



# The Plumbline

Assessing Current Teachings, Issues and Events with Scripture

## "The Apostles/Prophets Have Fallen and Can't Get Up"

It all happened on the evening of June 23, 2008 in Lakeland Fl. The occasion was a sudden visit of an august group of self-proclaimed Apostles and Prophets at the site of Todd Bentley's world televised revival meetings. I happened to be viewing the event on the God TV. C. Peter Wagner, the presiding apostle, suddenly appeared at the microphone with a group of apostles and prophets huddled just behind him. Instead of the tone of freewheeling extravagant revivalism, the mood was businesslike and somber. There were no references to gold dust or palms flowing with oil, no visiting angels (male or female) hovering near in glowing and glistening apparel. Except for the absence of liturgical robes one could almost feel the solemnity of a worldwide papal announcement sometimes called a Papal Bull.

"Apostle" Wagner began by reading a statement: "My name is Peter Wagner... I have served the body of Christ and currently I preside over the International Coalition of Apostles which brings together over 500 recognized apostles. I have the honor being assigned to preside over this momentous occasion, and I am humbled as I approach this with an enormous sense of awe. Holy Spirit I invite your presence, your power and your direction... Todd is following Paul's example by inviting to the platform three apostolic pillars of today's church. Che An of Pasadena, Bill Johnson of Redding, California and John Arnott of Toronto... This commissioning represents a powerful transaction taking place in the invisible world."

Todd Bentley (otherwise known as "Bam Bam") falls prostrate to the floor and quivers like a bowl of jello at their feet (description from Marsha West). The prophets now gather in and in turn begin to prophesy. Some the prophets utter prophetic words that paint Bentley as a supernatural super hero, even the first-fruits of the greatest of all revivals of the end time. These various prophetic words are too long and extended to quote entirely. However, there are a few that seem extreme (i.e. like Extreme Prophetic, Pat King). The prophecies are significant because of what we now know of the character and life of Bentley even as "prophetic" words were being spoken over him. Stacy Campbell who describes herself as an "ecstatic prophetess" has become famous (or infamous) for her delivery of prophesy. Her head begins to turn and shake so fast that all you can see is blond blur and at intervals she hisses loudly. (Google "Stacy Campbell" to witness this.) Stacy begins: "Todd because you asked, like very few men on the face of the earth. I will begin a revival through you that will move the very heart of God... I have chosen you to release a living epistle like the Word that became flesh and you will father a movement that operates in such revival power that is coming out of the very nature of God." Georgian Banov, a prophet, from Eastern Europe then follows: "Because you have loved His presence there are two anointings on you from the Lord.... The first anointing is the pleasure of the Lord." Banov then recites his own paraphrase of Isaiah 63 and concludes with ... "And God is releasing His pleasure and what He did to Jesus is upon you." The gist of this word is as Jesus was rejected and humiliated and attained God's pleasure, now God is releasing the same on Bentley. Many have remarked that this is a blasphemous word to attribute to a mere man.

We all now know (Not just a few inner circle prophets) that Bentley is just another discredited TV evangelist. Furthermore, the "alignment event" has been exposed as an exercise in false prophesy. We

now know that the other "so-called" apostles spoke words over Bentley that night that were not from God. I can boldly say this as it was only a few weeks until what many of Bentley's staff persons had known all along, that Bentley was having an affair with a staffer named Jenna, became known to all. The point is that if these prophets spoke for God at the "alignment", surely our omniscient all-knowing God would not have given these effusive words of endorsement that the prophets uttered. God is not only all-knowing but He would not have entered into this apostolic alignment as the source of fraudulent words for an evangelist that would soon be discredited. Ergo!! the prophets who spoke were giving false words purportedly from God. Scripture refers to this as false prophesy.

When the news exploded on August 23, Bentley left his wife, got a quickie divorce in Vegas and married Jenna immediately and went directly to Fort Mill, SC (Rick Joyner's headquarters). Rick Joyner, Bill Johnson and Jack Deere have been working on a "restoration." Todd Bentley (TB) is working out and lifting weights. He and his new wife have had his two children down from Canada to Fort Mill SC for a couple of weeks. This maybe have helped Shonna as she is dying of bone cancer. Bentley has been to IHOP (International House of Prayer) in Kansas City and claims to be writing a theology of divorce and remarriage. How convenient? Bentley had a similar sexual dalliance about two years ago of which we now know that Bill Johnson, one of the "alignment" apostles, knew about. Wagner apparently refers to this by writing: "It has now become clear that he (TB) indulged in periodic drunkenness... Their marriage (Shonna and Todd) has been torn for years by the emotional attachment of Bentley to at least one other female whose physical contact went beyond hugging and kissing and holding hands... All of this was concealed by lying and by swearing close associates who had observed his behavior to secrecy." (The Voice, August 26, 2008) This is a reference to what was then called at the time "Bentley's sabbatical". This whole current fiasco has now fallen prey to much gossip. People who are related to the Fresh Fire board have said: "TB has been lying to them (Bentley's board -Fresh Fire Ministries) all along... TB needs to get the help he needs before thrusting him into ministry like they did 2.5 years ago when he had an affair with a different staff member." (Northwest Musings).

