.

I think what is meant by the Second Coming is not the bodily return of that one solitary man, but the coming of the mystical body of His True Church; the coming of the spirit of Christ to everyone, sweeping through the world. Father, make us like Mary. . . to give birth to Your Son; to give Him to everyone. This is the time of the Second Coming. Whether we like it or not. There's no alternative except self-annihilation. . . it is the time of the Second Coming. . . The time when we must choose is upon us. Father, makes us like Mary ". What Return Can I Make. M. Scott Peck, p. 152.

Matthew Fox (Dominican, Director of the Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality) says about the same:

Indeed the birthing of the Cosmic Christ is the purpose of the incarnation. . . Divinity wants to birth the Cosmic Christ in each and every individual. "The Coming of The Cosmic Christ" pg. 122.

Ed Tarkowski, in a message entitled, "Christmas in the Hands of our Adversaries" carefully chronicles this "birthing" connection.

Pat Robertson interviewed Judson Cornwall on the 700 Club, June 9, 1994. Judson Cornwall referred to a prophetic vision that Glenn Foster had in January, 1994 in which he saw them both in a PREGNANT CONDITION. He said that during this night vision the Lord revealed:

"I am now impregnating some of my mature, older ministers with truth. . . I'm choosing my older men because I can trust them to carry that truth to full gestation and have the patience to raise it up once it is delivered. . . I will bring forth truth that is not now being taught and you will be part of it. "

This all fits together with NEW TRUTH being proclaimed for the New Day we are entering in to. This is revelation that goes beyond Scripture

Ed continues on this new truth coming after FULL GESTATION.

Marilyn Hickey's husband, Wallace, gave the following prophecy at a Rodney Howard-Browne meeting aired on TBN in May, 1994.

". . . God is new and lie's a growing person as anything that is alive. . .Just let God be God in you as a child, as a child be. God would will that the whole of everyone in eternity would be like He is, never old, every young, growing, a growing thing. "

We need to ask the question, "Is this the God of the Bible?" Or rather, "new teaching" coming into the church from many divergent streams?

One stream feeding into this same river is the Endtime Handmaidens. In their October, 1994 newsletter they say:

Sarah is a type of the Church. The Church is "withered" and its womb is dried up in many places, but God is sending a revival of joy to waken and renew the Church so that she can bring forth the 'man-child' of joy, even the army of overcomers who will go forth in the likeness and image of the Lord in these last days.

The conception, gestation, birthing and contractions are all in order for the Church to bring forth the Man-Child. This term is used interchangeably to mean the same thing as the Corporate Christ, the Manifested Sons of God, the Elijah Company, Joel's Army et al. It comes from a spiritualizing of Revelation 17, a form of Replacement. Theology that replaces Israel with the Church. This is exactly what was being talked about in 1948 in The New Order of the Latter Rain. In his letter to the archives of the Assemblies of God, George Hawtin stated it very clearly:

That which was begun by the Holy Spirit in 1948 will end with the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD AT THE END OF THE PRESENT AGE. THE ADOPTION; of which Paul spoke so often, is FULL, MATURE SONSHIP. . . I said to a friend of mine, Brother Young, 'Why do you suppose the Lord started this great move in the first place?' And he with simplicity replied, "To Get the Sons out." That was one of the most confirming statements I have every heard; and that, dear child of God; is the purpose for which our Father in heaven sent us this glorious outpouring - that the TRUE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST MIGHT BE FORMED, the Sons of God to be manifested at the end of the age. . . the elect were being gathered and the light was increasing. The next great event in order is the manifestation of the sons of God, the resurrection and the long-awaited kingdom of God that will shine its gladsome rays over all the earth. . . The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.

Do you see the problem here? What is being called for is a manifestation without the personal appearance of Jesus Christ. So then, what is being looked for? A glorification of the body. . . or, finding the god "within". It is humbling to say and even believe these words, but it is pure gnosticism! We are being conformed to His image and His likeness day by day. However, here on this earth we will only know in part, but when He shall appear, then we shall be like Him - for we shall see Him as He is. We look for Him! Our gaze must be heavenward for His appearing, not inward toward ourselves, nor around toward the Church at large. Our longing is for His appearing in the literal clouds, when WE SHALL BE CHANGED! Amen!

