
Subject: Lakeland "Revival": The Nature of Deception.

Dear Saints

1. **"In order to get rid of darkness, you don't curse the DARKNESS - you simply switch on the LIGHT!"**
2. **"Forensic experts who need to identify counterfeit banknotes don't study the COUNTERFEIT - they study the ORIGINAL."**
3. **"Don't worry. God is in control."**

Agree with these? These statements sound good, don't they?

I'm sure that you've heard at least one of them, quoted as the TRUTH and nothing but the TRUTH, somewhere along your Christian walk. Personally, I hear them relatively often. The problem with all of them is that each contain a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, LIE.

Lately, Todd Bentley - central to the so-called Lakeland "Revival" - has issued a beautiful letter (see attachment) in which he addresses the objections to his ministry. And although he states many truths in it, this letter could, once again, soothe believers into accepting his ministry - and the accompanying phenomena - as sound, simply because he sounds like a such a gentle, godly man.

Just for the record: We are NOT fighting a person. I honestly accept Bentley's *bona fides*. We've made inquiries about his person, even with people close to him, and as far as we could establish, Bentley is a sincere man. In that, we are more than happy to give him the benefit of the doubt. Unfortunately, we have to consider the fact that sincerity has never been, and will never be a safeguard against deception. Greater men than Bentley have been deceived in the past.

However, we are indeed fighting a VERY DANGEROUS SPIRIT, one that has deceived the world and the Church for literally millennia - a spirit whose characteristic symptoms are more than evident in Bentley's ministry, as it has been in the so-called "Toronto Blessing".

For the best part of three years, I have studied this spirit, the so-called Kundalini or serpent spirit, and have conducted several deliverance sessions where it had manifested. In the occult it is also known as the fire serpent, prana, chi, Hermes, Mercury, Thoth, Ureaus, St. George, St. John, the Green Man, Baphomet, orgone, esprit, elan, bio-electricity, "holy fire" (sound familiar?), and last but not least: the "*holy spirit*" and "*Shekinah*"!

And having studied it and its effects, I have enough reason to be very suspicious about the phenomena surrounding Bentley's ministry.

Also, for whoever might not know me personally: Having been a leader in the prayer movement in South Africa for at least ten years, and part of the pentecostal Church for a significant time, I am also well versed in the true manifestations of the Holy Spirit. I have seen almost every gift of the Holy Spirit operating through others, and many times through myself. I have witnessed baptisms of the Holy Spirit and true intercessory travelling many times. In fact, I am personally very much PRO the supernatural side of Christianity, and very much PRO its power!

However, because of Bentley's worldwide influence, I believe that we as a prophetic ministry have a responsibility before God to warn His people against this SPIRIT, and its deceptiveness.

We certainly don't do this because we enjoy causing conflict in the Body. If we desired comfort, peace and quiet, we would have remained silent.

But before God we need to act with integrity. And the Truth will set us free!

In order to grasp the nature of deception, let's put the above statements under the magnifying glass:

1. **"In order to get rid of darkness, you don't curse the DARKNESS - you simply switch on the LIGHT!"**

In the natural, this is of course largely true. Although: ONE light does not drive away ALL darkness! Sometimes you need more than one!

In the spiritual (the context in which it is usually quoted), it is an outright lie.

Why?

Because darkness is nothingness. Darkness is the ABSENCE of light. Darkness is not an entity in itself - it is the absence of that entity, namely light. Therefore, if you have light, the absence of light disappears.

This is NOT the case in the spiritual.

Demons are entities in themselves. They are not the absence of God. Neither are they the absence of angels. Neither are they the perfect logical opposite of these. They have personalities, and can make independent decisions. I've seen this hundreds of times during deliverance sessions.

And experience has taught me time and time again that demons don't necessarily flee simply because the Holy Spirit is present. (If you think they have to, consider this: The Holy Spirit is God, and therefore omnipresent - so why do we still have demons around?)

In the case of demons, quoting the bold statement above is logically almost equivalent to saying: "*In order to get rid of 'squatters', you simply need to get 'a man of integrity' to own the land!*" This is not much of a solution to a squatter problem! (For those who struggle to get the analogy immediately: Squatters are, by definition, illegal occupants of land owned by someone else).

On numerous occasions in the past (as someone who've studied the vices of darkness), I've been personally and frantically consulted by acclaimed "switchers on of light" who didn't know how to get rid of darkness once they encountered it!

2. **"Forensic experts who need to identify counterfeit banknotes don't study the COUNTERFEIT - they study the ORIGINAL."**

This is a blatant lie. Quite the contrary is true (I've checked!).

