

# Florida/Belfast 'Healing Revival' debate on Sunday Sequence: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2008:

(Some 'update comments' added in red on 29 December 2016)

In the article already posted to our website titled **Todd Bentley and his 'Healing Revival' in Florida** I made reference to how unfortunately this had impacted locally here in Northern Ireland. I wrote the following in that article –

'Sadly from a local perspective the events in Lakeland are being given both coverage and credence in the Elim Christian Centre in Alexandra Park Avenue and there are links on their website to enable people to watch what is happening...the Belfast Pastor, Brian Madden...the Pastor tells of visiting a young man in hospital who he claims was clinically dead for 15 minutes [during which time he apparently 'saw the devil'] but of how he felt led to 'anoint the sides, head and foot of THE BED with oil' and to 'rebuke the spirit of death'.

A local morning newspaper, the **News Letter** picked up on this incident and gave extensive coverage to it in their Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008 issue. As well as front page photographic coverage they also had a fullpage of coverage on page 4 and this is part of that coverage –

## Teenager 'back from the dead' after crash

BY GEMMA MURRAY  
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AN ELIM church in Belfast is claiming that a teenager came 'back from the dead' after a serious car crash.

The case is being linked into an international Pentecostalist healing phenomenon, which began in Florida.

Dozens of people are now flocking nightly to services at the church in Tigers Bay, north Belfast.

Members say that 18-year-old Andrew Duffin was dead for 15 minutes on a hospital operating table, but revived after his father, who is a Christian, sent out a prayer appeal through American preacher Todd Bentley.

But last night other observers voiced a note of caution and a Presbyterian minister who has worked in divine healing said that while miracles can happen, he had not personally witnessed any on that scale.

The 18-year-old was seriously injured when the car he was travelling in, smashed into a wall along the Newtownards Road, at around 10pm on Saturday, May 3.

He says he was unaware he was being carried in a stolen car and was left to die in the backseat after the driver and front seat passenger ran off.

Andrew said: "I was taken to the Royal Victoria hospital. I have only been told this, of course, as I remember nothing. I had been drinking for a few hours before the crash."

"I know now that my travel was captured and I was filled with poison but the hospital did not operate on me until the Sunday."

"When I was taken to theatre the doctors opened me up and I had a heart attack. The doctors then told me I died for 15 minutes on the table."

"I had a heart attack, my lungs collapsed, my kidneys stopped and then my organs all stopped. I was told they had given up on me."

"The first thing I remember is the feeling of sinking into black. I suppose that was me dying. Then I remember hearing one of the doctors saying 'he is alive'."

He said: "I was in hospital a total of six weeks. I am now totally healed, have no brain injury which is pretty unheard of for what I have come through."

Andrew admitted he had not believed in God.

**HEALING:** Pastor Brian Madden with Andy Duffin, who believes in the power of prayer and that God healed his 18-year-old son Andrew Duffin, who was seriously injured in a car crash  
Picture: Gavin Caldwell

### Elim pastor holds nightly prayer meetings

On Friday evening [20<sup>th</sup> June] I was contacted by a reporter from the **News Letter** and asked for my views on this subject and the following report was published in the Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June issue of the **News Letter** –

# Warning over 'possible deceptions'

**BY LAURA MURPHY**  
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PEOPLE being brought back from the dead or healed may have all the traits of modern-day miracles – but that doesn't mean God is behind them.

That is the warning from campaigner Cecil Andrews, who runs a website called [www.takeheed.net](http://www.takeheed.net) to warn Christians about "what we perceive to be deceptions, or possible deceptions".

He said that while so-called "cults" might spring to mind as examples, "more and more over the years we have seen such issues within Christendom, and as many inside it as outside it".

Mr Andrews believes that recent reports about the Florida meetings at Lakeland are attempts to "recycle the phenomenon of the 1990s, when the same thing happened in Toronto".

The Toronto Blessing is a term coined by the Press describing the revival and resulting phenomena that began in January 1994 at a church in Toronto. Participants reported healings and incidents of personal transformation.

But Mr Andrews and his supporters claim these kind of acts are unscriptural and many even bear resemblance to effects of non-Christian religions.

