

THE TORONTO BLESSING

Is it really God's blessing?

Throughout history, there have been many claiming to speak by the authority of God. When someone claims to speak on behalf of God, there needs to be a way of determining whether or not they are telling the truth. God has simplified this procedure by providing us with His written Word ...the Bible. The real test of all religions and doctrines depends on the need and acceptance for scriptural accuracy. There has always been those that treat the Bible lightly and prefer to promote personal opinion as doctrine. If this be the case, then any one doctrine is as good as another and the Bible becomes irrelevant.

If the Bible is to be treated as God's Word; then it has to be the sole source of authenticity when determining doctrine and religion. Some like to quote the Bible to establish their credibility, later presenting their own ideas when they have established an audience. There is no integrity using this method, it's dishonest. Many claim to believe their Bible, but discover they don't really believe it at all when their faith is put to the test. They would rather stick to their own ideas and concepts... traditions of men.

Will the Toronto blessing stand up to scriptural examination?

The 'Toronto blessing' as it has been termed, has been popularly associated with the Vineyard Ministries in Toronto Canada (It actually surfaced in Africa). Bill Jackson has written many pages of notes on behalf of the Vineyard Ministry that relate to all aspects of the Toronto blessing and we will refer to his commentary as a basis for the topic under discussion. All direct references to his work will appear as ...**(BJ)**. There are many words written on this topic with differences of opinion being expressed on all sides. Like all modern doctrines, there is no real unity within the churches on just how the Toronto blessing should be promoted, practiced or believed.

(BJ) Randy Clark (the founding pastor of the Vineyard Ministries) and those associated with him say that this move of God is more associated with refreshing the church and calling the prodigals home than with salvation for the lost.

(BJ) The following are the most obvious of the Toronto manifestations seen in their meetings... falling (resting in the spirit), shaking, drunkenness, crying, laughter, prophetic revelation.

(BJ) Basic questions being asked ...Is what we are seeing biblical? What are

these phenomena for? How can you be sure it's God?

(BJ) Other objections... it's hard to understand, It makes me afraid, It causes division, He overrides my faculties, It's so emotional, It causes me to be the center of attraction, It's so disorderly, It doesn't happen to me.

(BJ) In establishing whether or not these 'blessings' are of God, we have to identify them on a scriptural basis. There are primary scriptures (direct references) and secondary scriptures (scriptures that 'imply' or hint at events).

Bill Jackson goes on to make it very clear that none of the Toronto manifestations except Prophecy, are supported by any primary scriptures. All are based on secondary interpretations.

Paul openly declares the value of scripture ...as the Spirit led him.

2TIM 3:16 All scripture (the Bible and its contents) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teachings, precepts), for reproof (that by which a thing is proved or tested), for correction (restoration to an upright or right state), for instruction (chastening) in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect (complete), throughly furnished unto (with regard to) all good works (deeds).

Your attitude to scripture will ultimately determine the doctrines that you are prepared to believe or deny. Once we move away from scripture then we no longer have a consistent foundation to build upon and on that basis any doctrine is as good as another ...God's truth can no longer be established. Somewhere during reading this paper you may discover yourself parting company with scripture. If this is the case then there can never be any absolute scriptural truths in your life and you will be lead by your feelings and perceptions rather than by the true leading of the Spirit. This is the same problem that befell Adam and Eve, King Saul, Aaron (the golden calf), Ananias and Saphira, etc. ...they all chose to run with their feelings at the expense of Godly direction and commitment. God's Word must be the final authority.

How reliable are the feelings and interpretations of our heart?

The Bible gives us a very clear warning on these matters ...you can't trust an undisciplined heart at all.

JER 17:9 The heart (understanding of man) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

HEB 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. The deceitful heart allows us to accept practices and doctrines that the Lord has not revealed. Many are encouraged by their shepherds to depart

from the Bible and place their trust in their 'good spiritual feelings'. With the heart we must obey the Word of God ...not invent doctrine. Rom 6:17 ...but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Let us look at the 'Toronto manifestations'.

...ooOoo...

(BJ) Falling. 'Resting in the spirit'.

BJ quotes many O/T scriptures to support 'manifestations of the spirit' that refer to periods of time before the Holy Spirit was actually available. Do those that involve themselves in the Toronto blessing, understand the differences between the Old and New Testament?

JOH 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) *The Holy Spirit and its personal manifestations was not yet available, but began on the day of Pentecost*

Some O/T examples that BJ quotes to support falling.