Forensic experts do study the original - but this is not the ONLY thing they study. They study, in the most intricate detail, the work and techniques of forgers.

They are like Jesus. They have a detailed, foundational knowledge of BOTH THE ORIGINAL AND THE COUNTERFEIT. Jesus is the greatest teacher on the devil and his works recorded in the Bible.

3. **"Don't worry. God is in control."**

God is not in the controlling business at all. *Control*, as a concept, is pre-eminently the playing field of a demonic entity called *The spirit of Jezebel*. In the counselling world, her vices are known as *domination*, *manipulation* and *control*.

God does not control us, nor is he interested in controlling us. If He were, He would have made us robots, and denied us a free will.

But He didn't. He chose to be "out of control" by allowing man to take independent decisions - even rebellious decisions right against His will.

(What we actually mean when we quote the statement in bold is: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*. Rom. 8:28.)

These three examples give us an excellent demonstration of the nature of deception.

WHY DO THESE LIES DECEIVE US SO SUCCESSFULLY?

We believe the statement about originals and counterfeits, although it is an outright lie. It SOUNDS good, and reinforces some of the erroneous doctrines we believe. Therefore we WANT to believe it. And because we WANT to believe it, we never check the facts.

Why do we WANT to believe it?

Because it reinforces our COMFORT ZONE. We don't have to "make our hands dirty" with bad, demonic stuff. We don't have to study. We can only fill our minds with things that make us feel good and comfortable.

But is that necessarily wrong?

Yes, it is, because no seaman ever becomes a good sailor if he forever cruises along calm waters. The deception lies in the **false comfort** that this statement seems to guarantee.

We believe the statement about God being in control, because the choice of words reminds us of Rom. 8:28 - but it does NOT say the same thing. It SOUNDS good, but it is a lie. The deception lies in the **choice of words**.

We believe the statement about light and darkness, because it verbalises an **obvious truth** - but the deception lies in the subsequent **false analogy** that it draws. The analogy is not a valid one, because the metaphors aren't compatible.

A STRONGHOLD OF THE MIND: THE DANGER OF "MIXED SEED"

I could have used many more examples, pointing out the literally hundreds and maybe thousands of techniques that can be used to deceive weak, fragile human hearts and minds. But we lack space.

Bad enough as they are, the alarming fact is that these deceptions don't just stay where we've left them. Subsequently, they set out to establish what is called "**a stronghold of the mind**."

What is a stronghold of the mind?

Ed Silvano, in his book *That none should perish* defines a stronghold of the mind as such:
A mindset, impregnated by hopelessness, that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something which is contrary to the will of God.

How does this come about?

For whatever reason, the believer starts to believe something which represents, say 95% truth, and only 5% falsehood. Because he believes it in full, the person adjusts his behaviour accordingly.

Most believers will rationalise this, and downplay the fact that "only" 5% falsehood is present - that's if they recognise the 5% falsehood at all!

In most cases, the 95% truth in this seed mix completely obscures the 5% lie.

And if any person would dare to point it out, that person would be accused of "nit-picking," "heresy hunting," "a critical spirit," etc.

But this 5% bad seed OPENS US UP to believing the next concept, which might represent 90% truth and *only* 10% falsehood. Because we believe it in full, we adjust our behaviour accordingly.

The 10% lie BUILDS ON the previous 5% falsehood, and uses the 5% as its foundation.

This opens us up to receive a concept which represents still 80% truth, but 20% falsehood - building on the previous 10%. Because we believe it in full, we adjust our behaviour accordingly ...

Unchallenged, this process continues on effortlessly, until we eventually believe 100% pure lies, and would defend them with a hundred and more "good reasons."

Our outward behaviour now displays the outer layers of the lies we believe, while the original tiny lies are deeply hidden within our subconscious mind.

This whole structure of tiered (or layered) lies, building on one another, is known as A STRONGHOLD OF THE MIND.

How does one dismantle a stronghold of the mind?

It's difficult!

Because the person's behaviour represents the outer layers of lies, those are usually the first lies to be confronted by the truth.

Let's say lie no. 25 gets confronted by the truth:

Then the person simply says: *I believe that, because ...* and he mentions lie no. 24 as his reason.

Then, if told that no. 24 is ALSO a lie, he simply responds: *I believe that also, because ...* and he mentions lie no. 23!

And this process continues ... lower and lower down the order of lies.

The problem is usually that, long before tiny lie no. 1 gets confronted, the person with the stronghold gets angry: "*Are you trying to tell me that everything I believe is a LIE?*" And the process stops.

