

THE UK ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
A DIFFERENT MOVEMENT WITH THE SAME NAME

By **Philip L. POWELL**

<http://www.cwmfellowship.org>
<http://www.christian-witness.org>

Having grown up as the son and nephew of British Assemblies of God pastors, [born 1939] and having entered the Assemblies of God ministry as a student-pastor [circa 1959 in Brisbane, Australia] and a credentialed AoG-UK minister [circa 1961], becoming General Secretary of *The Australian Assemblies of God* [1989-1992] after pastoring in Britain (16 years) and Australia (10 years), I and others found ourselves in a quagmire. The original Assemblies of God had never been a denomination with a hierarchy. It was designed as a movement of autonomous local congregations held together by common doctrine and biblical practice with "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (**Ephesians 4:5**). However things had changed and with the election of carnal ambitious men as part of the hierarchy, over the years, the emphasis had moved away from Bible based doctrine and holy living to pragmatism and a plethora of false teaching with inevitable consequences.

I witnessed one deception and counterfeit "revival" after another bearing no resemblance to the biblical Pentecostalism I knew from my childhood. Doctrines alien to the Word of God, that traditional Pentecostals would have dismissed as heretical, were being embraced and promoted. For me it started with the 2nd visit of Mr Paul (later changed to "David" in typical cultic fashion) Yongji Cho to Australia [Adelaide circa 1979]¹. He taught "incubating" as part of his [Fourth Dimension](#)² heresy. Admittedly I did not at that time realise that the source of his doctrine was Buddhism, on account of his claim to have received it by "revelation" from the Lord Jesus. However both my wife and I were uncomfortable with it. I recall mentioning my concern to Fred Evans, brother of the then Australian AoG Superintendent Andrew Evans. It seemed to me that Mr Cho's idea condoned and even promoted covetousness, which the Bible forbids (cf. Exodus 20:17 with Romans 7:7 and 13:9). I shall never forget Fred's response, "Ah, Phil I don't worry about that sort of thing!" My concerns and more were confirmed by Dave Hunt's book – [The Seduction of Christianity](#)³ in which among other things the author documented Cho's doctrinal source as being Buddhist. Amazingly the AoG hierarchy in Australasia banned Hunt's book. I wrote to the editor of *The Australian Evangel*⁴ at the time, challenging the official AoG ban. My letter was not published.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD—inter alia⁵

The pattern and practice of the Australasian Assemblies of God were initially largely derived from the British Assemblies of God. As things have become, the three "denominations"⁶ have contributed doctrinally and in practice to each other. Sadly each has picked up the worst of their false doctrine and wrong practice from the other. In my opinion it began with a roles reversal development—the disciple nations became the teachers. To a large extent this was

¹ Philip and Kathleen Powell and family arrived in Australia November 1978 after Yongji Cho's first visit (Sydney).

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Yonggi_Cho

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Hunt

⁴ *Australian Evangel* was the name of the official magazine of the Assemblies of God

⁵ Inter Alia: Latin for *among other things*

⁶ AoG-UK; AoG-NZ; AoG-Australia

Christian Witness Ministries

based upon a perception of Australasian Church-Growth success which was perceived to be lacking in Britain. A recent cursory read of the AoG-UK [leadership section](#)⁷ of their website brought this fact home to me. There you read of one of the so called GS Team:

John Andrews is the Senior Minister of Rotherham New Life Christian Centre and serves on the GS-Team. He is a teacher with a passion to make God famous in their world.

The words which I have underlined immediately resonated with me. To my knowledge the idea of making God famous was first put forward by Malcolm Fletcher of Australia who took his strange and unbiblical notions to Europe. Malcolm, like myself is of Welsh origin as is one of his mentors, [AoG assistant president](#)⁸ Alun Davies, who in February 2003 signed a document of association with [Muslims in Melbourne](#)⁹. AoG-UK has been greatly influenced by AoG-OZ and to a less extent by AoG-NZ. All of this has had a detrimental effect to the point where I have been forced to confront the undeniable reality: what is calling itself the UK ASSEMBLIES OF GOD today is a different movement with different beliefs, and a different agenda that has merely retained the Assemblies of God name. The same applies to Assemblies of God in Australia and New Zealand.

