

**THE SPIRIT OF
TRUTH
&
THE SPIRIT OF
ERROR**

by Rev (Dr) Timothy Tow

Introduction

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” As the Apostle John warns of false spirits and false prophets, more so does our Lord the same, yea, even false Christs “shall show great *signs and wonders*; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt 24:24). Peter adds with “false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies” (2 Pet 2:1), while Paul rounds up the list with false apostles (2 Cor 11:13), false brethren (2 Cor 11:26) and false witnesses (1 Cor 15:15).

Furthermore, our Lord likens these agents of falsehood in the parable of the Good Shepherd to thieves and robbers, strangers, hirelings and wolves. But His sheep will not follow them. The sheep with keen discernment between the master’s voice and the voice of a stranger will keep out of harm’s way. Conversely, the Apostle John concludes, “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*” (1 John 4:6). Hereby is the test: if you say, “Amen,” to the preaching of the Truth, you have the Spirit of Truth. If you reject the preaching of the Truth, you have the Spirit of Error!

The Spirit of Error

Now, Jesus says He is the Truth (John 14:6). If anyone attacks His Person, like the Docetists in John's day denying His humanity (1 John 4:3), he is the tool of the Spirit of Error. When Arius, forerunner of today's Jehovah's Witnesses, in the fourth century denied the full Deity of Christ, he was also used by the Spirit of Error. Throughout the long centuries, the Spirit of Error has made the salvation of a man's soul not by the sole grace of God, but by the complicated system of works by Mary, martyrs and saints, etc, etc. Of more recent history there have arisen the modernists and liberals who reject His infallible, inerrant Word, with the latest so-called Neo-Evangelical scholarship that hypocritically speaks of a "limited inerrancy." It is the Spirit of Error that counters the inerrancy of the Bible, yea, even the living Word who is Jesus Christ. But we believe the Word to be infallible and inerrant to the jot and tittle, and hereby reaffirm our faith on this doctrine of doctrines.

The Spirit of Truth

While Jesus is the Truth, the Spirit of Truth is *Another Comforter* whom the Lord, before His departure, promised to send to His Church (John 14:16). The Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit, the

third Person of the Holy Trinity (Matt 28:19). He proceeds from the Father (John 15:26).

He manifested Himself in power at Pentecost by giving utterance in many languages to the Apostles in order to expedite the Great Commission of the ascended Lord (Acts 2). He is sent to indwell believers and to teach and guide the Church into all truth (John 14:17; 16:13). The mark of the Spirit of Truth is that He will not speak of Himself, but rather testify of the Son. He shall glorify the Son, for He shall receive of the Son and show it to us (John 16:13, 14). The Holy Spirit, being holy, “will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit is not a frivolous Spirit intoxicating the Church with hysterical laughter or with barking like dogs or roaring like lions.

The Holy Spirit does not receive our prayers as the Father and the Son. His function rather is to make “intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27). As He is sent from the Father by the Son (John 15:26), He is also called the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9). He is Comforter or Counsellor indeed, and no Jester.

Pentecostalism a New Phenomenon Since 1901

In the light of what we have briefly studied of the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error, and of the various manifestations of the latter in the course of Church history, it is our purpose to examine a new phenomenon that has arisen in the Christian Church since the beginning of this century. Whereas in the centuries earlier the Spirit of Error has attacked the Person, Work, and Word of Christ, now in the last days, the attack is directed, ironically, against the Spirit of Christ in the name of the Holy Spirit. This is the greatest mischief perpetrated by the Spirit of Error, yea, even Satan himself.

Starting out as Pentecostalism, this seemingly movement of the Spirit has developed into a New-Pentecostalism which is now known as the Charismatic Movement. Of its beginning, the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1978) says,

A number of fundamentalist Protestant sects that emphasise Spirit baptism as an experience different from conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-13) [were the beginnings of Pentecostalism]. They also teach the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by conversion and revival, instantaneous sanctification, divine healing; and

claim to be a restoration of original Christianity. Early Pentecostal meetings were characterised by outbursts of ecstatic enthusiasm featuring healings, speaking in tongues and motoric movements.

Pentecostalism began as an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement. In 1901 a Bible School called Bethel College was started at Topeka, Kansas, by Charles F. Parham, who using no textbook but the Bible, drilled his students in Spirit Baptism teaching . . .