OUR SAFEGUARD AGAINST DECEPTION

"When you're deceived, you don't realize you're deceived - BECAUSE you're deceived!" - Eben Swart

Jesus admonishes the Sadducees:

You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Matt. 22:29. Also Mark 12:24.

One of the fatal mistakes that we make in the Church is to think that mere knowledge of the Scriptures will safeguard us against error. (If we REALLY knew the Scriptures, we would know that we were wrong, because the very Scriptures deny this notion! - see the verse above)

Of course we need to know the Scriptures. But Jesus mentions another factor: *The power of God*. If we don't know *the power of God*, we will fall into error.

That is the reason why we see so many different theologies. Theologians major in Scriptural knowledge. Theologians don't major in the power of God. That's why they fall into error. You need BOTH to safeguard you against error.

But there's another snag here: The above scriptures DON'T say that they are in error because they don't know POWER. No, it speaks of "*the power OF GOD*."

All power is not GOD'S power. In order to be able to discern any truth, we need to have a PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE of God's supernatural power, together with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

The question here is: How many Christians have ANY testimony of God's supernatural power operating through their own ministry? Have you PERSONALLY seen God's hand working when YOU mentioned the Name of Jesus? Have YOU spoken the Name of Jesus, and seen things change instantly? Or have you only seen OTHERS do it?

If you haven't, **false power (even in the Name of Jesus) might deceive you**. Many demons carry the name "jesus". (For those who didn't know: Demons play dirty. They aren't good sportsmen).

Nowhere do the Scriptures guarantee that a display of supernatural power in the name of "jesus" is the real thing. It does say that there's power in the Name of Jesus.

Moreover, the Scriptures say that in the last days even the elect, if it were possible, might be deceived by such displays of supernatural power. Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22. Can you imagine that false last-days miracles with such deceptive power would be performed in any other name than the name of "jesus"? Miracles in the name of Satan would hardly deceive anybody!

The problem here is that we sit with a stronghold of the mind: Layered lies, building on top of one another. How come?

Because, since the days of William Branham, the Church had been sold supernatural phenomena (most probably the working of a Kundalini spirit) under the name of the "holy spirit" (no capitals here!) And we've been trained by church leaders for decades to receive these phenomena as originating from the Holy Spirit!

We've come to know power. But was it the POWER OF GOD?

Why were these church leaders in error? Because they were theologians, with minds bursting with Scriptural knowledge, but with little to no PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE of the true supernatural power of God. Which leads to error.

So they themselves received these Kundalini phenomena, and let their followers do the same.

THE FRUITS?

We do not judge SUPERNATURAL POWERS by their fruit. Read the Scriptures. We judge FALSE PROPHETS by their fruit. Matt. 7:15 - 16. Todd Bentley is said to be a prophet, as well as a worker of supernatural powers. For lack of space we will not discuss his prophecies here, but only the source of the supernatural powers in his ministry:

We judge THAT by knowing the original (God's power), as well as the counterfeit (Kundalini power).

God has also supplied at least some believers with a divine, supernatural tool for this very purpose: The gift of discernment of spirits. 1 Cor. 12:10.

As is the case with every one of the three supernatural revelatory gifts (words of knowledge, words of wisdom, discerning of spirits), it would usually come to the receiver as an "impression," and hence be subjective. In his letter, Bentley's kind but subtle downplay of this gift inside the Body - discerning the SPIRIT behind his ministry - as mere "discomfort" due to traditional or spiritual bias, is alarming. We need this gift in the Body more than ever!

Nevertheless, Bentley advises us to look at the fruits of his ministry. He mentions **salvations** and **healings**.

1. **Salvation** cannot occur without repentance from sins. Do we see this in Lakeland, Florida?

We DID see it abundantly during every past true revival. Actually, repentance from sins often formed the most evident phenomenon during the entire revival! Repentance was not hidden or obscured, it was open and in your face! With tears and sobbing!

Sadly, in Lakeland we don't see tears and broken hearts over sins, but bio-electricity, involuntary shaking, uncontrollable shouting and other unmistakable Kundalini phenomena!

2. **Healings** also occur at Lourdes, France, in the name of the Virgin (in a Roman Catholic setting). They also occur in Africa in the name of ancestral spirits. And I can mention many more.

The difference between demonic healing and Holy Spirit healing is this:

Holy Spirit healing is for free, gratis - permanently! Demonic healing gives with one hand, and takes with the other.

The only available documentation of the medium-term effects of Bentley's ministry in a local church reports that they weren't good. Even the divorce rate in that church rocketed.

Who is keeping track of the medium and long term effects of Bentley's ministry? Is this healing for free, permanently, or does it give with one hand and take with the other?

AN OPEN THIRD EYE?