"God's blessing is not transferable from one person to another," he explained.

He said that the idea of clergymen travelling to meet people like Todd Bentley in Florida, to obtain the ability of administering healing to other people, was contrary to the Scriptures.

Mr Andrews said he was certain that many people have experienced what they believe to be miraculous healings or experiences.

But he warned: "We need to keep in mind that just because something works doesn't mean it is God. The Bible tells us that Satan can transfer into an angel of light."

He admitted that he had concerns that the people claiming to have been touched by these happenings would be left "emotionally upset and disillusioned".

Mr Andrews is due to appear on the BBC's Sunday Sequence programme tomorrow morning where he will feature as part of a panel debating the whole issue of miracles.

Pastor Brian Madden, from the Elim Church in Tigers Bay, is also believed to be taking part.

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As you will have read in the last 2 paragraphs of this report both Pastor Madden and myself had been invited by the local BBC Radio Ulster to take part in a panel debate on these issues in their Sunday Sequence programme of 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Also taking part in the live debate in the studio would be Professor Norman Nevin, a Christian from Belfast and renowned expert in the field of genetics. There was another contributor by phone, a Roman Catholic journalist called Peter Jennings who had a history of being 'ministered' to in the past by the late John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Movement from whence the so-called 'Toronto Blessing' emerged.

There would also be contributions by Radio Ulster reporter Malachi O'Doherty and a Queens University psychologist. At this point if you click on the following link you will be able to listen to the presentation that lasts in total for about 40 minutes and then I will comment on the various contributions to the debate,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O\\_klKxesFel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_klKxesFel)

## Comments on report by Malachi O'Doherty

Before commenting specifically on Malachi's report I want to 'set the scene' a little. In another article on our website I have stated that what is happening with Todd Bentley in Florida is very much a rerun or recycling of the type of meetings/events that took place in the Toronto Airport Vineyard church in the 1990's. That church, where the so-called 'Toronto Blessing' was 'birthed' and then 'distributed,' was pastored, as it is today, by John Arnott.

The following link will take you to where you can watch a 9-minute video clip of John Arnott on stage in Florida with Todd Bentley. In it John Arnott relates a tale of a United Methodist pastor friend of his who apparently was visited by 2 angels with back-packs and their message was that they are ready to fly to all the locations that were supposedly 'blessed' in the 1990's, places like Toronto, Pensacola [John Kilpatrick], Argentina [Claudio Freidzon], Sunderland [Ken Gott], Holy Trinity Brompton [Nicky Gumbel] and pour out fresh blessings from their back-packs. Obviously I can't possibly know the intent of John Arnott's heart but it did sound rather like 'a pitch' to rekindle fresh interest in those locations. This is the link -

<http://endtimespropheticwords.wordpress.com/2008/05/28/video-of-john-arnott-with-todd-bentley-at-lakeland-florida-outpouring/>  
**Sadly, this video is no longer available to view**

The 'Toronto' connection has been further emphasised in recent days by a 'commissioning service' [Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008] in Florida for Todd Bentley that was carried out by amongst others, John Arnott and a man called Bill Johnson [more about him shortly]. According to Todd Bentley's speaking schedule he is due to be 'ministering' at John Arnott's church in Toronto on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 in what is billed as a '**Signs and Wonders Conference**'. Canadian 'Birds of a feather' apparently do truly 'flock together'.

Referring back to the other 'commissioner', Bill Johnson he is mentioned by Todd Bentley during the following video clip located on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMEKB2UUm&feature=related>  
**Sadly, this video too is no longer available to view so you'll just have to trust my report on it that follows now.**

It is important to note that when Todd Bentley spoke here he was not covered in tattoos so obviously, these have been subsequently added during a time when he professes to be a 'Christian'.