GEN 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. *(Where does the horror of great darkness fit into falling? ...are there going to be 'horror' attacks in the next wave of doctrine?)*

EZE 3:23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face. *BJ quotes this scripture as evidence that falling is an example of the 'Bible precedent'. An act of humility or fear is overlooked to favour 'falling'. Let's read the next verse in this 'precedent' 24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house. It would seem that when the spirit enters into an individual, that the opposite to falling occurs ...they are 'set upon their feet'. Anyone can fall over, but only God can stand them up. How many are supernaturally raised to their feet? Verse 24 must be considered as a primary text that proves the opposite to 'falling'.*

The O/T scriptures that BJ quotes have no bearing at all on the N/T manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They didn't exist on a personal basis until Jesus had paid the sacrifice (his life), opening the door for the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If the personal power of God was available pre-Christ, then Jesus really wasn't needed at all. It is a very dangerous precedent to grasp any scripture you feel supports your cause and use it without consideration for context or dispensation.

BJ quotes some N/T references to support 'falling' i.e.

MAT 28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. *(The guards were acting against the plan of God and*

would have tried to prevent the risen Lord from leaving the tomb and also would have prevented the eyewitnesses from acknowledging the miraculous resurrection if the angel hadn't intervened ...this is hardly an example of a church practice. The guards were scared out of their wits by the appearance of the angel and shook in fear before they were overcome, probably fainting).

JOH 18:6 ...refers to the guards falling backwards when they tried to arrest Jesus. *(These men were repelled/rejected by the spirit ...they had no power over Christ until he permitted them to arrest him).*

ACTS 9:1-6 ...refers to Paul when he was apprehended on the road to Damascus. *(Paul was heading off to another city to arrange for more Christians to be jailed or put to death. Many people incorrectly believe that Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. If you read the scriptures with a little more care for detail, you will notice that he was told to go to Damascus where he would be spoken to v6 ...he was also struck blind ...anyone can fall over but only God can blind them and heal them). How many experiencing 'falling' are also struck blind?*

All of the above incidents happened to the enemies of Jesus and the church as they opposed the Word of God. BJ tries to include every occasion where the slightest hint of 'falling' is alluded to, but he is out of step with N/T doctrine on every quote. It is a simple fact, that there is not one scripture that refers to any person 'falling' in the whole N/T church. The unscriptural practice of falling has been around for many years. It was termed 'slain in the spirit' till it was correctly pointed out that the slain of the Lord were always the enemies whom the Lord God dispatched permanently ...see Jer 25:33. The unscriptural practice of falling was evident before the 'Toronto' expectations began and has been simply included as part of the package by popular demand.

What about the following scripture, isn't it more in keeping with what is happening in some churches?

MAR 9:20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. *It is a sad fact that 'falling' has more in common with people who were in urgent need of deliverance. They had to be delivered from the 'spirit' that caused 'falling', not be introduced to it.*

Not one mention is made in a N/T church meeting of 'falling' ever happening, or of it ever being expected to happen. Is it safe or wise to try and introduce 'church doctrine' using non supportive and contradictory scripture? The practice of falling over is unscriptural and not recognised in the N/T epistles. Peter, Paul, James, John and Jesus never recognised or promoted the practice at all. Where do you stand now ...if you have to choose, do you believe the Bible or your church doctrine? Many claims are made about the good feelings and benefits gained by those who indulge themselves, but the Word of God remains silent ...we are reminded that our heart is deceitfully wicked and capable of being deceived. There are many carnal practices which bring joy to the participant, but they aren't God inspired. Many things feel good and can cause great influences upon our emotions, but we are told to trust only in the definite working of the spirit ...nothing more is

spiritually safe or valid. Don't take liberty where it's not offered.

MAT 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness (*false testimony* ...*doctrine*), blasphemies:

It may be a response to fear or humility or expectation, but 'Falling' comes from the heart of man, not the Spirit of God.

Many will insist on falling over despite what their Bible says.

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(BJ) Shaking

(BJ) Shaking is also common in our meetings and is one of the hardest phenomena to understand. The kinds of shaking vary greatly. Sometimes the shaking is accompanied by all sorts of bodily contortions; sometimes mild, sometimes almost violent.

BJ quotes the following scriptures to support the doctrines relating to this Toronto 'manifestation'.

PSA 99:1 The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. *Does the earth also move when the people tremble?*

PSA 114:7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

ACT 2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour

of the day.