There have been a number of contributing factors associated with false teachers and movements such as [The Power Team](#)¹⁰ which toured Australian AoG in the 1980s and later AoG-UK. Leader [John Jacobs](#)¹¹ according to these two links went through two divorces. The team disbanded after the first – but guess what? Rather than “dying” or “declining” power teams have multiplied into a number of similar so called “ministries”. Amazing! Does anyone ever learn? The point is AoG in most parts of the world has always been quick to grab the latest fad? Why? Well it’s all about numbers and money you know. Don’t worry about the little ones who are offended (cf. Matt. 18: 6), disillusioned and lost along the way. And when it all fails just move on to the next new attraction to keep your numbers and retain your assets. This in my view is the most concerning aspect of what AoG and Elim et al have done over the years.

Another serious false movement and doctrinal departure which was endorsed by AoG leaders was [Power Evangelism](#)¹² a la the late [John Wimber](#)¹³ and his associate at *Fuller Theological Seminary* [C. Peter Wagner](#)¹⁴. In terms of the Assemblies of God it’s hard to say which fell for the deception first, AoG-UK or AoG-Australia. But certainly each influenced the other. In the 1980s [David Shearman](#)¹⁵ of AoG-UK gave me John Wimber’s book on *Power Evangelism* during my pastorate in Kyabram, Victoria, Australia. I am sure he thought he was doing me a service and was being kind. Thankfully I had already formed an opinion about Wimber so his book neither impressed nor influenced me.

An additional example of doctrinal and practical departure by AoG from our roots relates to the matter of prophecy, which has always been a Pentecostal distinctive that is important to us. During my tenure as National General Secretary in Adelaide I attended a State Conference where a preacher from the USA preached about Elisha’s prophecy in 2nd Kings chapter 3. This

⁷ http://www.aog.org.uk/meet_our_leaders.asp

⁸ http://www.moriel.org/articles/notice_board/scandal_rocks_australia_AOG.htm

⁹ http://www.moriel.org/notice/respond_article_christian_and_muslim_leaders.htm

¹⁰ Created in the 1970s by John Jacobs, the *Power Team* was a touring group of evangelists who put on crowd attracting strength and martial arts displays.

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Jacobs_%28Power_Team_Minister%29

¹² <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/bookreviews/wimber.htm>

¹³ <http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/wimber/general.htm>

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Peter_Wagner

¹⁵ <http://www.findachurch.co.uk/churches/sk/sk53/cc/index.html>

Christian Witness Ministries

man claimed that it was when Elisha prophesied that a rain storm started in the mountains of Moab which caused the flood that brought victory. The entire thrust of his message was that we should prophesy and that until we do nothing will happen. Just about everyone at the Conference thought it was a marvellous new truth. However, far from being marvellous or true it was totally false and put a new slant on "prophecy" that early Pentecostals would have rejected. Why? Simply because it took the emphasis away from the sovereignty of God and put it on human action. The idea was that we have to "prophesy" things into existence. Biblically prophecy is a declaration of what God has determined not what man decides. While the incident I have just related may have focused the serious departure it was of course already by then a part of the AoG practice—at least in the circles of my knowledge. Men like the late [David Cartledge](#)¹⁶ and the late [Frank Houston](#)¹⁷ were constant practitioners of this false notion about prophecy and the expression of other of the "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). They developed the false notion that "prophets" prophesy things into existence.

EXAMINE YOURSELF

I am writing this, God willing, as a prelude to a book about my experiences as a minister within Assemblies of God and more recently as one "estranged" from the fold and criticised by my former colleagues and misunderstood by many of my former friends and associates. I do so on request, but also from a long time desire to try to answer misconceptions regarding the motive and modus operandi of the many associated "watchmen" ministries including our own *Christian Witness Ministries (CWM)*. In so doing the following verses of scripture are uppermost in my thinking:

Brothers, if anyone is overtaken in a fault, ... restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you are also tempted - Galatians 6:1.

Sadly, too many who are perceived to have pointed the finger at others have themselves fallen. Meekness in our approach, with a desire to restore not to condemn, is vital. I pray that the Lord will forgive me if this has been lacking previously and that He will help me on this occasion and into the future if the Lord spares me, so that I will be divinely enabled to help others.

Why do you behold the mote that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? - Matthew 7:3.

"Oh to see ourselves as others see us" is an old adage that is blatantly true. So in writing this I really am declaring myself open to receive response and, if required, rebuke from anyone, including my former colleagues and any whom I name.

But if the watchman sees the sword coming, and blows not the trumpet, and the people are not warned; if the sword comes, and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand - Ezekiel 33:6.

At times I tremble at this solemn, awesome responsibility. Too often perceived attacks on leaders are not counter-balanced, in the person's perception, against the genuine desire and need to protect the followers of those leaders. We all, me included, struggle to get that balance

¹⁶ <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2001/latterrain01.html>

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Houston

Christian Witness Ministries

right. Please pray with me that my sincere effort will achieve that end—repentance (by all, me included if required), reconciliation, restoration, renewal, even revival.