In his 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle John wrote '**Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God**' [verse 9]. One example of Todd Bentley not abiding in the doctrine of Christ is this - on stage in Lakeland he has apparently worn a T-shirt saying '**Jesus loves me and my tattoos**' – God's Word clearly states in **Leviticus 19:28** that God's people are not to make markings on their body '**for the dead**' or to have tattoo marks on them. SO, SINCE CLAIMING TO HAVE BECOME A CHRISTIAN Todd Bentley has had his body [repulsively in my opinion] tattooed including one that is a 'death mask' of the Lord Jesus – these are the actions of one who '**abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**'. **(This 2016 article sheds further light on my thinking about the whole subject of 'tattoos' - <http://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2016/September/Tattoos.pdf>)**

In this video clip Todd Bentley claims that at the meeting in Seattle where Bill Johnson was speaking he was confronted by a 'pillar of fire' and God told him to step into this open 'portal'. He did and was 'transported' up into heaven where he ended up on an 'operating table' with 4 men in white coats. They then proceeded to 'gut' him and insert boxes of 'truth' into his stomach – Todd Bentley quotes **Psalm 51:6** "**Thou desirest truth in the inward parts**" as justification for this bizarre procedure – he was then told that God didn't have time to train people up over years as He did with Moses and so Todd Bentley is to return to earth and distribute this "**truth**" that has been implanted into him as a 'quick-fix transfer of knowledge' to others.

This is another claim of one who “**abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**” for the Lord Himself promised that the gift to believers of the indwelling Holy Spirit would amongst a range of purposes be to “**teach you all things**” [John 14:26]. Knowledge of God and His ways does not come through visiting someone like Todd Bentley who then proceeds to ‘impart’ such knowledge that has been ‘implanted’ into his ‘**inward parts**’ during some celestial operation.

Bobby Sullivan, one of Todd Bentley’s ‘Fresh Fire’ ministry team, also encouraged this open ‘portal’ experience [referred to earlier by Todd Bentley] when he ‘ministered’ at the Elim Christian Centre, Belfast on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June. I was contacted by a newspaper reporter who had attended the meeting that night and he told of how Mr Sullivan encouraged those at the meeting to move searchingly around the building until they discovered their own personal ‘hot spot’ and he told them this would be their open ‘portal’ and that by stepping into it they would be taken to a higher spiritual dimension. Apparently, he actually likened this promised experience to scenes from a science fiction movie called ‘Stargate’ where this type of experience was portrayed. This teaching by Mr Sullivan has no biblical basis or sanction but would certainly be common practice in occult/Spiritism related type meetings. Just in closing this section, the newspaper reporter who contacted me attends another Elim Pentecostal Church in Northern Ireland.

**To try and compensate for the fact that earlier videos mentioned are no longer available to view the video on this link will give helpful information on the ‘spiritual calibre’ of Todd Bentley and his apostolic/charismatic friends –**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JONXRO4vPSc>

I have taken the time to set these facts out as a precursor to commenting on Malachi O’Doherty’s report because, as Malachi explained, these meetings in Belfast were initiated by the pastor, Brian Madden after he personally visited Todd Bentley meetings in Florida. Because of the link and similarities to events at Toronto in the 1990’s I have ‘revisited’ some of the helpful materials [reports, booklets etc] that I gathered in my research at that time. In a Day One publication called ‘**Toronto: The Baby or The Bathwater?**’ by [now former charismatic] Leigh Belcham we read this –

**‘Where can we find even one scriptural precedent for, or a scriptural injunction to engage in such practices as “calling down the Holy Spirit” or “inviting the Holy Spirit to our meeting”? Many times I have heard leaders of meetings, after praying, “Come Holy Spirit” declare, “We welcome you.” And sometimes He is not so much invited as commanded to turn up...Being a simple soul, I have always understood that the Holy Spirit came to the church nearly 2000 years ago...surely the only occasion in the Bible on which anyone held a meeting to await the arrival of the Holy Spirit was at Pentecost? On no other occasion do we read that Christians prayed for Him to come upon those who had already received Him. At meetings involving the impartation of the “Toronto Blessing” [Cecil – and also at Todd Bentley meetings in Florida that I have watched], it is frequently implied that being spiritually dry and having “a thirst for more of God” is a virtue...Jesus said “whoever drinks of this water that I shall give him will never thirst” (John 4:14). In John 7:37 He said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink”. [Cecil – in Florida people including Mr Bentley regularly declare their “hunger” for more of God yet Jesus said in John 6:35 “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger”]...with the “Toronto Blessing”...prayer, usually accompanied by the laying-on of hands often results in a trance-like state...scripture...nowhere suggests that God’s blessings are given out in dollops as we, like latter-day Oliver Twists, queue to ask for “More, more!” Jesus Himself said... “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3)... Contrast this with one “Toronto Blessing” meeting where the leader was heard calling upon God to “Let the fire come! Burn them through Lord!’**