(BJ) The newly filled believers were acting in a 'drunken' manner is what is known as an argument from silence. The text never says that they were but it is obviously inferred. They would not be accused of being drunk because they were speaking in different languages. They would have been accused of such because they were acting like drunks, i.e.. laughing, falling, slurred speech by some, boldness through lack of restraint, etc.

*BJ is listing this scripture out of Acts under 'shaking' and mentions everything else but 'shaking'. Some unbelieving Jews chose to mock speaking in tongues by suggesting they were drunk on new wine ... Peter said they were **not drunk** ...it was nothing more than mocking. There are no drunken symptoms from people who are sober. A similar insult today might say "you are raving mad", which would be nothing more than an insult suggesting weakness or foolishness.*

The silent evidence does not exist. We have another occasion where a doctrine is built around the behaviour or mocking statements of unbelievers who are opposing the plan of God. Again, we see the actions of the critic being counted worthy of establishing a N/T doctrine.

The quotations BJ uses from the O/T have no bearing on the Spirit filled people of the N/T church.

(BJ) Conclusion: While there is not much to go on here the N/T passages are important texts. The possibility of being drunk in the Spirit is with the overall flow of biblical precedent. If this statement is true, consider the opening verses in Isaiah 28 on page 6.

Consider the following scriptures.

LUK 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts (*minds*) be overcharged with surfeiting (*the giddiness and headache caused by drinking wine to excess*), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. *Don't act like a drunk.*

ROM 13:13 Let us walk honestly (*in a seemly manner, decently*), as in the day; not in rioting (*half drunken procession*) and drunkenness, not in chambering (*also means ...a place for laying down, resting, sleeping*) and wantonness (*also means ...outrageousness, shamelessness*), not in strife (*debate, contention ...how many churches are up to their necks in contention because of the Toronto fervour?*) and envying (*excitement of mind, ardour, fervour of spirit*) ...*don't be overzealous, maintain personal discipline.*

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for

the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. *Don't behave in the 'Toronto' fashion. These verses demand the opposite behaviour to what BJ recommends.*

1THE 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

These above scriptures are primary text that recommend the opposite to what the Toronto blessing permits.

Consider the prophetic warning against 'drunken' behaviour... ISA 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. God totally rejects such behaviour.

There is no precedent and no evidence. BJ confuses 'drunkenness' with 'shaking' and still fails to establish anything scripturally. AGAIN ...The practice of 'shaking' is unscriptural and not recognised in the N/T church. Peter, Paul, James, John and Jesus never recognised or promoted the practice at all and they all managed very nicely. Don't be so gullible; trust in the Word of God.

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(BJ) Crying

ACT 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked (cut to) in their heart, (BJ) This text doesn't say that they wept but it's hard to imagine "being cut to the heart" as not evoking that emotional response.

These people were clearly informed of their guilt regarding the blood of Christ. Their emotional response would hardly be a suitable guideline for the church to develop a doctrine around. BJ would have been a lot wiser to quote the balance of the verse and promote it instead.

ACT 2: 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **Not the Toronto blessing.**

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Again, the actions and emotional responses of the critics and enemies of the church are used as a reference for church doctrine. Does this mean that all people who allow themselves to be involved in the 'Toronto phenomena' are actually the enemies of God who still need to repent of their ways? This conclusion has much more logic than those quoted by BJ.

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(BJ) Laughter

(BJ) While there are not a lot of texts that describe laughter as a response to divine visitation, the key passage of

scripture on this subject comes at a very important moment in redemptive history. Both Abraham and Sarah had laughed in unbelief when God told them respectively that they would have a child in their old age. Abraham named him 'he laughs' (Isaac).

They laughed because initially, they didn't believe God ...does this mean that all those that 'laugh' in the spirit are unbelievers? The thought of having a baby in their old age was quite amusing to them ...it appealed to their sense of humour; but the laughter wasn't an act of the spirit.

Does laughter mean uncontrolled continuous outbursts or normal laughter that the whole human race is acquainted with?

Sarah laughed within herself, not out aloud.

GEN 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? *Why did God question Abraham about Sarah's laughter, if he had caused it? God didn't do it!*

14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. *Why does Sarah deny laughing if it is an act of the spirit? It was her own natural reaction that caused her to laugh, not the moving of the spirit.*

BJ has made the classic mistake of starting off with a 'doctrine', then trying to make it fit in with scripture. It just doesn't work. As you have already seen, you end up with a very weak doctrine that falls over under very little pressure. He would be far better starting off with scripture and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal the doctrine.

