

The Toronto Deception

By a former Toronto Vineyard Pastor Paul Gowdy

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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 where 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 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 my self 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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