*If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and makes merchandise of him, or sells him; then that thief shall die; and you shall put evil away from among you - **Deuteronomy 24:7**.*

*Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them - **Ezekiel 34:10**.*

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber – **2 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)**.*

*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me – **1 Corinthians 15:10**.*

“There go I but for the Grace of God” is an often repeated phrase that is true to scripture though not an actual quote from the Bible, as some mistakenly think. It is in the “spirit” of that expression that I present this article--not with any feeling of superiority or elitism.

The only way to be saved from the lure of the wrong roads is by doing what our Master [the Lord Jesus Christ] tells us, that is, *“Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”* If we do not watch and pray we shall be led into temptation before we know where we are. *“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”* said Jesus (Luke 18:8). He will find faith in individual men and women, but the general organized form of the Christian church has slipped almost wholesale onto wrong roads to the Kingdom-- **Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)**. Quoted by *The Berean Call* – 13-05-08 - refer <http://www.myutmost.org/addnl/forward.html> for the Foreword to the classic *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers.

It is remarkable that the above, written before or at the start of the 20th century, rings so true today. That great Christian statesman Oswald Chambers asserted, “... the general organized form of the Christian church has slipped almost wholesale onto wrong roads to the Kingdom.” It was happening then and it has happened again:

*The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun - **Ecclesiastes 1:9**.*

While it is important to see that *“there is no new thing under the sun”* is true generally of things within and outside the Church, it is equally important to recognise and, to some extent, to assess, the major contributing factors in producing the present malaise within Christendom. Obviously, it would be simplistic to suggest that it can all be attributed to one incident or principal cause. In moving rapidly towards the end-time apostasy prophesied in Scripture (cf. 2

Christian Witness Ministries

Thessalonians chapter 2) the "falling away" must of course impact upon the entire Church and not just the section to which you and I belong—in my case the Pentecostal section. However my rationale is that I have a principal responsibility to "clean-up" my own backyard. Or to use another cliché "charity begins at home."

It is my considered opinion that the present state of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Church is largely due to the fact that the established and/or recognised leaders opened satanic sluice gates that allowed all sorts of evil to flood into the organised section of that "church". The so called "revivals" related to the *School of the Prophets*, especially the [Kansas City Prophets](#)¹⁸ and their off-shoots, followed by the Toronto and Pensacola movements have wrought havoc within the Church and now through the latest so called *Florida Healing Revival* under Todd Bentley things have descended to a new low.

As if to underscore the urgency of this article, as I was writing it I received a report from Wales, the country of my birth, about an alleged "spreading revival" that has some most disturbing features. Clearly it emanates from the latest fad— Todd Bentley's *Florida Healing Revival*, which you can read about [here](#)¹⁹.

Florida Outpouring: Internet Draws Thousands to Lakeland Revival

By [Cary McMullen](#)²⁰ - LEDGER RELIGION EDITOR May 18,2008.

I am quite certain that were it not for the previous so called "revivals" at [Carpenter Church \(Florida\)](#)²¹, [The Airport Church \(Toronto\)](#)²² and [Brownsville AG \(Pensacola\)](#)²³ this clearly occult latest "fad" with Todd Bentley, who claims that "Jesus" told him to get his body tattooed (cf. Lev. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:19) would not have got off the ground. So in my opinion those who supported, endorsed and/or promoted the former must accept responsibility for the latter.

For an incisive examination of this latest demonic delusion and its main proponent go to the CWM blog at:- <http://www.christian-witness.org/blog/?p=13>²⁴ and link to the article *Todd Bentley - The New Simon Magus*, by pastor Bill Randles. Feel free to leave a comment.

From the other side here's a sample of what arch-heretic Rick Joyner has published on his website about the latest "[revival](#)"²⁵.

As C.S. Lewis wrote about Aslan, his personification of Christ, "He is not a tame lion." Just when we think the anointing is fading, the strongest wave of all would come and stagger us. Most of our team has experienced a lot, and have been in many previous revivals, renewals, and moves of God, but it is a bit scary to see them so scared when He comes the way He has been here. Even when the building is empty, there is a presence that sends chills down your back. We have had this many times, but not on this level. This really is different.

