

A Lakeland Update  
From C. Peter Wagner  
October 29, 2008

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Dear friends,

This is an update on the aftermath of the Lakeland Outpouring. As most of you know, a day or so after I went to Lakeland and helped align Todd Bentley with Revival Alliance on June 23, the veil of secrecy over a number of serious, hidden sins began to come off. God has now shaken what could be shaken in Todd's life.

On August 12 he announced that he was leaving his wife of nine years, and it had been revealed that he had been directing his attentions toward another woman.

This is now history, but many have been asking for an update. I have delayed sending you this email until I had an official statement from Todd's apostolic alignment, John Arnott, Ché Ahn, and Bill Johnson of Revival Alliance. Here is their statement, issued October 23, 2008, four months after the alignment:

**PUBLIC STATEMENT ON TODD BENTLEY FROM REVIVAL ALLIANCE**

Dear friends, several years ago, six leadership couples came together formed a relationally based, non-denominational network called Revival Alliance. When the Lakeland revival broke out Todd Bentley and the revival meetings were coming under much criticism. At the suggestion of Peter Wagner, three of the members of the Revival Alliance team went to Lakeland because the Alliance as a whole wanted to express support for the Lakeland Outpouring and to commission Todd as a revivalistic evangelist. Having been powerfully touched in the Toronto outpouring, and seeing the opposition that came from leaders in the church because of that movement, we wanted to stand with Todd and deflect some of the personal assaults that were coming against him. Many of the attacks were coming from well-respected Christian leaders, people that we still hold in high esteem. Yet the mandate from the Lord was clear.

And we stood with Todd and the Fresh Fire Ministries team to both endorse and support this move of God. Rory and Wendy Alec of God TV also took tremendous risk in airing the revival prime time and broadcasting it to over 200 nations around the world. Their heart is to capture and release the move of God, no matter where it happens, or who God uses as His instrument. This unparalleled media attention gave unusual advertisement for the outpouring. But it also put their whole team in an unusual, high-level position of receiving both praise and criticism.

The impact of the Lakeland Outpouring has been amazing, and it still continues. The

record of conversions and miracles of healing is extraordinarily great in number. And the spreading of the revival to nation after nation has also been very significant. The God TV broadcast stirred up the hunger in people from around the world to go to Lakeland and receive from God, but then bring it home to their local churches.

Impartation seems to be one of the unusual markers of a genuine move of God. Revival fires began to spread around the world as a result of the impartation received at Lakeland. But as great as the fruit has been, so have the devastation and fallout from Todd's personal failure.

While there must be no toleration or whitewashing of sin, there must also be no allowances for ungodly judgments in the name of Jesus. Hatred often masquerades as a passion for holiness. And while the church has had its share of tragic failures of leaders in recent days and equally tragic reactions, we must get this one right.

It is possible to promote holiness and accountability in the spirit of grace. The quickness to condemn and abandon a fallen comrade has caused us as much concern as has the actual sin of our friend. Some want to humiliate and expose Todd before the world. And then there are others who want to point to the obvious anointing on Todd's life as the sign of God's approval of Todd's behavior. Neither is acceptable to us. There must be deep repentance and thorough restoration

The restoration process must be firm but loving, while holding to the Kingdom standards of both holiness and grace. The initial goal is not to get Todd preaching again. It is to get him healed from the issues of the heart that have brought devastation to his family, and such shame and failure to him. His gift will always function when given an opportunity. We just want it to come from a place of personal victory and triumph this next time.

Since the announcement of Todd's leaving his wife, Revival Alliance has been working to help restore our fallen brother. Sin is disastrous on any level, but it is wellknown that "to whom much is given, much is required." Gross sin from someone on Todd's level of influence is devastating. Even so, God is ready to heal and restore.

Todd recently spent three days in Redding, California, with Bill Johnson dealing with the issues of his personal life. Following that, he went to Morningstar Ministries in Charlotte, North Carolina, to be with Rick Joyner for the same reason. Rick, along with the Morningstar leadership team, has offered to help in his restoration. With great confidence, Revival Alliance recommends this as the appropriate process for Todd's healing and restoration. Todd will be moving to Morningstar Ministries to live for a season. Rick Joyner's wisdom, along with the strength of the Morningstar community of believers, will be a great support to Todd as he deals

with the heart issues that brought about his failures. A council of three has also been formed to give oversight to the restoration process. Rick Joyner, Jack Deere, and Bill Johnson will give oversight as needed.