(BJ) Conclusion: Again, laughter fits with the general flow of scripture. Christians can be so filled with the joy of the Lord that they are given over to fits of laughter.

All the substitutes in the world, can't replace the genuine workings of the Spirit of God.

PRO 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. *Even laughter can't help if you are wrong.*

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. *Doesn't need extras.*

15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.) *Check it out, don't believe everything you hear.*

'Crying and Laughter' as applied by the Toronto expectations are not described in the N/T church at all. None of the N/T writers gave any indication of the claims that BJ makes. Undoubtedly the joy of the Lord and circumstances of life will result in all of us showing some sort of emotional response from time to time, but

nothing like the imagined expectations explained by BJ. These practices scare many people away from the church and fail to achieve their claimed objectives.

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(BJ) Prophetic Revelation.

BJ indicates correctly that the topic is too big to be covered properly. There is a difference between the prophecy of scripture and the personal prophecy and dreams that are claimed under the Toronto banner. The word 'prophecy' in the N/T means ...to expound or tell the Word of God. The Toronto application centres more on predicting future events most often relating to individuals. These predictions are very often proven to be incorrect. Prophecy **(even if fulfilled)** always needs to be in accord with the Word of God.

DEUT 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

2 And the sign or the wonder **come to pass**, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods (*another way*), which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; *let's make new doctrine.*

3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, **to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Do you love God?**

4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. *The Bible is the established voice of God.*

What does the Lord say about the Prophets?

DEU 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods (*alternative doctrines*), even that prophet shall die. *God doesn't treat prophecy lightly.*

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? *How can we work out who is of God and who is false ...let's keep in mind that the self speaking prophet was worthy of death under the law?*

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (*not remain with him*).

Have nothing more to do with those that prophecy and it doesn't come about. This would eliminate 100% of all of the 'personal' prophets. Five out of ten for accuracy, isn't good enough. Prophecy can have very emotional consequences for some people ...many peoples lives have been (and will be) wrecked by people who prophecy in their own power. The false prophet will not get off lightly when the Lord judges them, no matter how well meaning they are.

1COR 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth (*doctrine which is outside of the Spirit*), but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

This is what we have been doing, comparing the Toronto claims with Bible evidence. The Toronto blessing is failing every genuine scriptural test.

Falling, shaking, drunkenness, crying, laughter and prophetic revelation (apart from genuine prophecy) are entirely without scriptural support or requirement. They are emotional, dangerous additions to sound doctrine. We do not have the liberty to add to or take from the Word of God. We have clearly shown that the phenomena of the Toronto blessing is unscriptural and not God given. The same people that are deceived into promoting and

experiencing unscriptural and ungodly practices are also supporting personal prophetic utterances. The credibility of what they are prophesying cannot be taken seriously.

REV 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add** unto these things, God shall **add** unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

JER 14:14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy **lies** in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they **prophesy** unto you a **false vision** and divination, and a thing of nought, and **the deceit of their heart.**

JER 23:32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: **therefore they shall not profit this people at all**, saith the LORD.

MAR 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible (*convincing enough*), even the elect.

*Many of the elect have been seduced into accepting the Toronto blessing because many of their shepherds are too weak or foolish to believe God. Many of the shepherds are openly declaring that you can't trust your Bible, 'it's merely a guide' ...they personally claim to have the answers. **It's your life you are putting into their hands ...be very careful.***

*Remember, a prophet is a person who claims to be speaking on behalf of God. If they speak things of their own imaginations which God has not spoken, then they are in very big trouble. **REV 20:10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. *Prophecy is a very serious business indeed.**

HEB 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

The Word of God and the experiences they offer remain consistent and stable. It is the human race that promotes new doctrines like some sort of spiritual fashion parade, all in the name of God. Keep in mind, that any form of contrived emotional outbursts or practices are not of God and benefit no one. God's blessings don't need any additional help... his miracles and signs are good enough in their own right. If you need more than this, then you are not suitable for the kingdom of God!!

*How do you feel about your Bible now? Is your church looking as good as the scriptures require or aren't you so sure ...or don't you care? By now you will understand a lot clearer how honestly you are prepared to handle the Word of God. Maybe you can live without it? **Read on...***

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.

(BJ ASKS) ...WHAT ARE THE PHENOMENA FOR?

They are claimed to be signs of the Lords presence. Consider the more detailed words of Jesus.