THE EXPULSION OF TORONTO

Recently, John Wimber and staff travelled to Toronto where they laid out concerns with John Arnott and the Toronto Vineyard. They did not believe John Arnott had followed Vineyard guidelines laid out in a 1994 directive. The main area of concern was expressed as:

The problem is that in the opinion of John Wimber and the Board and the Canadian Leadership, these things (people that "roar" or "cluck" or "bark"; have been spotlighted, spiritualized, and otherwise promoted contrary to the policy - a policy which was worked out and agreed upon with the leaders of Toronto present and participating. Obviously, if someone is not following seriously given advice of their pastoral leaders in the Vineyard, not on a minor point, but on something which is seriously given and printed up and sent out to every pastor in the movement, then there really is no point in continuing the official relationship. . . since they don't choose to follow the counsel of John Wimber and the Board on this point, it is not appropriate for them to keep the name Vineyard." E. Steven Nicholson, Dec. 11, 1995.

It seems impossible to comprehend how the Vineyard can suddenly remove itself from what has developed in Toronto and thus around the world with Vineyard impetus. Several years ago the Vineyard tried to distance themselves from the "prophetic", yet continued to sell such tapes in their bookstores. There seems to be a separation, for all intents and purposes, so that each stream becomes its own tributary for awhile before merging for the final onslaught. A Vineyard pastor from Kelowna, B. C. says it well:

Perhaps the Great Director (God) is producing a new synergy in the guise of separation and tension that will produce a new movement, a new corp, and a new tributary from the River of God." (Roger Helland).

Now John Arnott is free to move full steam ahead with bizarre manifestations and revelations upon revelations, free from encumbrances. With PromiseKeepers picking up steam, it behooves the Vineyard to disassociate from Toronto. It will be interesting to see what kind of face "Charisma" will put on all of this. Toronto has been given so many favorable reports in that magazine. "The New Man" (the PromiseKeepers Magazine) is also published by "Charisma".

Todd Hunter (works closely with John Wimber) made the claim that in 1977 John Wimber spawned the Third Wave. He says that the Vineyard employs Pentecostal means to an Evangelical end. Hunter believes that Wimber was able to renew the evangelicals that were missed by the first two waves. According to him, the first Wave was "speaking in tongues", the second Wave was being slain in the spirit, getting in to "high praises" and shepherding. He believed John Wimber was to take the power that was available (and not being tapped), and marry it to the plain things of scripture. (Again the marriage of the physical to spiritual.). So, the premise was that there is power that is not being tapped in to.

Hunter calls John Wimber a Synthesizer. He calls him this because of what he can put together, i.e. he took George Eldon Ladd's Kingdom message and married it to the Pentecostal message.

KINGDOM MESSAGE.

John Wimber was best known among evangelicals (and Catholics) as a conference speaker. . he would teach. . the kingdom of God is here, accompanied with "signs" of "kingdom power", all to make the point that evangelism is more effective when demonstrations of "kingdom power", accompany the message; hence the term, "Power evangelism."

Pastors who receive Wimber's views, often making a sudden shift from their previous "Dispensational" views, then go back to their congregation, and before you know it, another "Vineyard". . is born. Perhaps Christians who attended other churches in the area would hear of the exciting changes taking place in their friend's church and then leave their own "denominational church ", and join in on all the excitement. This is what is known as "church growth". . .

Wimber has been very candid at admitting. . that the views of George Eldon Ladd regarding the kingdom of God are the theological justification for his "doin' the Jesus stuff" ministry of preaching the "kingdom of God" accompanied by "Signs & Wonders".

". . from Dr. Ladd I came to believe that the kingdom of God is, in fact, relevant to our lives today. . at the very heart of THE GOSPEL lies the kingdom of God and that effective evangelism and discipleship relates directly to our understanding and experience the kingdom today. This revelation remains the most significant spiritual experience since my conversion in 1963...

...it was not until I read his book [George Eldon Ladd] JESUS AND THE KINGDOM, that I realized his work on the kingdom formed a theological basis for power evangelism. . . . I became convinced that power evangelism was for today.