I truly don't have any desire to nit-pick Bentley's letter.

But there is one paragraph which had all my red lights flash on:

"Many people don't see what's happening in the spiritual realm, viewing things only from the physical realm. This is one reason why there's so much division right now. I have found that many are judging things by what they see or hear in the natural, by their natural senses, to feelings, or without having relevant supernatural experiences themselves." (Last paragraph under "Encounters/Visitations").

Is Mr Bentley implying that HE sees into the spiritual realm, and that some others cannot?

Does he have an open third eye?

If so, he is DEFINITELY infected with a Kundalini spirit. And transfers it with every laying on of hands.

SCHOLARLY?

As to the accompanying letter (see attachment) of dr. Gary Greig, Ph.D. which, according to Bentley, "is written at a high level of scholarship for pastors, church leaders and theologians," I would rather refrain from comment. The errors and ignorance concerning spiritual matters are obvious, even to the "untutored" mind and eye.

BIBLICAL?

On logical grounds, Bentley's argument concerning extra-Biblical phenomena is perfectly valid.

But it raises a crucial question:

In any TRUE revival: Would Biblical phenomena be central, or extra-Biblical phenomena?

I believe the answer is obvious.

KUNDALINI PHENOMENA

I've taken the following symptoms from an **occult** web page on the Kundalini spirit (freely translated from Dutch):

- Muscular pullings or spasms.
- Strong energy currents of immense electricity circulating through the body.
- Itching, vibrating, titillating, tingling, sharp or creeping sensations.
- Intense sensations of heat or cold.
- Involuntary body movements (often occurring during meditation, rest or sleep): shocks, vibrations, shivering, the feeling of being held in a specific posture by an inner power, or moving the body in an unusual manner.
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Episodes of extreme hyperactivity or overwhelming tiredness.
- Intensified or inhibited sexual drive.
- Headaches, pressure on the skull.
- Accelerated heart rate, chest pains.
- Digestive problems.
- Numbness or pain in the limbs (especially left foot and leg).
- Pains and blockages in whatever body part, often in the back and neck.
- Emotional explosions; rapid mood changes; extraordinary periods of sadness, anxiety, anger or depression, seemingly without cause.
- Spontaneous vocalisations (including laughing or crying) - just as uncontrollable as hiccups.
- Hearing an internal sound or sounds, mostly described as whistling, drumming, waterfall, chirping birds, buzzing bees; but it can also resemble booming, rustling or thundering sounds, or ringing ears.
- Confusion, struggling to concentrate.
- Changing levels of consciousness; increased consciousness; spontaneous trances; mystical experiences.
- Heat, strange activity and/or experiences of bliss in the head, especially at the crown.
- Ecstasy, bliss and periods of immense joy, love, peace and compassion.
- Paranormal experiences: Extra-sensory perception, astral travel, memories of past lives, leaving the body, direct awareness of auras and chakras; contact with spiritual guides by means of inner voices, dreams or visions; healing powers.

- Increased creativity: Fresh interest in self-expression and spiritual communication by means of music, art, poetry, etc.
- Heightened understanding and sensitivity: Insight into the own self; deeper understanding of spiritual truths; extraordinary awareness of the environment (including "vibrations" of others).
- Experiences of illumination: A direct knowledge of the greater reality; transcendental consciousness.

KUNDALINI TESTIMONIES

Please consider the following testimonies (my emphasis):

1. Patricia Pinchon:

*He extended his arms, and I suddenly saw Benjamin Creme's face disappear, and in the frame of what had been his face was a completely different face which didn't look anything like him. It was a face that was a sort of golden-bronze sort of colour, with very large dark eyes that were very luminous, and very high cheek bones, and a longish face. And He also had a beard, this **extraordinary Being** Who was looking at me. I actually saw Him for the full twenty minutes that this **blessing** lasted, so I had a very good chance to have a very good look at it, at this face. And when His eyes came directly into my line of vision, I felt these tremendous **waves of energy** radiating from this Being, and striking me in the heart. And **I was really moved**, to the very depths of my being, because what I actually experienced was a tremendously **powerful** and **very pure love**. It was something entirely **remarkable**, to experience a **love** like that.*

Patricia Pinchon could just as well have been at a Lakeland meeting. But she was not. She describes a New Age meeting. Benjamin Creme is a leading New Age figure in Britain.