MAR 16:17 And **these signs** shall follow them that **believe**; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. *This is primary text. Not one of the Toronto expectations are even hinted at by Jesus Christ when he lists the signs that follow **true** believers. Why don't they focus on these signs instead of straining to invent new ones? Maybe God's way*

isn't as appealing as the Toronto way? Have some forgotten that the Bible is the **revealed** Word of God?

The Toronto 'blessings' are claimed to be manifestations of the Spirit.

Let's look at the most detailed list in the Bible which Paul describes to the Corinthians ... **in fact, it's to all of us.**

1COR 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. *Those that support the Toronto blessing seem to be ignorant of this prophecy of Paul the APOSTLE. Consider more of the following scriptures. This is genuine revelation of the Holy Spirit.*

7 But the **manifestation** of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

According to Paul, all true Christians have manifestations that are different to those the Toronto 'blessing' promotes. Perhaps if they focused on the scripture (primary texts); they might experience what Paul is telling the church. Do you have the manifestations that God gives to every man? If this is not the case, then perhaps you are not yet a true Christian, as you suppose?

Paul goes on to list the gifts of the Spirit v8-10 ...wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and the interpretation of tongues. None of these manifestations are ever linked in the N/T with anything like the Toronto blessing, except prophecy. Why is the revealed Word of God being replaced by emotional extremes? By choosing to move away from sound Bible basics, many have never developed the capacity nor genuine desire to discern between truth and error ...discernment is a manifestation (gift) of the Spirit. Many are embracing the Toronto expectations and forsaking the genuine working of the spirit.

These directions are to all churches throughout the whole N/T age.

1COR 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, **with all that in every place** call upon (*present tense*) the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the **grace** (*charis: that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech*) of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; *Toronto isn't part of the equation.*

5 That in **every thing** (*the all*) ye are enriched by him, in all **utterance** (*logos: the word of God*), and in all **knowledge** (*gnosis: the deeper more perfect and enlarged knowledge of Christianity, such as belongs to the more advanced*); *Paul is revealing the full measure that will perfect the saints and yet no mention is made of Toronto 'blessings'. God has never required such and from the evidence, does not now require it.*

6 Even (*just*) as the testimony of Christ was confirmed (*established*) in you:

7 So that ye come behind in no **gift** (*charisma: favour, divine grace*); waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: *If none of the Toronto 'blessings' are even considered by Paul, why are these practices promoted or permitted? Are the genuine ways of God no longer valid in our modern religious society? Do you know more than Paul?*

How is your bible looking now ...or have you lost interest?

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS.

**All of the Toronto manifestations are supposed to be for renewal, not for salvation (see BJ page 1). Yet on nearly all occasions the example scriptures that are supposed to support the Toronto manifestations, refer to unsaved people. The majority of these being hostile to God. Is this testimony suitable for establishing and promoting Christian doctrine?*

** How many are injured as they fall or shake or lose control? Why are 'catchers' or 'protectors' needed to prevent people from injuring themselves while under the 'influence' of the 'spirit'? Does God bless them into harms way?*

**It wasn't all that long ago that people who demonstrated aspects of the Toronto blessing were considered to be possessed with demons. Their prophesying oversight, standing boldly before wide eyed congregations, numbered and named all the demons as they were cast out of the 'possessed' victim. Many of these same men and women are now experts once again, claiming prophetically that this same behaviour is now a manifestation of the power of God. What once was supposedly revealed by God to be Satanic, is now freshly revealed as being the work of the Holy Spirit. Were they casting God out of those poor deluded people in the past?*

** According to Romans 8: 9 ...if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. So how is it that many of those that are partakers of the Toronto blessing don't have the Spirit and further more, don't want to receive this fundamental, spiritual experience? It is impossible to be God inspired in these circumstances.*

**Why are these same experiences also being practised by many groups of people who don't even believe in the God of the Bible and who practice many pagan abominations as well as these emotional extremes? Many people who have mental disorders or who are under the influence of drugs, have similar outbursts ...is this the testimony of God?*

How can people possibly find scriptural credibility when they are encouraged to trust in an unscriptural experience more than the Bible? Where is the wisdom to discern between truth and error? Are we now free to lay aside such discernment? **When did the Bible become irrelevant?*

**Why is it that the Pentecostal churches that reject the Toronto blessings and remain faithful to obvious scriptural directives, still enjoy healing and all the other supernatural blessings that the Lord offers?*

**Why do so many of the people who support the Toronto blessing seem to lack scriptural discernment and Godly integrity, tending to have an 'anything goes' approach to doctrine?*

**How are the people who are going far beyond the 'accepted' Toronto doctrine going to live disciplined, self controlled lives, when all along they are being encouraged to do the opposite? Many churches have already lost control.*

**If it is a renewal, why have so many churches been split wide apart by a practice that is supposed to bind them all together?*

1COR 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (*harmony*), **as in all churches of the saints.**

1COR 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that ye all speak the same thing**, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** (*spiritual understanding*) and in the **same judgment**. *The Toronto experience is producing the opposite*

response to that required by these scriptures.