¹⁸ <http://www.intotruth.org/kcp/kcp-roots.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.theledger.com/article/20080518/news/805180341&tc=yahoo>

²⁰ <http://www.theledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080518/NEWS/805180341/1039&template=printart>

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carpenter's_Home_Church

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto_Airport_Christian_Fellowship

²³ <http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/pensacola.html>

²⁴ <http://www.christian-witness.org/blog/?p=13>

²⁵ <http://www.morningstarministries.org/Publisher/Article.aspx?id=1000031456>

Christian Witness Ministries

What is going on here at Heritage seems to be contagious as well. We are hearing reports of people receiving emails about it, or in some cases, cell phone calls from Heritage, and they get smitten by the power of God, and something breaks out where they are. It is like coals of fire being thrown on dry wood.

Joyner appears to admit that even the money-grabbing, false prophets themselves are getting scared at what is happening. He admits: "Even when the building is empty, there is a presence that sends chills down your back." What "presence" would send a chill down anyone's back? Surely NOT the presence of the Lord! Yet of course he can't resist the temptation to dangle another carrot to entice his unsuspecting, naïve, deceived followers and would-be followers into the trap that he and his cohorts have set. Come to HERITAGE!! Remember heritage was where Jim Bakker sold his false wares and ended in prison for his efforts. Released he's back on the trail so lookout Joyner et al, there's only so much to go around and the best conman gets the most – or so it seems.

Those who initiated and promoted the false "Toronto" and false "Pensacola movements are particularly culpable as are those who failed to detect what was going on and/or refused to take a stand against it. If there is any chance of recovery both groups—the active promoters and the passive endorsers—must openly and publicly repent.

THE POSITION OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, ELIM and the Traditional previously Conservative PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS and their Leaders

I refer to these because I was part of them and associated with the leaders whose names I have mentioned hereunder. This is not an exercise in "name calling" and "finger pointing". It is an honest attempt to establish accountability and recovery. There could have been another, better way, but so far my former colleagues have refused to meet with me or to reasonably consider and discuss what I have repeatedly presented to them in writing, including numerous requests for a meeting. Two of the following named men died quite young by today's standards. We are all moving rapidly towards the end – "*maranatha*" (1 Corinthians 16:22).

KEN GOTT, WYN LEWIS, COLIN DYE, THE LATE WARWICK SHENTON, THE LATE DAVID CARTLEDGE, THE LATE FRANK HOUSTON, ANDREW & FRED EVANS, DAVID & ANDREW SHEARMAN, PAUL WEAVER, PHILIP HILLS, JOHN LEWIS et al

This article will, God Willing, be published widely on websites and blogs and will be drawn to the attention of the worldwide Church by means of various email letters as a prelude to my proposed book entitled *Whatever Happened To the AoG*, in which I plan to tell my story as a sort of auto-biography. I will provide more supporting examples, in addition to those herein, for my assertions of doctrinal departures by Assemblies of God worldwide with careful documentation where appropriate. Such action has been forced upon me by the attitude of those whom I am trying to reach. A number of my former colleagues have asked me to delete them from my email lists. This, in my opinion, is because they cannot or will not intelligently respond to the matters which I have raised. In my desire to rescue or protect those who would "*follow their pernicious ways*" (2 Peter 2:2) I am left with no alternative, but to adopt this course of action. I do so without fear or favour, yet in the fear of the Lord. I know that this will not "win friends and influence people" in my favour, but it is par for the course that was set for my life and work.

Christian Witness Ministries

By way of explanation I would point out that what follows is to a large extent anecdotal. I welcome the response of those who may have a different recollection and/or who dispute what I claim, including those named, whom, with the exception of those deceased I have endeavoured to reach by email prior to going public with this article. The proposed book will carefully document what I assert.

WHERE, WHEN AND HOW DID IT ALL START?

Shortly after the birth of our youngest son, Jonathan in 1986 I and my family motored from northern Victoria—Kyabram where I was pastoring—for a holiday near Batemans Bay in New South Wales south of Sydney. We concluded our holiday in the Blue Mountains, where I had pastored and lectured at the Commonwealth Bible College (CBC-AoG) during the years 1978-1980. Driving home on a Sunday we called off at the *Christian Life Centre* (CLC) AoG pastored by Frank Houston. I sat in the congregation incognito being recognised neither by the leader nor by the pastor who preached. On entering the sanctuary I was profoundly disturbed that we had to make our way through an art display which was linked to the so called *Creative Arts College* that Frank had established in association with the CLC which was located near the notorious Kings Cross area of Sydney.