One of the converts, William J. Seymour, brought the teaching to Los Angeles in 1906 where he founded the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street. Seymour, a black with only one eye, was described by one who attended his mission as being ‘meek, plain spoken and no orator,’ in short, not a very charismatic personality. Despite his unimpressive appearance, the results of the Azusa revival attracted national attention . . .

Pentecostalism became an international movement early in its history . . .

Recent developments have excited a lively interest in Pentecostalism. Its impressive growth while the major Protestant churches have been declining has caused concern in many circles. The fact that higher social classes are being attracted to its teachings — coupled with the building of

attractive modern Church buildings, accredited colleges (such as Oral Roberts University), orphanages and other institutions — has also brought increasing public attention. In the post-World War II period a spate of new ‘independent’ Pentecostal groups has appeared, including the New Order of the Latter Rain, Wings of healing, the World Church, the Gospel Assemblies, and the Full Gospel Fellowship of Ministers and Churches, International. In addition to these, practically every major denomination, including the Episcopal, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches, now has its own charismatic element . . .

Charismatics and Roman Catholics Since 1967

According to *The World Christian Encyclopaedia* (1982 edition), as of 1980 there were 100 million people in the world who claimed to belong to the charismatic-pentecostal *movement*. What is more significant is that since 1967 the charismatic experiences have leapt across the fence of Protestantism into the Roman Catholic fold. What began as pockets of tongue-speaking has now spread like a prairie fire, as we will see later in this discussion.

In the early 1970s the Jesus People Movement, a young people’s movement, swept America and parts

of Europe. It was about this time that Christian rock music began to be popular among these Charismatic young people. This new Contemporary Christian Music, as it came to be called, has spread to mainstream Christianity.

From Charismatism to Ecumenism

As to the spread of Charismatic practices into the Roman Catholic Church, its strength can be seen in such meetings. In 1975, 10,000 Catholic Charismatics gathered at the Vatican in Rome and received blessing from the Pope. In 1977, a Charismatic meeting of 45,000 was held in Kansas City and its chairman was a Roman Catholic. At the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelisation, July 22-26, 1987, at New Orleans at which 35,000 to 40,000 attended, 50 percent of the conferees were Roman Catholics. Thus, the blossoming of the Charismatic Movement into a full-fledged Ecumenical Movement with an ever-increasing Roman Catholic population has taken place in a matter of two decades. Furthermore, David W Cloud, who was an eye-witness of the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit, says, “the charismatic movement is sweeping Asia and forms one of the most serious challenges to our missionary work and that of other fundamental preachers.”

Now, while it is admitted that not a few members, lay people, in the Charismatic Movement are born again Christians that love the Lord, it is the leaders of the movement whose doctrines and practices energised by the Spirit of Error that must be refuted. In making our refutation, we would borrow in part the Statement on the Charismatic Movement issued by the Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, as follows:

We see this Charismatic Movement as a counterfeit of the work of the Holy Spirit, being in essence Satan's confidence trick and end time deception.

Everywhere denominational distinctives are being dismantled and Christians of every sort, Protestant and Roman Catholic, evangelical and liberal, believers and unbelievers, are drawn together in ecumenical fellowship — all in the name of the Holy Spirit.

We see in the Charismatic Movement an insidious force aiding the ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT which is fast moving toward the formation of OIKOUMENE or ONE WORLD, Satan's counterfeit of 'the Kingdom of God.'

A movement that brings Protestantism which was liberated from the darkness of Roman Catholicism through Luther in the sixteenth century now back to

Rome is undeniably a movement of the Spirit of Error.

The Error of Tongue-speaking

Now this Charismatic Movement makes tongue-speaking the evidence of Spirit baptism which is required of all Christians. And tongue-speaking is the chief phenomenon that is stressed in the coming together of Protestants and Catholics. We affirm there cannot be such a gathering of those who have the truth of salvation and those who are bound by a false tradition, but by the insidious working of the Spirit of Error. This insidious working of the Spirit of Error has now ripened into the Togetherness Statement of Evangelicals and Roman Catholics (ECT) since March 29, 1994, whereby the work of Martin Luther bringing in the Sixteenth Century Reformation is all but lost.

And inasmuch as the Word of Truth declares that tongues shall cease (1 Cor 13:8), and historical evidences during a thousand and nine hundred years of Church history show that Biblical tongues have ceased, it behoves us to conclude that tongues today are not from the Spirit of Truth but from the Spirit of Error. In the mighty Pentecost of Singapore 1935 when the Holy Spirit caused 2,000 to be soundly converted through Dr John Sung, we spoke no tongues but sang hearty praises to the Lord. The

speaking of tongues was forbidden by the doctor in his North China campaign.