The responsibility of the church oversight is to bring the saints together in unity with the Word of God and protect them from false doctrine. The true shepherds know their Bibles and won't allow anything to undermine the lives of God's people. They will stand up and be counted, not cave in to pressure or winds of doctrine.

EPH 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **(not to introduce new doctrine).**

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth **be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the **truth** in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

The perfecting of the saints never included one mention of the Toronto blessing, but did specify the dangers of new doctrines. Don't be talked into acting like foolish, immature children.

THE FINAL TEST

Paul very simply explains the way that the manifestations of the Spirit should work in the church, and details the correct attitude of those who seek to use them.

We are told to seek after the gifts (manifestations) of the Spirit.

1COR 12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts *(the more useful for the need at hand)*: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. *(The best way to use them)*. Remember, Paul listed the true manifestations as ...wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

Paul details the most LOVING approach to serving the church.

1COR 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity **envieth not** *(is not over zealous ...too much zeal is offensive to many and prevents them wanting to be imitators of those things which are considered 'good')* charity **vaunteth not itself** *(a self display, employing flamboyant embellishments in extolling one's self excessively)*, **is not puffed up** *(not proud and conceited in its own value)*, Love *(charity)*, **is not what the Toronto blessing produces.**

5 Doth not behave itself **unseemly** *('unseemly' is by Bible standards not personal interpretations or feelings)*, **seeketh not her own** *(is for the benefit of others ...not self)*, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; *The definition of love and the attitude behind these scriptures is the opposite to what the Toronto blessing promotes. The Toronto phenomenon focuses very strongly on a purely selfish approach of self fulfilment, helping no one and causing division and confusion in many others. How big an ego does a Christian need?*

Many people in the churches fail to notice the distinction between edifying the church and edifying the individual. ...Consider the next few verses.

1COR 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue **edifieth himself**; but he that prophesieth **edifieth the church**.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, **that the church may receive edifying.**

Paul is focusing on the need for the church to be edified rather than the individuals excelling for their own benefits. He is not telling them to forsake tongues but makes it very clear, that tongues without interpretation doesn't help the church. ...'I would that ye all spake with tongues', (but not during the gifts, when they needed to edify the whole church).

1COR 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, **seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.**

Again, Paul makes it clear that God's planned use of spiritual manifestations was for the edification of the church, not the individual. How is it that the Toronto blessing focuses almost solely on individuals doing their own thing for themselves? This is completely opposite to everything that we are told. In the three chapters that Paul deals with the Spirituals, there is not the slightest hint of any form of personal Toronto blessing, except for the correct use of prophecy.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. *The use of tongues in the church serves as a necessary sign to the unbeliever but is limited to two or three times in any one meeting...*

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. *The Toronto blessing tends to replace the signs that God requires, although many churches continue to abuse the use of tongues as well.*

If Christians want renewal and inner blessing, why don't they pray in tongues as the scriptures encourage them to do, rather than invent non scriptural practices? Tongues are God given ...use them.

ROM 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities *(weaknesses)*: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought *(remember, he is telling the saints ...the spirit filled, that their natural language and understanding is not sufficient)*: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. *God gives us a spiritual language. Use it, don't deny it and don't abuse it.*

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. *Paul tells them to pray in the Spirit (tongues) if they want some real spiritual blessing. God knows what our heart needs more than we do, that is why he gives us a pure spiritual language when we receive the Holy Spirit.* 1COR 14:14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth... *Use tongues as part of your private prayer life.*

Paul quotes a prophecy out of Isaiah relating to doctrine and tongues which apply to today's church.

1COR 14:20 Brethren, **be not children in understanding**; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. *Paul makes it very clear that there is more to understanding the*

manifestations than what they had previously appreciated ...do you comprehend the value of these gifts? It's time to grow up and stop being immature.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they **not** hear me (to give heed to, comply with admonition, to obey), saith the Lord. Many people are prepared to ignore, down play or deny the value of tongues in the life of individuals and also within the church ...they won't hear.