I think the similarities between the meeting in Belfast that Malachi O'Doherty reported on and the 'Toronto' meetings that Leigh Belcham wrote about are both obvious and striking. 'Prayer' in Belfast was more often 'a command' to God ('Heal the brain tumour: Burn it out: Drive out the MRSA...Give her more of you.') rather than a humble submission or request. In reality it seemed to me that these 'commands' for God to heal this and that would receive a rebuke similar to the one delivered by the Lord to Satan himself in **Matthew 4:7**. The devil had taken the Lord to **'the pinnacle of the temple'** and then challenged Him to do something spectacular by throwing Himself down towards the ground. The Lord replied, **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"**. These prayer/commands bellowed forth to God both in Belfast and Florida amount to **'tempting God'**.

Then the phrase 'Let the fire fall' was clearly heard in Belfast and one young man reported of a feeling of fire "through to his belly". Some interviewed by Malachi had experienced and in some cases, were still in a 'trance like' state.

A few other observations would be these –

1. As I myself watched [via an Internet link] the Canadian Bobby Sullivan from Todd Bentley's 'Fresh Fire' Ministries 'minister' at the Belfast meeting I was really fearful for the safety of those he was attempting to have 'slain in the spirit'. I have watched many of these 'slayers' [like Benny Hinn, Morris Cerullo etc] but Mr Sullivan was without doubt the most aggressive, man/woman-handler I have ever seen – I think Malachi referred to his technique as being like a 'knee-kick' [like one delivered recently on stage in Florida by Todd Bentley to a man with advanced colon cancer and which obviously caused the man deep pain and distress] or a 'mimicked head-butt'. I would guess that 'Health & Safety' might be keen to issue a 'health warning' to anyone going forward to be 'ministered to by Mr Sullivan' if they saw him in operation.
2. Malachi reported how many of those being 'ministered' to were convulsing, shrieking, laughing or weeping and regularly those on the platform declared they didn't know what was happening. At the time of 'Toronto' I explained that one of the ingredients of 'the fruit of the Spirit' that we read of in Galatians 5:22-23 is "temperance" and that literally means "self-control". Such "temperance" was clearly absent from these spirit-induced experiences in Belfast. In his book **'Charismatic Chaos'** Pastor John MacArthur wrote on page 151, **'...the highest expression of God's power in the world today is not some spectacular and unusual sign or wonder, but the tranquil godliness of a Spirit-controlled life'**. Another ingredient of 'the fruit of the spirit' is **"gentleness"** and that does not square up with the violent aggression displayed by Todd Bentley and Booby Sullivan to those seeking help and healing.
3. Overall there was a great deal of 'confusion'. In his book **'Reckless Faith'** Pastor John MacArthur wrote on page 172, **'The apostle Paul was very clear in pointing out that "God is not a God of confusion" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:33). Where pandemonium rules, we can be certain God is not the author of it'**. In my Daily Devotional, **'Footprints of Faith'**, edited by Alan Cairns, the devotion for 14<sup>th</sup> June is based on **Joshua 6:10 "Ye shall not shout...until the day I bid you shout"** and we read **'The taking of Jericho was marked by discipline, the discipline of faith. Some may think that faith is a noisy, wild, undisciplined affair that displays itself in loud terms and lavish activity. The faith of God's elect however is a disciplined faith'**.