At Shihkiachwang in Hopeh the Band stepped on charismatic territory again, for the meetings were held at the AOG Church (Assemblies of God). John pointed out to them an anomaly. These who stressed on tongue-speaking as a sign of the Holy Spirit nevertheless had never repented of their sins. These so-called Holy Spirit filled ones were exhorted to come forward to confess their sins. Therefore Dr Sung stressed again, “What a sinner needs is not the gift of tongues but the gift of salvation. Too many who claimed to have the Holy Spirit ended up having an unholy spirit! Instead of being filled by the Spirit, they were felled by the Spirit.”

That Biblical tongues have ceased is in full accord with the great Confessions of Faith of the Protestant Churches, and with the position of the Reformers. Charismatic tongue-speaking is not of the Spirit of Truth but from the Spirit of Error because it is often artificially induced through human agents, being unintelligible, jabbering utterances bringing confusion. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . .” (1 Cor 14:33). Even if, for argument’s sake, tongues have not ceased, these tongue-rattling ones are silenced by Paul’s advice to the confused Corinthian Church, “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding,

that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1 Cor 14:19). To speak with understanding is to be energised by the Spirit of Truth, to speak in a tongue of 10,000 syllables of repetitious unintelligibility is to be energised by the Spirit of Error. I have a new Christian friend who has been sucked into the tongue-speaking section of the Anglican Church. He tells of his taking lessons in tongue-speaking under the tutelage of his pastor. On request he jabbered away in a repetitious monotony of “ecstatic utterance.” Several young people from the same church, now delivered, have similar “ecstatic utterances,” all learnt from their pastor. Whether this is from the Spirit of Truth or the Spirit of Error, judge ye!

The Error of Divine-Healing

The next phenomenon stressed by the Charismatics is divine healing, miracle-working, showing off with “great signs and wonders.” Charismatic leaders like German-born Reinhard Bonnke, who had visited Singapore on two occasions, have made wild claims of healing, “causing the blind to see and the lame to walk.” To make such claim is not of the Spirit of Truth but of the Spirit of Error. A young Charismatic star of Singapore, Rony Tan by name, goes even to the

extent of holding “miracle rallies,” also “making the blind to see and the lame to walk.”

Such bombastic display of pseudo-miracle power cannot come but by the Spirit of Error; inasmuch as our Lord and the Apostles had healed, but never by a miracle rally of the sick. If such faith-healers claim to be followers of the apostolic pattern, let it be known that “signs and wonders” were only those of an Apostle (Acts 5:12). These were given the Apostles to enable them to confirm the Infant Church (Mark 16:20). When the Church was established, the working of signs and wonders through healing was no longer needed. It therefore passed with the age of the Apostles, though there is a healing ministry by elders according to James 5.

We affirm that these Charismatic faith-healers, apart from snatching the glory of Christ for their own megalomaniacal ends, are deceivers, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. This blindness to those who claim to open the eyes of the blind is ludicrously published in Bonnke’s own after-campaign report, wherein a young lady “testified” how after the evangelist’s prayer, one of her eyes, not very successfully operated on, had now received a clearer vision. Nevertheless the same young lady also stated she would go for an operation of the other eye. Now, if the faith-healer was of the Spirit of Truth, he should have healed both eyes. Since he did not, he

was of the Spirit of Error. “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 presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deut 18:22).

At the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit, Bonnke boasted of how he scared a white salesman to repentance in a music shop in Africa with Jesus coming out of his eyes. This is what our Lord meant when he warned of “false Christs, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt 24:24).

Now, from the healing ministry has erupted a hypnotic power whereby devotees are “slain by the spirit.” As shown on television, the latest and most powerful “worker” is Benny Hinn. With a swish of his hand, twenty, thirty, forty “frontliners” would be floored by an unseen power. This, it is claimed, is the working of the Holy Spirit. The significant thing of these who are “slain in the spirit” is that they all fall **backwards**, not forwards. “For the Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and rulers, the seers hath he covered” (Isa 29:10).