The leader of the meeting had been seconded from some Church in USA (California as I recall) to head up the *Creative Arts College*. This leader justified that Sunday's "art display" by appealing to the historic emergence of *The Renaissance* as a sequel to *The Reformation*. He said something to the effect: "We need to reinstate the arts of *The Renaissance* as that period brought great enlightenment and advancement to the Church." This conflicted with my own perception of the effect of *The Renaissance* upon the Church. In my opinion it brought darkness not light. Art is not wrong per se, but it is not the work of the Church. When it is introduced into a holiness movement it has the effect of refocusing the emphasis away from godliness and righteousness to fleshly pursuits. I was later told that there was a blatantly salacious²⁶ picture hanging that Sunday morning in the CLC art display though I didn't see it myself and was later assured that the senior pastor did not know about its presence. In the light of subsequent disclosures about the late Frank Houston one must wonder what truly was going on.

At the end of the service I and my family left quickly for the long drive back to our home, without talking to anyone there. For the first fifteen minutes of the drive I couldn't speak without weeping. I later shared my experience with Mr Houston and with my executive colleague Andrew Evans, who at first supported my desire to meet with Frank Houston over my concerns but later asked me to "back-off". I really do not know why, except that Andrew intimated that Frank could not handle me in debate. He said I had made my point and that I should leave the matter.²⁷

Shortly after our visit to CLC on that Sunday morning and unbeknown to me there was an acrimonious change of principal at the *Creative Arts College*. The new appointment was a man from Nottingham, UK associated with the church pastored by David Shearman.

David and Andrew Shearman, named above, had been long time friends and associates of mine. For several years, as a young man, I was a neighbouring pastor at Droylsden to their father Ernest Shearman at Denton in the greater Manchester area. The two town centres are

²⁶ Salacious: appealing to the flesh, in particular, sexual desires/feelings.

²⁷ Frank failed to honour an arrangement to meet me to discuss the matter at the AoG Conference in Sydney.

Christian Witness Ministries

within five miles of each other and the respective Church buildings somewhat closer. I am slightly senior to the two Shearman brothers and became quite close to them. In view of the later disclosures about the late Frank Houston I have concerns about the close association of David Shearman's Church in Nottingham with the developments that occurred in respect of the appointment of the principal at CLC's *Creative Arts College* in Sydney.

My concerns were exacerbated when I watched a video of David preaching at an AoG-UK Conference in what became known as the Yellow Coat incident. Towards the end of his sermon David threw his bright yellow jacket on the platform and invited "pastors", who desired an anointing, to kneel down and touch it. Amazingly the appeal triggered a mad dash by the British AoG presbytery to act on David's invitation. Such antics would have been unimaginable in the Assemblies of God that I knew and grew up in. As I watched the video it was clear to me that David was mimicking his friend and mentor Frank Houston, who was well known for stirring his congregations with antics and gimmicks.

If it was no more than that—a preacher copying another preacher whom he admired and with whom he was very close there would be no need to mention it. But what David did at that National General AoG-Conference of the movement with which it was a one time honour to be associated was blatantly occult. It is best described as "totemism"²⁸ and is something that was introduced into the Pentecostal movement by Oral Roberts through his "point of contact" doctrine and is forbidden by the Bible.

As early as the mid 1950s, before Oral Roberts was chased from Australia and his tent set on fire on the occasion of his first visit "down-under", the late William F P Burton, who was a pioneer Pentecostal Missionary statesman and a most godly brother wrote to Oral Roberts warning him that his point of contact doctrine was basically Roman Catholic and that it would corrupt the Pentecostal movement. Oral Roberts would invite his listeners to reach out and touch their radio as a point of contact as he prayed for them or whatever need they or their associates had. Of course Oral Roberts paid no attention to William Burton, he was too "big" to concern himself with a humble godly missionary who had seen genuine miracles in his establishment of approximately 1000 local Churches in the Belgium Congo over a 30 year period of sacrificial service. William Burton was right. The yellow coat incident was a natural progression of Oral Roberts' false idea and wrong doctrine.

The fact that the AoG Conference leaders failed to publicly rebuke David Shearman and correct the incident but rather supported it contributed in a major way to the additional corruption that has taken place.

Two things lie at the heart of the problem:

1. A failure on the part of the leaders named above, and others, to correctly interpret and apply the Scriptures; and
2. An attempt to justify what they did (and do) by appealing to pragmatic results. For these leaders "Church Growth" is their bottom line. This leads to personal or denominational "empire" building. Like the religious leaders of old they "*compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made*" they "*make him twofold more the child of hell than*" themselves - **Matthew 23:15**.

²⁸ The belief in the association/kinship of individuals and groups to plants, animals and objects.