2. Kumar Swami, an Indian Christian working with Operation Mobilisation in India:

*His father was some kind of witch-doctor in a village. One day a few years ago Kumar's elder brother announced that he had received '**the power**.' To prove his point he stretched out his hand and touched, first his mother, and then Kumar — both of them **fell to the ground** as though stunned. Immediately his brother received the **veneration** of all the villagers and set off to demonstrate **his power** in other places.*

This describes the ways of an Indian witch-doctor. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

3. Swami Baba Muktananda, a great Hindu guru:

*My identification with a lion had become stronger still. I **roared** so much that the cows nearby broke their ropes and ran helter-skelter, dogs barked madly, and people rushed to my hut. Sometimes I would zigzag along on the ground **like a snake**, sometimes **hop like a frog**, sometimes **roar like a tiger**. My mind was held **spellbound** watching the extraordinary inner moods-of **the Goddess Chiti**.*

Was this a Hindu guru operating, or a Lakeland meeting? Who would know the difference? When this swami would touch his disciples on the forehead:

*Manifestations included uncontrollable **laughing, roaring, barking, hissing, crying, shaking**, etc. Some devotees became **mute or unconscious**. Many felt themselves being infused with feelings of **great joy and peace and love**.*

4. Glenda Waddell, a member of staff at Holy Trinity Brompton, the Anglican Church in London which acts as the British headquarters of the Toronto Blessing:

[T]o my absolute horror I just knew beyond any shadow of doubt my hands were doing strange things and I was going to roar. I said, "Oh Lord, IT do anything but please, please, don't make me roar. Only the men roar and the women don't roar." But it came and I did roar quite loudly and I made a lot of awful noise and I was crawling around the floor doing terrible things and half of me was thinking, "This cannot be me." But another part of me knew that it was.

Any sign of free will here? Does the true Holy Spirit ever override our God-given free will?

5. Mick Brown, testifying about a meeting of John Arnott, pastor of the Airport Church, Toronto:

*A body came falling towards me. I rested it on the ground and moved on. I found myself beside John Arnott, who was moving through the crowd, blessing people, who fell like ninepins. I didn't even see his hand coming as it arched through the air and touched me gently—hardly at all—on the forehead. "And bless this one, Lord...." I could feel a **palpable shock** running through me, then I was **falling backwards**, as if my legs had been kicked away from underneath me. I **hit the floor**—I swear this is the truth—**laughing** like a drain.*

Mick Brown is not a Christian. He is an unconverted Daily Telegraph journalist who went to Toronto to write on the Toronto Blessing for the Daily Telegraph magazine. But the effect on him is the same as on Christians. And by the way - this experience didn't in any way convince him to become a Christian! Is this the Holy Spirit?

THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF DECEPTION

The Bible is unambiguously clear on the fact that deception will increase in the last days. The current deception is not the first, nor will it be the last one to tempt the Body before the second coming of Jesus.

Deception is ALWAYS mixed with truth. The greater the percentage of truth, the more effective is the deception. Therefore, it is not surprising that the current one contains so much truth.

Often, at the **entry level** of a stronghold of the mind (where only about 5% falsehood is present), deceived people experience something similar to an initiation: "A whole new world" of understanding opens up to them. This whole new world is represented by the subsequent 10%, 20% ... 100% **lies** which follow.

And if the way for those lies have already previously been opened up and paved by others, the deceived person feels almost overwhelmingly awe-inspired by the structuredness of the "new world opening up."

And this is exactly what we are dealing with now in Lakeland:

Although each of the following ministries represents a good percentage of truth, the way for the current deception of this decade has been opened up and paved by smaller percentages of falsehood in the ministries of those who had gone before:

William Branham (of whom a fellow preacher said that Branham should rather just do the miracles, rather than preach - because his teaching was so skew!)

Kathryn Kuhlman (a Jesuit priest, dr. Roberto R. Riviera, who came to know Jesus admitted that she was a Roman Catholic Church plant. When ministering, she always dressed up like a wiccan witch)

John Arnott (the pastor of the Airport Church, Toronto)

Rodney Howard-Browne (South African born preacher, who introduces himself as "God's bartender" - dishing out the Holy Spirit like alcohol).

Kenneth Copeland (prosperity gospel teacher)

Benny Hinn (who is obsessed with Kathryn Kuhlman's ministry. In his own book he describes how he went to her grave to "draw power" from her bones)

Randy Clark (the man who brought the "blessing" to the Airport Church in Toronto)

Kenneth Hagin (whose tongue, like that of a serpent, darted in and out of his mouth while ministering - I have the video documentation)

These are just a few of those who had gone before. And Todd Bentley will not be the last to follow.

My prayer is that this article, although uncomfortable, will truly bless you. I pray that you will increase in understanding and insight, and that God's truth will set you free, in the mighty **Name of Jesus!**

In Christ

Eben Swart

P.S. You are more than welcome to distribute this article to friends, fellow Christians and loved ones.