We appreciate the prayers and support of countless numbers of believers who have continued to support Fresh Fire Ministries. We also appreciate the prayer support of so many for the Revival Alliance. We are also very thankful for Rick Joyner and his whole team that will be working to bring about a complete healing to our friend, Todd Bentley.

It should also be noted that effort is being made to ensure that Shonnah (Todd's wife) and children are also cared for and given opportunity to receive ministry and help. As you may imagine, they have suffered great hurt from this failure.

There are many in Fresh Fire Ministries who also need help. Efforts are being made to serve them as best as possible. John Arnott recently invited the Fresh Fire Ministries associates to Toronto for their Signs and Wonders Conference to receive personal ministry and encouragement. These kinds of efforts will continue.

Bill Johnson, John Arnott, and Rick Joyner have each spent time with the Fresh Fire Ministries board, and will continue to assist them as needed through this tragic season. Fresh Fire Ministries will continue their crusades and conference schedule around the world. They are a group of ministers with much integrity and a great heart for the lost. Pray for them as they maneuver through the challenging season ahead, while serving the church at large.

We are thankful for the honor of being involved in this crisis.

On behalf of Revival Alliance: John Arnott, Ché Ahn, and Bill Johnson  
Thursday, October 23, 2008

### Apostolic Protocol

The Todd Bentley situation affords us a good contemporary case study in the proper application of agreed-upon apostolic protocol. Before an international TV audience, Todd affirmed that he desired to be apostolically aligned with Revival Alliance, and then received their apostolic commissioning as a revivalistic evangelist. Almost immediately, the shifting that this alignment produced in the invisible world caused Todd's hidden personal life to begin to unravel until he left the Lakeland Outpouring in early August. Host apostle, Stephen Strader, continued services in Ignited Church until he finally closed it in October.

The Revival Alliance took the first steps toward dealing with Todd's discipline and possible restoration. However, Rick Joyner of Morningstar Ministries in Ft. Mill, South Carolina, a friend of Todd's, offered his services to help in the process. Revival Alliance, then, decided to outsource the long-term hands-on restoration to Rick. Rick brought his friend, Jack Deere onto his team, and Bill Johnson was added to maintain a link with Revival Alliance.

After reading the Revival Alliance statement above, some have asked not only who is now in charge of the restoration (Rick Joyner authorized by Revival Alliance), but also who would make the official announcement to the body of Christ if and when the restoration is complete and give Todd clearance to resume public ministry?

The answer to this question revolves around responsible apostolic protocol, and the proper answer is that only Revival Alliance would be authorized to make such an announcement.

How would I reach that conclusion? Later on, I will explain the Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team, but first let me introduce an official statement on apostolic protocol dealing with situations such as Todd Bentley's issued by the group in October:

#### Statement from the Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team

Current issue: Paul Cain and his appearance on the platform of the Lakeland Outpouring.

The background. At one point rather early in Lakeland Outpouring I, prophet Paul Cain was invited to appear on the platform. A few months before the Outpouring began he had prophesied publicly that such an outpouring would break out in Lakeland, and Todd Bentley felt it would be appropriate to recognize Cain on the platform and let the audience know about his accurate prophecy. While Cain was there, he took the opportunity to announce, among other things, that he had been living a chaste life and that rumors about him were not true. This event drew criticism from many observers who knew something of Paul Cain's recent experiences. It turned out that he had been living a secret life which involved problems with drunkenness and homosexuality. Three Christian leaders who had been long-time friends and colleagues of Cain, namely Rick Joyner, Mike Bickle, and Jack Deere, attempted to bring correction and restoration privately, but to little avail. Consequently, they decided that, following the precepts of Matthew 18, they had come to the place where they needed to announce Cain's moral turpitude to the church at large with the hope that this public reprimand would speed the process of his restoration. Cain's response was to place himself under the accountability of other, self-chosen, Christian leaders who after a period of time announced that his restoration had been completed and that he was free to return to public ministry.