Falling backwards as a result of some unseen power occurred also in the days of Wang Ming Tao. Let Wang Ming Tao, China’s greatest saint, who was

once a charismatic but got out of it in good time answer this enigma of being “slain in the spirit.” In his book *These Fifty Years* (in Chinese), part of which I have translated and incorporated in mine, *Wang Ming Tao and Charismatism*, he says:

There is another danger linked with the Charismatic Movement, viz., many seekers for the charismatic gifts are transgressors in speech and walk by their abnormal, unruly and irresponsible conduct. During a meeting some would get up and dance, some would clap and shout, and there are others who behave most unseemly and offensively. When counselled, they would reply they are acting in deference to the Holy Spirit. Should any ask them how the Spirit would cause them do such thing, often one of their group would cite King Saul’s prophesying at Naioth and how he stripped off his clothes and lay naked for a day and a night (I Samuel 19:18-24). They admit that to lie naked is a loss of face. The Holy Spirit could cause Saul to do such a thing. But could He not cause us to do something special? Should the Spirit cause us to lose face, to be a laughing stock, we would be willing to suffer shame for the Lord’s sake. Not too long ago I saw how a charismatic leader used this same passage of Scripture about Saul in a magazine to prove that when the Holy Spirit fills a believer he can behave unseemly before other people.

What a monstrous error is this! How they have misinterpreted to such an extreme this Scripture passage! Now, when Saul lay naked, he was not under the blessing of God but rather under His punishment to his shame. We should know that Saul at this time was long rejected for disobeying God. God had meantime anointed David King. God's Spirit had departed from Saul and an evil spirit had come upon him. For envying David, he tried to kill him. David had to run for his life to escape Saul. At last he came to Samuel. When Saul came to know about this, he sent men to take David. But it turned out that three times men were sent to take him, three times these men prophesied by the Spirit of God when they came to Samuel. They could not lay hands on David. Finally this Saul, monster of monsters, went himself to take David, but who could imagine that before he could get his quarry, he was overturned with disgrace. Not only did the Spirit of God cause him to speak but also meet with what the three messengers did not experience — for a day and a night he lay down naked. Not only should we not seek Saul's experience but rather flee from it. . . .

Now, out of the practice of "slaying in the spirit" has erupted a new hysteria called "holy laughter" and out of the "holy laughter" a newest mania of barking, crowing, meowing and roaring of animal voices known as the "Toronto Blessing." This so-called "blessing" has burst not only on Christendom but

also taken centre stage of the world. It becomes sensational news to the curious, and to the gleeful chuckle of enemies in the world. “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up” (Hos 8:7).

Let Dr Frank McClelland and Dr Bert Oatley-Willis in their booklet, *The ‘Toronto Blessing’: Christian Faith or Charismatic Feeling?* (April 1995) present their observation of the whole show:

The following eye-witness report is by a colleague of the authors, Don Morley. It is acknowledged that no two services can ever be the same, but what Don has written gives a fairly typical picture of a Toronto Vineyard Christian Fellowship meeting. The authors, and other acquaintances, have also attended with the purpose of making first-hand investigation and they confirm the validity of Don’s observations. One difference is that the Toronto Vineyard has now moved to larger premises.

“On October 20th 1994 we went to the Vineyard Fellowship to witness the so-called ‘Toronto-Blessing’, held in a warehouse type building near the airport. There were about 400 people in the main hall, plus an overflow room. A survey by the leader indicated representation mainly from the United Kingdom and the United States.

“Other countries represented were Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Holland, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Most areas of Canada were represented, but only a relatively few visitors from Toronto itself. The home congregation, when asked to stand, numbered less than twenty. This proved what we knew — that the ‘Toronto Blessing’ has little impact here.

“What we observed was sickening and diabolical. Many times we felt like walking out and had to force ourselves to stay. For the first forty-five minutes a band with two soloists led the singing. The people were standing and singing with them to deafening rock type music. The songs were about worshipping the Lord, but the music and behaviour seemed to be opposed to the Lord’s honour. During the singing the crowd was progressively aroused.

“In all, only about four different songs were used but each was repeated over and over — the chorus of the first song being sung thirty times. There was much arm waving, shouting with horrifying screams and, when the music volume was lowered, the drone of what must have been ‘tongues’ could be heard. By the end of the singing many of the crowd were exhibiting spasmodic, uncontrollable bodily ‘jerks’, which continued for the rest of the evening. When the leaders were speaking and one of these spasms

occurred they either made a loud shout, or their words came out as a shout.

“Apparently this evening marked nine months since these ‘happenings’ began and they felt they had now ‘come to birth’. Between two of the songs, one of their own women went off in a screaming account of the movement coming to birth. Here screams and actions were so realistic that for a time we thought she was actually experiencing labour pains.