Let's look at the prophecy which Paul quotes above in it's context.

ISA 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way (*gone astray*); **the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink**, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; **they err in vision (prophecy), they stumble (to reel, totter, fall) in judgment (reasoning).**

The drunkenness, shaking, falling and prophetic utterances (including visions) of the Toronto blessing could easily be the topic of this eye opening prophecy. The Toronto manifestations fit very comfortably into this condemnation of false doctrines and their tragic results. Drunkenness is definitely a corruption of the priesthood and the prophet. Would these verses be primary or secondary texts? The claimed manifestations of the Toronto blessing and the ministry that false doctrine produces, are definitely rejected.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness (*their food is that which is rejected and unclean in the sight of God*), so that there is no place clean. *They prepare a feast of unclean and rejected practices for their people, instead of the good food (sound scripture) that the Lord offers. These verses are definitely referring to New Testament church doctrines Paul recognised and quoted them (1Cor 14: 20-21) ...read the following.*

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and **whom shall he make to understand doctrine?** them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. *Time to grow up and act like an adult.*

10 For precept (*command*) must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line (*measuring-line*), line upon line; here a little, and there a little: *Every doctrine and all knowledge had to be very firmly and accurately discerned by cross referencing the scriptures, piece by piece ...not from popular personal or emotional interpretation.*

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This is **the rest** wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is **the refreshing; yet they would not hear.** *This prophecy is alarmingly accurate as it clearly indicates that the majority of people wish to down play or ignore genuine Spiritual manifestations and instead, glory in 'blessings' not identified in New Testament doctrine. Remember, tongues began at Pentecost.*

13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

This is precisely how the Toronto blessing has been established. A bit of this and a bit of that (all based on very poor Bible understanding) and the hearts of men invents new doctrine rather than being led of the Holy Spirit. They are slowly destroying their soul through spiritual starvation. Remember, Paul quoted these above verses to the church.

The Toronto blessing is offensive for a great many and is contrary to direct scriptural guidance.

1COR 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, **will they not say that ye are mad?**

God is concerned about how his church is to be perceived by the unbeliever. If the disorderly use of tongues without interpretation brings disrepute on the church, how much more offensive is the Toronto blessing to the potential convert? Many who are already in fellowship are greatly offended with these extraverted practices ...how much more offensive and unscriptural is it for the unbeliever?

You cannot use the argument that God is overriding your faculties and you can't control what you are doing.

1COR 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. *You can control the use of the Spirit ...in fact, it is required of you. God gave his people the capacity to be accountable for their own actions.*

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. **...in all the churches.**

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual (*one who is filled with and governed by the Spirit of God*), let him acknowledge that the **things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.** *God commands self control as well as all the other concepts covered in this study.*

40 **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

The Bible is very easy to understand on these matters and is very straight forward. How willing are you to trust in your Bible now ...how scripturally honest are you?

It is up to every individual to take full responsibility for their own actions.

1COR 11:31 For if we would **judge ourselves** (*learn to discriminate*), we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are **chastened** of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. *Many of the churches that promote the Toronto blessing do so because they are too weak to apply Godly discipline and judgement. Many consider it unloving to do what God requires from his church. However, it is unloving not to promote sound scriptural practices.*

The following is one of the last statements and scriptures that BJ uses to support the Toronto manifestations.

The scripture that BJ quotes immediately follows his commentary.

(BJ) This passage allows for a category of person in the church that are amazingly able to move in spiritual gifts but at judgment day will be counted amongst those that do not know Jesus. The difference is that they are not doing the will of the Father. Their motive is not one of love for God or men, but is self-service. Jesus is clear: self serving activity, no matter

how powerful, doesn't count. *The Toronto blessing is a self serving activity.*

These following scriptures are what BJ has just referred to ...they actually identify his type of approach to doctrine.