Christian Witness Ministries

From the mid 1970s and on into the 1980s the Australasian and British Assemblies of God experienced a radical paradigm shift. Assemblies of God, Elim Four Square and similar denominations worldwide are NOT what they once were and NOW they have reached a watershed. The time of recovery is NOW or never. The warning must be given. The trumpet must be sounded. It is very late—may be too late to rescue these movements.

THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE

When Toronto broke I and my family were based in Hamilton, New Zealand. It was in nearby Auckland (100 kilometres north) that I first met Jacob Prasch who has become a close associate in ministry. That was a time of "violence" and "taking the kingdom by force" in the thinking of those who were being called "the new breed". Andrew Shearman, who was aligned with American Dominion Theology proponent [Rick Godwin](#)²⁹, since exposed in the American press in a damning report on Godwin's [financially related activities](#)³⁰, had expounded some weird idea supposedly based on Matthew 11: 12 about Christians becoming aggressive in "taking the kingdom". When Jacob Prasch pointed out from the meaning of the Greek that Andrew's exposition was entirely wrong, David sprang to his brother's defence saying to me in an email that we should adhere to the "simple vernacular". However this statement, which is typical of superficial thinkers, overlooks the fact that if the "simple vernacular" fails to convey the truth contained in the original language we are in danger of being deceived and furthermore of deceiving others if we rely entirely upon it.

IN JACOB PRASCH'S WORDS:

The Greek word is BIAZOMAI meaning "force into" (almost identical to the word for 'rape'). Contextually "The Law and Prophets" preached by John showed the impending judgment of an angry God due to sin. Salvation by Grace through a repentant faith was the way of escape. The Law (or Torah) as proclaimed by John might be compared to an alarm system on a ship sounding a signal that it was going to sink. Once a way of escape is offered, the passengers 'force their way' into the life boats which in the analogy is comparable to the Gospel.

Theologically and biblically Jacob is correct. The violence that Jesus spoke of has nothing to do with human activity in extending the Kingdom of God externally. It relates to our personal pressing into the Kingdom ourselves, no matter what the cost. It is not only the original language that makes this plain but even the "simple vernacular" teaches this so long as you rightly divide the Word of God by comparing scripture with scripture. Sadly the pragmatism adopted by the hierarchical leaders of Assemblies of God no longer understands let alone practices that art. However, whether we agree or disagree with Jacob's explanation is not the main point. The disturbing thing is that David Shearman's comment belies a flippant approach to scripture. What he says in effect is that the original words in the original language are not important. Fred Evans' comment to me in the context of Yongi Cho's Buddhist "incubating", "Ah, Phil I don't worry about that sort of thing" (see above) is even worse. He says in effect that he doesn't care about the Bible anymore.

Flippancy and banality feature everywhere in respect of these self-seeking men. For example Andrew Shearman referring to his own "journey" [writes](#)³¹:

²⁹ <http://www.ondctrine.com/10godwin.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/metro/stories/MYSA111807.01A.church.2a4b302.html>

³¹ <http://www.andrewshearman.com/bio.html/#bio2>

Christian Witness Ministries

Those who travel it will fill the earth with the Glory of God and fulfil God's Dream. This Sacred Journey has seen me empty, full; demoted, promoted; humiliated, elevated; confused, certain; fearful, courageous; failing, succeeding; procrastinating, disciplined; scattered, dedicated; chaotic, ordered; foolish, wise; sinful, sacred; double-minded, decisive; jackass, apostle; doubtful, full of faith; downcast (rarely), passionate (mostly); despairing, full of hope; being loved, loving; fasting, feasting; condemned, forgiven; filthy, righteous.

I have never been without a sense of call, obligation and destiny, usually idealistic, a man of peace but a man of war, always looking down the road, I believe that my steps have been ordered by the Lord. The twists and turns have been deliberate and well planned and sometimes taken me completely by surprise.

I am happy and relieved to be me--finally. My name is Andrew James Shearman and I am a Keeper of God's Dream!

What is the man talking about—God dreaming? No, it's Andrew Shearman who is dreaming. A one-time common friend in the AoG-UK ministry and veteran pastor told me that in the early days of Andrew Shearman's association with Rick Godwin, Andrew invited him to visit USA with the offer, "We'll fill your pockets with dollars." My friend, who is a godly man and now a veteran retired pastor said to me, "Who wants to fill his pockets with dollars?" That's their bottom line—money, popularity, prestige, self-promotion.

Such men are or have been the "leaders" of AoG, and similar denominations, where now pragmatism prevails! For them, if it works or appears to work, it must be all right. Of course incubating does not work, nor does a humanly contrived "taking of the kingdom by force". These things only appear to work and, in fact, they have both led to all sorts of other wrong doctrine and evil practice.