“Four people were called forward to testify, but they had very little to say except that since receiving ‘the blessing’ they had a love for everyone. One man declared he had received the gift of prophecy that afternoon. He also said when he saw people lying on the floor after receiving ‘the blessing’, he wanted to lie on top of them to share it.

“One woman was so overcome by the spasms she appeared to be very drunk and could hardly walk. Here testimony time was taken up by she and the leader making jokes about her appearance of drunkenness. The crowd laughed hilariously so that it resembled a comedy show. Following each ‘testimony’ the leader prayed for them and they fell into a trance, one man later roaring like a lion. . . .”

The Error of Prophesying

Let it suffice to conclude with a third and last analysis of charismatic prophesying. With the closing of the New Testament canon, God's revelation to man was complete. And the Apostle Jude has said, "The faith was once [and for all] delivered unto the saints." No preacher is to add any word as directly received from God to the Sacred Scriptures nor to take any away from it. But the stress on visions, voices and prophecies by Charismatic leaders has gone so haywire that it encourages some dauntless charismatic suitor to tell the young lady with whom his heart is inflamed, "The Lord told me last night that I should marry you today." I would advise the harassed young lady to reply, "But the Lord did not tell me, neither last night, nor this morning."

David W Cloud—the discerning fundamentalist reporter—who listened to dozens of prophecies, so-called direct revelations from God, like the prophecies received by Old Testament prophets, at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit, July 1987, declared that his own feelings were best described by a man named Neil Babcox, pastor of the Pentecostal Word of Life Church (Carbondale, Illinois), until his leaving the Charismatic Movement. Consider the testimony of this man who once gave such prophecies himself and who believed in such things:

“Prophetic messages were quite common at our Church. In fact, whenever we assembled to worship, spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, were foremost in our minds. Even though we followed no prescribed liturgy, there was an unwritten order of worship that always included the opportunity for one to prophesy according to the proportion of his faith (Romans 12:6) . . .

“Our prophecies seldom if ever predicted the future. Instead they took the form of fervent exhortations or simple words of comfort. Generally they consisted of various biblical phrases and fragments pieced together like a patch-work quilt. Often they focussed upon such theme as the imminent return of Christ or God’s forgiving love. Most of the time the prophecies were spoken in the first person as if God Himself were addressing us, but occasionally the phrase ‘thus saith the Lord’ was used even as it was by the prophets of the Bible . . .

“There was something distinctly romantic about the notion of prophesying. There you are, standing in succession to the prophets of the Bible. Samuel and Elijah saw your day coming and were glad. True, your lips are unclean, but they have been touched by a live coal from off the altar. Like Isaiah, you have heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And you responded, ‘Here am I. Send me! . . .’

“Yes, it was all very romantic. But gradually, what had started as a romantic venture, an idealistic quest for spiritual gifts, was slowly imperceptibly changing. Into what, I wasn’t sure. ALL I KNEW WAS THAT THE EXCITEMENT AND ROMANCE OF PROPHECYING WAS TURNING INTO AN UNEASY SENSE THAT THE PROPHECIES I HEARD, INCLUDING MY OWN, WERE HARDLY WORTHY OF THE NAME. THE IDEA THAT THEY WERE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD WAS BEGINNING TO SEEM PAINFULLY LUDICROUS. Would the romance now become a comedy of errors, or a tragedy, perhaps? At any rate, one thing was certain: this burden of the prophets was becoming a crushing, onerous weight. And I couldn’t help wondering if the weight which I was carrying was not the burden of the Lord at all, but some foreign yoke of bondage . . .

“IN MY CASE THERE WERE FOUR SIMPLE WORDS THAT PLAYED A DECISIVE ROLE IN CHANGING MY HEART: THUS SAITH THE LORD. To me, these were most unsettling words. And the more I comprehended their meaning, the more I understood what the prophets meant when they spoke them and what the Holy Spirit meant when He inspired them, the more unsettling they became . . .

“‘Thus saith the Lord.’ WHAT ABUSES I HAD SEEN OF THOSE WORDS! WHAT BITTER FRUIT I HAD SEEN BORN BY MEN AND WOMEN SPEAKING THESE WORDS! I have seen people married on the basis of guidance received from personal prophecies only to be divorced a week later because of a terrible scandal. Many lives have been harmed by such prophetic guidance. What actions, what conduct, have been countenanced by a ‘thus saith the Lord’ . . .