Wagner relates that he received: "a call from Stephen Strader, the host pastor (in Lakeland), who was a member of the ICA (International Coalition of Apostles) which I lead, with a passionate appeal for apostolic intervention because chaos and confusion had begun to invade the Outpouring. Toward the end of the hour... I received one of my infrequent direct words from God "alignment." Just one word. So I knew I had a divine command and responsibility." (Voice Magazine). Previous to going to Lakeland, Wagner received many cautions from other apostles, but Wagner "respected their point of view but had to follow God's leading.... It was not a comfortable decision." (Voice) Other apostles have since gone public criticizing the "alignment" after the fact, especially Dutch Sheets the American leader of the ICA.

Bentley and Jenna and Shonna and the kids will fade. Bentley will probably be exonerated and declared restored. But it is Wagner and other prophets of the "alignment" who have fallen and can't get up. Why should anyone listen to any of these prophets ever again? They have prophesied falsely and that makes them false prophets. That would seem to be the obvious, but the so-called "end time prophets" use the excuse that they are always learning and growing in the prophetic. Even now these false prophets are "mentoring" more prophetic trainees and wannabes. Even though Wagner says he only receives infrequent direct words from God, obviously, this was one too many. Was God wanting an alignment with whom many of the prophets knew to be an alcoholic and philanderer? Wagner later actually suggests that God wanted this alignment so the truth about Bentley would come out. Wagner states: "Final Question is: was it successful? Looking back I praise God for using me and others to bring order to confusion... When we did this (the alignment) spiritual transactions took place in the invisible world that would not allow the enemy to maintain the veil of secrecy that had been in place over the outpouring. ... even the next day June 24 this became evident." (The Voice)

Would God choose such a means to clean up such a mess on World – Wide Television to bring such discredit to His Name? Would He allow "His real prophets" to endorse someone that He would have to reject the next day?.... Enough already!

Actually in the prophetic movement there is now virtually no possibility to qualify as a false prophet. Bob Jones, the seemingly "master prophet", only claims a percentage of prophetic accuracy. Just as well! Bob Jones' Los Angeles and Hoover Dam prophecy of some years ago was a huck (not the dam) that is not commonly known. Jones had prophesied that Los Angeles would slide into the ocean and people were urged to leave California. Furthermore, Jones' sexual misconduct doesn't help his record. Also Paul Cain is still an unrepentant homosexual, Jones has apparently taken his place and has the adulation of his fans. Jones is famous for teaching people to make imaginary trips to the third heaven. He claims to make the trip 2-3 times a day as well as many night trips. Some of his stories are beyond incredible. He is most famous for his heavenly trip in which he saw the remnant seeds. Here is his account: "I went and seen the Lord and I was looking at little yellow things like a spirit of God - little round yellow things and there were a billion of them and it was like Him (the Lord) and all the angels were looking through there and once in a while they'd say: "Hey! here is a an end time one. Get it down here on the end. I said what are you doing? The Lord said: Oh! we are collecting those foreknown and predestined for the end times... That's the purpose so that Jesus in the last days has the seed that will glorify Him above any other generation... They will be that generation that is raised up to put death itself under their feet." Jones later said: "We shouldn't worry about inaccurate prophesies, for God told him that prophets are like guns and prophesies are like bullets and inaccurate prophesies are the blanks... And God told him: "I am loading the guns and I put in the blanks."

How can people follow prophets who are wrong over half the time. How can anyone revere a prophet who fails even only once? Would you go to a doctor who was wrong over half the time? Even a mechanical computer can tell when your password is invalid. Notwithstanding, Bill Johnson introduced Bob Jones at the graduation of his Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry as the most accurate prophet he knows. This is very frightening!