For example, when Benny Hinn's father-in-law, Roy Harthern visited Adelaide shortly after Yongji Cho's visit, he publicly claimed that he was "incubating" a new sewer system in his big Church building in Florida. The mind boggles especially in the light of the fact that upon his return to America from that visit he was charged with immorality and was disciplined as an AG-USA minister. This sort of thing has happened so frequently with those who have embraced and taught seriously false doctrine that it is well overdue that current AoG leaders woke up and faced the inevitable conclusion—false doctrine (Nicolaitanism) leads to wrong living (Baalism) and vice versa – cf. Revelation 2: 14-15.

Thomas Trask--Paul Weaver—Ken Gott

Some time ago I was contacted about the unexpected, sudden announcement made by Paul Weaver that he was stepping down from the position that he had held for some 13 years as General Superintendent of the British Assemblies of God. In the build up to their recent national general conference (May 6-8, 2008) the official AoG-UK website included this statement about Paul Weaver on the "meet our leaders" page:

Paul Weaver has been the General Superintendent of AoG since 1995.



Paul will stand down from office immediately after the Conference in May 2008. We are planning to celebrate Paul's contribution and long service to the Fellowship at our May Conference. I am sure you will join with us in praying for Paul and Jenn as they enter a new phase of their ministry.

Christian Witness Ministries

A current (May 21, 2008) announcement on the AoG-UK website blandly [reads](#)³²:

During the conference we honoured Paul Weaver for his service to the Movement as General Superintendent and we pray God's richest blessing as he moves into a new chapter.

The current "[meet our leaders](#)"³³ page simply lists what they call "The General Superintendent's Team" with David Shearman first but NO ONE named General Superintendent. I wonder why?



David Shearman is Senior Minister at the Christian Centre, Nottingham. As well as being committed to the church and the city of Nottingham, ... David operates with a very strong apostolic and prophetic anointing that sharpens, shapes and impacts leaders around the world.

Conference delegates were presumably told more—or were they? It is a well known fact that leaders never hide what is appropriate, but always what is inappropriate. Why should AoG-UK not publicise the reasons for Paul Weaver's resignation and the reason why NO ONE has taken over his role as General Superintendent of AoG-UK? Going further afield, Thomas Trask former General Superintendent of AG-USA likewise resigned "suddenly" and unexpectedly and in his case in between Conferences, which is most unusual, especially in view of his long tenure of some 20 years. Once again CWM was asked questions about the secrecy which we could not answer and which AG-USA also failed to comment on to me notwithstanding my friendly email interaction with the incumbent General Superintendent, George Wood.³⁴

KEN GOTT – FRANK HOUSTON & TORONTO

Last night (May 20) a small group from our CWM-Fellowship in Brisbane watched part of a DVD entitled *The Discernment Tool Kit – video study series* which is produced and available from [DECEPTION IN THE CHURCH](#)³⁵ author Sandy Simpson--Apologetics Coordination Team – website mirrored at <http://op.50megs.com/ditc/>³⁶.

Sandy argues the need to apply the test of what he calls the five Core Doctrines of the Christian Faith—**Trinity; Person of Jesus Christ; Second Coming; Salvation; Scripture**—to all movements, denominations, teachings and teachers. Our group has watched and studied most of the series with just three studies left. I recommend the exercise to everyone. Sandy is a missionary based in Hawaii who works very closely with Mike Oppenheimer of [LET US REASON MINISTRIES](#)³⁷ which we also highly recommend.

The author rightly makes the point that if any of the five Core Doctrines is contravened, abrogated or ignored the teacher and teaching should be rejected. In last night's session I was sickened to once again view the bizarre, blasphemous, and blatant balderdash so called "manifestations" that originated with Toronto—men and women kicking their legs in the air as they rolled on the floor, clucking like chooks, roaring like bulls and crowing like cockerels, with

³² http://www.aog.org.uk/resources_events_conf.asp

³³ http://www.aog.org.uk/meet_our_leaders.asp

³⁴ After sending this article in draft form George Wood said that there is no mystery. The Lord told Trask to step aside. He is respected and continues to preach within AG-USA.

³⁵ <http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com>

³⁶ <http://op.50megs.com/ditc/>

³⁷ <http://www.letusreason.org>

Christian Witness Ministries

one man leading another on his hands and feet like someone walking his dog and they called it a movement of the Holy Spirit. What blasphemy!