“The moment of truth came when I HEARD A PROPHECY SPOKEN AT A CHARISMATIC CHURCH I WAS VISITING. I WAS SITTING IN THE CHURCH TRYING TO WORSHIP GOD WHILE DREADING THE APPROACH OF THAT OBLIGATORY MOMENT OF SILENCE WHICH SIGNALLED THAT A PROPHECY WAS ABOUT TO BE SPOKEN. THE SILENCE CAME, AND SOON IT WAS BROKEN BY A BOLD AND COMMANDING ‘THUS SAITH THE LORD!’

“Those words triggered an immediate reaction. Conviction, like water rising against a dam, began to fill my soul. ‘Listen my people . . .’ [the prophecy commenced]. Until finally, the dam burst: ‘THIS IS NOT MY GOD,’ I CRIED WITHIN MY HEART. ‘THIS IS NOT MY LORD!’” (*A Search For Charismatic Reality — One Man’s Pilgrimage*, pp. 49-59; Neil Babcox . . .).

What Babcox cried out in his heart that night about the Charismatic prophecies, reflect exactly the cry of my own heart [reiterated David W Cloud] as I heard the blasphemous prophecies in New Orleans. This is NOT my Lord and my God speaking! It is NOT the Holy Spirit, but a false spirit. These are hard words to those caught up in this movement, but this is a discernment based on the teaching of the Word of God and the fruit of the Charismatic movement, and should not be taken lightly by anyone.

What is said by David W Cloud of the charismatic prophecies he heard at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit 1987 can be said of John Wimber in his Australian campaign also in 1987 in a self-proclaimed, “Third Wave of the Holy Spirit.” Speaking extra-Biblically “words of knowledge” as a direct revelation from God, he prophesied in Sydney, according to Andrew Shead, how “hundreds of millions” will turn to the Gospel and AIDS will be cured. This will be brought about by the display of **signs and wonders**. Ironically, our Lord has preempted Wimber’s trademark of **signs and wonders** in Matthew 24:24, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great **signs and wonders**; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

So, by “power evangelism,” that is, preceded by **signs and wonders** of healing and tongue-speaking, slaying in the spirit, and now barking and roaring, the muted voices of dogs and lions, Wimber’s disciples will impress hundreds of millions of people, and AIDS will be cured in these last days. But does our Lord say so? Rather pestilences (and AIDS is a pestilence) will be sent in judgment, and the Church will be lukewarm like Laodicea (Rev 3:16), “and because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold” (Matt 24:12).

Nor will there be mass conversions in hundreds of millions but rather the command to accelerated missions by the age-old Great Commission, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt 24:14). There is no charismatic power to missions and evangelism, for the power is in the Gospel itself, and it is by the foolishness of preaching and not sign-power that it will go forward (Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 1:23, 24).

The Spirit of Truth who would guide us into all truth by His Holy Word the Bible has no part indeed in any of the above extra-Biblical prophecies which cannot come but by inspiration of the Spirit of Error. Nor does the Spirit of Truth have any part in miracle rallies or divine-healing lapsing into “slaying of the

Spirit,” mass hysterical laughter, and in barking and roaring.

Conclusion

Let us hear the prophet Jeremiah, “Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. 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” (Jer 23:31, 32).

Jesus says, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt 7:15-23).

In conclusion, let us hear the Word of the Apostle John again, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . . We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:1, 6).

Rev (Dr) Timothy Tow was President of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches (FECCC). The above is based on a message delivered at the Second National Conference of the Indonesian Council of Christian Churches, Jakarta, November 26, 1987, brought up to date.

Spirit of the Triune God

*Spirit of the Triune God, Spirit of Grace
Spirit of the Triune God, Sent by the Son
Cleanse me, heal me, fill me, send me
O Holy Ghost from Above, o' the Three in One*

*Spirit of the Triune God, Spirit of Love
Spirit of the Triune God, Sent by the Son
Help us love Him, love another
O Holy Ghost from Above, o' the Three in One*

*Spirit of the Triune God, Spirit of Truth
Spirit of the Triune God, Sent by the Son
Teach me, give me Sight, Discernment
O Holy Ghost from Above, o' the Three in One*

*Spirit of the Triune God, Spirit from High
Spirit of the Triune God, praise, praise the Son
Speak not Thine own, Show us JESUS
O Holy Ghost from Above, Thou o' God Triune*

(To the tune of Spirit of the Living God)

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