The reason they are not laughed off the scene for their bogus fortunate telling is because of a teaching about New Testament prophesy that allows for prophetic errors. The prophets bank on this even though they claim to be Old Testament prophets and have a "Seer anointing" of Old Testament caliber. We know God's opinion of false prophets in the Old Testament. They were stoned! Another tactic is to plead that every person has character flaws. Let the one without sin cast the first stone etc. But this is an argument technique (bait and switch). What is in question with false prophets is not their prophetic character but their false, bizarre and messages. In the next section I will address the teaching regarding New Testament prophesy that supposedly allows for false prophesy from a true prophet.

## **Truth Or Consequences**

Whether it be recognized or not, there is a huge integrity problem in the church today regarding who speaks for God...We berate politicians when they make promises they choose not to keep. Remember "Read my lips"? But when someone with no hesitation announces the supposed very Words of the Almighty God fail completely, we don't make a murmur or bat an eye. Isn't this an integrity problem? Moreover, don't you suppose that the Holy One who never lies or changes, has some problems with all the inaccurate words He has supposedly uttered? Do you really think that God, in the wideness of His mercy, simply sees these prophets (all of them) as immature trainees? Can we really believe that God is absolutely thrilled that some of His announced mouthpieces have actually arrived at 30% accuracy. Do we just give these prophets an "A" for effort and hope they will do better next time.

Wayne Grudem, a popular professor of theology and Vineyard member, has come to the rescue of those who prophesy falsely. In his book, "The Gift of Prophecy in the NT and Today" he offers a theory about NT prophecy that gets those "missing it" off the hook. His proposal is that NT prophecy was a lower grade of prophecy which though inspired by the Holy Spirit is an unreliable unauthoritative revelation and cannot be guaranteed to be from God. I believe his whole theory hinges on one Greek word, *diakrino*. The context is *found* in 1 Cor. 14:29, "Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge." The semantic field (range of meanings) of the Greek word translated "to judge" overwhelmingly points to an "up or down" judgment. When we compare *diakrino* in 1 Cor. 14:29 within and without the NT, we discover that the verb generally refers to an up or down decision between two possibilities. Even *Philo* refers to sifting wheat from chaff. Josephus uses the verb to distinguish between clean and unclean. Obviously he is not suggesting sacrificial animals were part clean and part unclean. In Acts 15: 9, cf. 11:2 the verb distinguishes between a Jew and Gentile. Again it's an either or judgment.

Grudem envisions a congregation "sifting" (*diakrino*) and determining which "parts" of a prophecy were from God and those that were not. Can't you just see a slave (lets call him Demetrius) raising his hand and indicating one part of a word as from God and his master responding that he considered another part from God. It could have taken hours to make a decision and it would have needed a vote. We learn from a 100 AD NT church manual called the *Didache* that NT prophecy was generally an itinerate ministry. We read in that same *Didache* that they had tests for a true prophet. One test was whether the prophet stayed for more than three days. In that case he was judged a false prophet. An up or down discernment (*diakrino*) was the only way a church could escape a confused smorgasbord of supposed authentic prophetic utterances. The situation is similar today by one half. There are competing prophecies but there is an absolute absence of any judging or even sifting. In NT times if a prophecy was judged to have any error they didn't sift it, rather if part was deemed false they rejected it outright and designated the prophet as a false prophet. If in the prophetic movement today as a first step began "sifting" it might be helpful on the way to finally judging prophets true or false.

## Concluding Remarks

Back to the "alignment." William Branham got at least two mentions in prophecies said over Bentley. Joshua Fowler prophesied: "Todd! the Lord has made you to be a "detonator." I see cables going around the world to different nations, see Great Britain being set ablaze by the power of the Lord... You will go with God's glory, even as William Branham. And the Lord says you will carry a portal anointing. And whatever city you go over, there will be a portal.. (opening to go up to heaven). The Lord says you will detonate, and BOOM BOOM ! There will be a release of glory through the nations, says the Spirit of the Lord"

*William Branham was a "Latter Rain" false prophet who denied the Trinity. Branham prophesied that by 1977 all denominations would be consumed by the World Council of Churches under the control of the Roman Catholic Church, that the rapture would take place and the world would be destroyed. He claimed to be the angel (messenger) of the church of Laodicea in Revelation. But he died in 1965. Still many of his followers expected him to be resurrected. Some of his followers thought he was virgin born. Yet without exception the current bevy of prophets idolize the man.*

This proves again to be the same ole same ole of false prophets in church history. Wesley and Whitfield had to contend with the French Prophets and the early church had to contend with Montanus and his female prophets in the second century. And so it will be till the Son of Man returns.

**Dr. Orrel Steinkamp, Plumblin, 47725 Co. Rd. 21, Renville, MN 56284**  
**Email: orrelsteinkamp@hotmail.com**