. . . The KINGDOM OF GOD is the Rule of God (the age to come) which has invaded the kingdom (rule) of Satan (this present evil age), and is the arena in which Sign and Wonders occur. They are the "marks" (signs) of the Kingdom. Understanding about the kingdom of God is fundamental to understanding the ministry of Jesus; the kingdom of Satan was his real enemy. There is a war on! Jesus was sent by God to shatter the strongholds of Satan. His ONE PURPOSE was Satan's defeat. Jesus accomplished this through his death, resurrection and ascension. This demonstrated who was the victor, but Satan is not yet cast out and will not be until Christ returns to establish his Kingdom forever. The Church is God's Army in the continual fight which goes on with Satan as she "lives between the times".

To anyone familiar with the theology of George Eldon Ladd; the above should sound strikingly familiar, and the false teaching above should be easily discernible. (Manuscript - Carl Widrig)

Why the disagreement with Toronto? The main point of disagreement seemed to be in the interpretation of "renewal". This word is ballied about and then brought into focus for definition and re-definition. It has been difficult to determine if what is happening in Toronto is Refreshing, Renewal or Revival.

According to the Anaheim Vineyard conference during the summer of 1994, John Wimber was positive about the Toronto Blessing. However, he did caution that it could be harmful in the long run if the focus was too much on the renewal itself. He cautioned to keep the spirit phenomena in perspective. He reminded the people that there has been phenomena on and off throughout the Vineyard from the beginning. His concern seemed to be that it would aim the Vineyard toward Pentecostalism rather than Evangelicalism.

It would seem that John Wimber approved of the Toronto Blessing in the same way he embraced the prophetic. However, he disassociated from the prophetic because of the excess baggage. That seems to be the case also with Toronto.

One wonders what will be supported next? It may be the Promise Keepers holds the key for the fulfillment of the Kingdom Message as their call for "unity" compromises doctrinal truth. The unity the Promise Keepers teaches is an outward visible unity based on "love" and "relationships". This diverts people from the truth and is a far cry from the "unity of the Faith" spoken of in Ephesians 4:13.

A TESTIMONY

One Fish That Jumped out of the Water.

Tricia Tillin of BANNER MINISTRIES of England received the following letter:

Over the past few months, I have come out of the "Toronto Blessing", and have realized what a sad state the church is in. I am 20 years old and have only been a Christian for 18 months, having come out of drugs, the occult and new age, etc.

I experienced the "Toronto Blessing" when I first visited Brighton at Terry Virgo's church, Church of Christ the King, 13 months ago. . . I experienced all the manifestations, from falling, to swimming, to growling, laughing, crying, convulsing, shaking - the works. . . I had a "love" for Jesus, I sang of His kisses, of seeing Him run over mountains and peer through doors. Yet, I always seemed to wonder where my "lover" was. I experienced times of absolute depression and anxiety. I would start crying for no reason. I would scream at God and swear at Him. I couldn't understand where this "God of Love" was when I felt like that. . . Many times, during this time, I considered turning away from God and returning to my old life. . . .

Looking back, I can see that my walk with God took a real and serious nosedive. I was falling into sin and feeling far away from my Saviour. I couldn't get out of the sin, and yet I was being convinced that I was meeting with God and my life was changing. During this time, two close mends left the Fellowship because of things being taught. . . I was advised not to have any contact with them, or receive ministry from them because they were 'in rebellion' and because I was under the authority of the person discipling/shepherding me. . . .

Over a period of time, they gently brought me to a point of questioning the "Toronto Blessing".

. . . . I did manifest, but not as much. . I was horrified when Terry Virgo encouraged us to get together in a circle and hold hands as a sign of 'unity' and to let the power flow through us.

. . . It was a testing time. My life turned upside down. . . I decided to write a letter to the elders. . .

I met the elder armed with scripture and questions. He (the elder) had two conclusions: (I) the Bible is a book of principles; (ii) I was a dispensationalist/pre-millennialist. . . within two weeks I appeared before the Senior Pastor. He's a Greek scholar and Theologian. . HE NEVER ONCE OPENED THE BIBLE. All he said, in an hour, was experientially, 'people did strange things when the Holy Spirit came upon them in the Bible', and 'auto suggestion does take place' and 'keep the spirit of unity'.

. . . . since leaving my life has improved. . . I spend time with God every morning, read the Word and the Cross has become central to my life. . . . All I want is to see people come out of their deception and set free! Matt D. Sussex, England