One of the early AoG-UK promoters of this nonsense was [Ken Gott](#)³⁸, who built a big “church” on the sensation of Toronto in Sunderland and ended in confusion for himself and those whom he led, with an excuse by the AoG-UK leaders that God was re-directing him.

Richard Riss Toronto Blessing “historian” asserts on his [website](#)³⁹:

Upon their return from the Toronto Airport Vineyard, the Gotts decided not to tell the church about the phenomena they had seen. Ken said, 'We wanted to have a visitation, not an imitation.'

The idea that Ken Gott did not publicise what happened to him at Toronto is NOT supported by facts. At the outset of Toronto in UK Ken Gott gave a talk to the students of the *International Bible Training Institute* (IBTI) at Burgess Hill in the south of England. He told how what he caught at Toronto caused him to crawl like a drunk into the foyer of the hotel where he was staying near the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, to the amazement and amusement of the hotel employees. This crazy carry on was and remains an indictment on the Pentecostal movement, as do the false stories such as that published by Richard Riss mentioned above. These things demand acknowledgement and public repentance.

Ken Gott called Frank Houston "[one of the Body of Christ's all-time giants in God](#)"⁴⁰. They both supported Toronto as a great move of the Holy Spirit, as did Andrew Evans and the late David Cartledge and the late Warwick Shenton. [David Cartledge](#)⁴¹ claimed that what he “caught” at Toronto sometimes threw him against the wall at the back of the platform where he was preaching and at other times transfixed him on the spot as he was praying for a person. Warwick Shenton lay prostrate on the platform for much of the time of the national general conference during his last chairmanship before he died. (Both David Cartledge and Warwick Shenton died from terminal brain conditions.) I heard a recording of Andrew Evans claiming that he had met with the Pentecostal leadership of Australia and they had concluded that Toronto was a genuine revival produced by the Holy Spirit (circa 1994).

It was not. The fruit of that false movement is now evident. Fruit you know is NOT what appears immediately. It takes time for a new tree to produce fruit. What was set in motion back in the early 1990s far from dying has continued to our time with more sinister expressions each time it reoccurs. We call on all to face the facts and like [Kevin Reeves](#)⁴² author of *The Other Side of the River* and [Paul Gowdy](#)⁴³ former *Toronto Vineyard* pastor and author of [The TORONTO DECEPTION](#)⁴⁴ to admit that the movement they supported and promoted was in fact a demonic delusion- read on [here](#)⁴⁵.

As I was coming towards the end of this article on Friday May 23 I received a note from pastor Ray Barnett of New York pointing out the total hypocrisy of the leadership of AG-USA. He did not know that I was composing this article. Among other things he wrote:

³⁸ <http://www.intotruth.org/tb/sndlnd.html>

³⁹ http://www.grmi.org/Richard_Riss/history/sunderland.html

⁴⁰ http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/van2002/houston2_15.html

⁴¹ <http://www.pastornet.net.au/renewal/journal7/cartledg.html>

⁴² <http://www.lighthouse-trails.com/osr.htm>

⁴³ <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2007/toronto39.html>

⁴⁴ <http://www.yesumulungi.com/Apologetics/Appologs12.htm>

⁴⁵ http://www.christian-witness.org/past_mailers/feb07mm.html#Anchor-3.%20Tor-42110

In case you didn't know, the Todd Bentley demonic phenomena is taking place in an AOG church - Steve Strader. I didn't know that until the brother [below my email] alerted me. His open letter is a good read, especially as the A/G Presbytery back peddles claiming they have no authority over a "sovereign" church. These guys are like the IRS - they get you coming and going. How convenient, when controversy arises the church is sovereign. When money is involved the pastor is booted out and the assets are seized. PS - In case you have not seen the Todd Bentley "outpouring" in Lakeland you can see it here - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9mSCHJfnGE>⁴⁶

From: Totally Sharp (Jon) - Wednesday, May 21, 2008 5:43 PM

Subject: The Assemblies of God and Todd Bentley...

Just thought you might be interested in my letter to the AG.

<http://blog.thewaycf.com/2008/05/open-letter-assemblies-of-god-re-todd.html>⁴⁷

My heart bleeds as I conclude this article, which I have been hesitant about publishing, but I feel I must. The writing is on the wall. Who can read and interpret it (cf. Daniel 5: 25)? It's REPENTANCE or else

*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils – **1 Corinthians 10:21.***

*Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty - **2 Corinthians 6:17-18.***

*.... the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he who is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he who is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be – **Revelation 22:10-12.***

⁴⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9mSCHJfnGE>

⁴⁷ <http://blog.thewaycf.com/2008/05/open-letter-assemblies-of-god-re-todd.html>