MAT 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? *It is interesting to note that the majority of the Pentecostal churches which accept the Toronto blessing as genuine, also have very strong doctrinal policies in favour of prophetic utterances, are very active in casting out demons and make all sorts of claims relating to wonderful works (Toronto being one).*

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. *Doctrines that are not in unity with the Word of God, have been the downfall of many Spirit Filled people who fellowship in Pentecostal churches. Jesus goes on to tell people to build their house upon the rock (the Word of God) instead of the sand (fragments of the rock). Many Pentecostal churches' doctrine is subject to continual change, because there is always a new 'fashion' coming along. Today's doctrine is tomorrows curse.*

The whole concept of the Toronto blessing is flawed and the arguments used to support it actually reveal it to be unscriptural. We are supposed to cast out the false and only accept that which is true. How is this possible when most people can't even work out the basics in their Bibles and fail to believe God, even when the evidence is brought before them?

If you go into a bank and hold it up with a gun, that is wrong. If you go into the bank and speak in tongues while you hold it up ...it is still wrong. Getting one thing right doesn't make everything else right. It is the same with doctrine and church behaviour ...the genuine actions of the Spirit don't legitimise the unlawful practices of the heart. We are required to be diligent in sorting out truth from error.

EPH 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace (charis) unto the hearers.

1THE 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing. (JUDE: 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost)

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit. *Many people who prefer scriptural accuracy to extraverted practices are often accused of quenching the spirit, but the reverse is true. We are further encouraged to take prophecy seriously and to make sure we only accept the truth ...not extras.*

20 Despise not prophesyings. *Genuine prophecy.*

21 **Prove all things;** hold fast that which is good. *Have you scripturally established the proof of your beliefs?*

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. *The Toronto manifestations fail to do this. The Word of God already faces much resistance ...it doesn't need to be made almost impossible to present, to an already sceptical public. The damage and disrepute that the Toronto blessing is causing, is also inflicting pain and disrepute in the lives of those who have a healthy respect for God.*

By now you will better understand your heart. You know now whether the Word of God is your first love or whether your own opinions rule you. The only way you will overcome, is if the Bible holds place of honour in your life and heart. If your church supports the Toronto blessing you have to make a stand ...Note.

The good intentions and a sincere attitudes of your church and its shepherds do not necessarily establish God's approval. Consider the following ...1SAM 15:13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. Read the remainder of this story and discover for yourself the difference between good intentions, sincere attitudes and the need to be obedient. If you agree that obedience is better than 'good intentions' then you will need to act accordingly. 2COR 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

God warns about preaching new or false doctrine (despite intentions).

GAL 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. **The gospel of the anointing.**

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. *There is a curse on those that modify the scriptures.*

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

These verses would have to be speaking very strongly against those that promote the Toronto blessing.

2TIM 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.** *How many of these types of scriptures are people prepared to ignore, so they can indulge in their 'spiritual fantasies'.*

JOH 10:27 My sheep hear my voice (**pay attention to me**), and I know them, and they follow me:

Do you really understand what an antichrist is?

An 'antichrist' is simply a person who offers an alternative means of salvation to the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Why does religion generally insist on stopping short of God's genuine promises? To proclaim anything less than these is to be antichrist minded.

1JOH 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now** are there **many antichrists;** **whereby we know that it is the last time.** *(Some were falsely proclaiming salvation through personal belief, instead of the anointing ... 'anti christos.' Anti, instead of ...christos, the anointing)*

19 They went out from us *(from the real church)*, but they were not of us *(they disagreed with the full gospel)*; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. *John is referring to church members who foolishly allowed natural thinking to replace Spiritual wisdom, and preached their own gospel instead of the anointing (anti ...instead of, christ ...the anointing). They presented themselves as being 'more loving and understanding', through neglecting the vital disciplines and corrections which God had commanded them to observe. They moved away from the basics of inspired scripture.*

The Toronto manifestations are replacing the true manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thus they stand in place of and compete with the true anointing of the Spirit (and so are literally ...anti christos). Look up the word 'antichrist' in your concordance.

These are the words that started the New Testament church.

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto **you**, and to **your children**, and to **all that are afar off**, even as **many** as the Lord our God **shall call**.
There were going to be no secret additions for the modern church.

2COR 1:13 For we write **none other things unto you**, than what ye read or **acknowledge**; and I trust ye shall **acknowledge even to the end**; *Paul makes it clear that the N/T authors all meant what they wrote ...there was no secret agenda for the more enlightened. It was expected that all people who followed God, would uphold the same doctrine right through to the end of the age.*

How faithful are you going to be to the whole Word of God?

Footnote.

*Do yourself a favour and find a **Revival Fellowship** near you, where the true basics of the Pentecostal experiences are still being adhered to and blessed.*

Made available through Brisbane Revival Fellowship ... Australia (1996). Phone for further information 0414 768 768.