This was an obvious violation of apostolic protocol. The correct apostolic protocol would have been for the three who first blew the whistle publicly to have been involved directly in any announcement to the body of Christ that Cain's restoration had been complete. Not only were the three not involved, but they felt that the timing for such an announcement had been premature. Bentley knew something of this situation because he reportedly later commented that he had thought (wrongly!) that he had first cleared his intentions of inviting Cain to the platform with Rick Joyner. The problem had become more complicated with Cain's public confession of having lived a chaste life, apparently denying that he ever had been involved in homosexuality. His

later explanation that he really meant that he had been chaste only since his restoration" was not sufficient to change the impression left with the huge international television audience who heard his first words. Our conclusion is that inviting Cain on the platform and allowing him to have the microphone was an unfortunate mistake on the part of Bentley since it was an intended or unintended violation of apostolic protocol.

The principle. What can we learn from this?

The principle is that the prescribed restoration of a fallen leader should be undertaken only by or under the direct supervision of the apostle or apostolic group (whether or not the term "apostle" is used) with which the fallen leader has previously aligned. The practice of the leader, himself or herself, slipping out from under a recognized accountability structure in order to select what would inevitably be a more lenient person or group of persons should be regarded by the body of Christ as unacceptable behavior. The proper apostolic protocol should be for those involved in the initial apostolic alignment, and those people only, to make any public announcement on the progress of the restoration or that the restoration has been completed and that the restored leader be allowed once again to resume public ministry.

As a footnote, it should be recorded that in recent years Paul Cain has not been the only high-profile leader to attempt this evasion of accountability. Others have taken similar erroneous pathways, and our opinion is that there should be a general consensus in the church that such behavior will not be repeated or tolerated in the future.

In light of the above statement it seems clear that public reports of the progress or successful termination of Todd Bentley's restoration be made only with the explicit approval of Revival Alliance. Any attempt to circumvent this apostolic protocol (as was done in the case of Paul Cain) should not be regarded as acceptable to the body of Christ. Especially those of us in the charismatically-inclined evangelical stream feel deep embarrassment over a number of recent cases that have taken this deviant route.

The Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team

As I have told you in other emails, after I moderated the meeting at which Todd Bentley was aligned and commissioned, I received over three thousand emails. Many of them expressed dismay and concern over issues that had surfaced during the Outpouring itself and during the commissioning. I carefully cataloged these and simultaneously pulled together a group of apostles which I called the Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team. The team included Stephen Strader, Steve Strang, David Cannistraci, Ché Ahn, Lee Grady, Joe Askins, Jeff Beacham, Chuck Pierce, and John Arnott besides myself.

One of the first things we did was to analyze the issues raised and end up with a list of 24 important concerns, each of which we would discuss and attempt to issue a public statement to the body of Christ.

We began our work and issued the statement above on apostolic protocol for the PaulCain case, reducing the list to 23. Meanwhile, God began speaking to Dutch Sheets, whom many of you know is my pastor at Freedom Church here in Colorado Springs, and who has been recognized as an apostle to our nation. Dutch felt that God was giving him an assignment to deal with many of the issues that I had on my list, and others as well, from a proactive, rather than a reactive posture as I had been doing.

After consulting with John Kilpatrick, Dutch approached me with the possibility of making some changes. I gladly received his suggestions and, frankly, I was greatly relieved. While I chaired Todd's alignment ceremony in obedience to a direct word from God, I did not have the same clear assignment from God to deal with the issues.

I had organized the Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team only because I felt it was my duty. Dutch now has a passion for the task, while I only had a sense of responsibility.

The upshot is that I have now disbanded the Lakeland Outpouring Apostolic Team and passed the torch to Dutch Sheets, who will form a similar group. One condition for Dutch's action was that I would agree to be a member of the new group, which I did. I also think that a proactive stance will be much more profitable for the body of Christ long term than my reactive approach, dealing specifically with problems arising from the Lakeland Outpouring which no longer exists.

#### Conclusion

That is my update for now, and probably the last one I will issue on the subject of Lakeland. Criticisms of what I have done have been severe, but affirmations have outnumbered them maybe one hundred to one. Only a few have been so upset that they have severed relations with me, and I deeply regret this. But I have no regrets over what I have done in the last four months, although there are undoubtedly a few things that I could have done better.

Let's move on to new horizons for the kingdom of God!

Blessings,  
Peter