

What are your thoughts on the Toronto Blessing?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14

Code: QA62

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The apostle Paul was very clear in pointing out that "God is not a God of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33). Where pandemonium rules, we can be certain God is not the author of it.

"You're limiting God," many advocates of the Toronto movement will say.

No, God can do whatever he wills. But He will not deny Himself. He will not mystically reveal Himself to us as someone different from the holy God the Scriptures reveal. Since the Bible tells us He is not the author of confusion--and specifically that He does not approve of disorder in public worship services (this is the whole point of 1 Corinthians 14)—we can know with absolute certainty that He is not the power behind a movement whose main features are hysteria, tumult, and frenzy.

More important, the Scriptures reveal Him as the Spirit of *truth* (John 14:17), who bears witness not of Himself but of Christ (15:26), who speaks not on His own initiative, but guides us into truth (16:13), and sanctifies us in the truth. Where is this sanctifying truth found? Not through mystical means. *God's Word* is the truth through which we are sanctified (17:17). This means that one of the Holy Spirit's primary ministries is to convey the truth of Scripture to our understanding. Nothing in Scripture indicates that He works by stirring up our emotions while bypassing our minds.

According to 1 Corinthians 14, this is precisely why Paul valued prophecy more than tongues: "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one *understands* ... But one who prophesies speaks to men for *edification* and exhortation and consolation" (vv. 2-3, emphasis added). "If I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?" (v. 6). The point is to communicate *truth*. Ministry that bypasses the understanding is pointless: "If the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" (v. 8). All the gifts are meant to *edify*, which is an expression Paul uses to speak of ministering to the *mind* (v. 3). That is why Paul insisted that tongues be interpreted. "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the *edification* of the church" (v. 12, emphasis added).

When the laughing revival has run its course, what will be next? How can a movement stoked by the heat of raw passion rekindle the flames when people's emotions finally grow cold?

Those who really know Christ and love Him must come back to the truth of His Word.

Adapted from John MacArthur, *Reckless Faith* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1995).

For more information, consider the following resources:

- ***Christianity in Crisis* or *Counterfeit Revival*, by Hank Hanegraaff**

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