4. As I listened in the studio to Malachi O'Doherty's report and heard Pastor Madden and Bobby Sullivan 'performing' at times like a comedy double act I was like Paul in **Acts 16:18 "grieved"** - even though the damsel of **verse 16** was saying things that to the undiscerning appeared helpful to the cause of Christ, Paul discerned that another **"spirit"** was abroad and he confronted it in verse 18. I am fully persuaded that in this Belfast meeting and also at the Todd Bentley meetings there is/are another **"spirit"** or **"spirits"** abroad as prophesied by Paul [**"seducing spirits"**] in **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1**. The Lord Jesus Christ did not endure hell and the just wrath of His Father against sin on the Cross of Calvary to provide a backdrop to such Christ-dishonouring frenzied activity and His truly redeemed people can readily discern that 'grievous' reality.

## Comments on contribution by Roddy Cowie

My comments on this portion of the presentation will be brief. Bearing in mind that both Mr Cowie [not only a Professor of Psychology at Queens University Belfast but also a Church of Ireland lay-reader] and the interviewer, William Crawley [trained as a Presbyterian minister although he has since turned from that path to pursue a career in broadcasting] would profess to be Christians I thought it was significant that no direct reference was made by either to the wonderful indwelling 'resource' that Christians have been graciously gifted with and that of course is God the Holy Spirit. Towards the end of the discussion there was much talk about motivation for good through religion giving 'purpose' and through religious people adopting a 'positive' mental attitude. In their book **'Psychoheresy'** on pages 117-118, Martin and Deidre Bobgan wrote –

**'Twentieth-century idols are more sophisticated than the false gods of the Canaanites and Babylonians. Rather than idols made of wood and stone, modern man makes idols of the mind and heart. By elevating his own conceptions of personhood, purpose, and power for change above what God has already said, man directly or indirectly raises himself to the status of godhood. In his own limited wisdom man has attempted to form a psychological model of mankind in place of the biblical model and a psychological methodology of change and growth in place of sanctification.**

**In other words psychologists have contrived ways of explaining man other than the fall,** [we were informed by Mr Cowie that according to a World War II survey by Frankel people would die quickly because they had "lost their sense of purpose" – we die because "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin" Romans 5:12], **ways of saving man other than the cross, and various ways of transforming man** [according to Mr Crawley – "if I have hope, if I have optimism, if I have a high purpose in life"] **other than through Christ** [Cecil – lip service to 'benefits' is often credited generically to 'religion' rather than specifically to Christ].

**The temptation to seek help from sources other than God comes in the same way as Satan enticed Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The twentieth-century tree of the knowledge of good and evil contains much psychological fruit** [According to Mr Crawley "The power of mind over matter" and according to Mr Cowie "The power of mind in lots and lots of ways...of course it has power over matter". God says in His Word "which one of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature"? Matthew 6:27] **which looks like "a delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise".'**

## Comments on contribution by Peter Jennings

William Crawley described this Roman Catholic journalist in his introduction as the Press Secretary for Archbishop Vincent Nicholls of Birmingham and I will comment later on this position and the 'credentials' of Mr Jennings. However, the lengthy and uninterrupted story that he related centred very much on his personal encounter with the ecumenical, charismatic 'healing ministry' of the late John Wimber.

In the first videoed public talk that I gave on the so-called 'Toronto Blessing' I spoke about the 'ministry' of Mr Wimber and what I had to say can be viewed by going to this article <http://www.takeheed.info/the-vineyard-movement-and-the-toronto-blessing/> and you can link there to view what I had to say about Mr Wimber and his Vineyard movement from which the so-called 'Toronto Blessing' emerged.

It will come as no surprise to understand the high regard Mr Jennings has for Mr Wimber when you hear from my talk that Mr Wimber described Pope John Paul II as a 'born-again evangelical' and that he [Wimber] had been invited by the Vatican to help train Roman Catholic priests for their 1990's Decade of Evangelisation.

In a recent email inquiry, the following statement was made by the inquirer – ***'There is no benefit to Satan's kingdom to not only heal or fake a healing but also to attribute such positive wonders to Jesus Christ'*** – in response I would say that there is every benefit to Satan's kingdom through such tactics if it serves to keep non-Christians like Roman Catholic Peter Jennings still wedded to the false non-Christian system of Roman Catholicism. At the same time, it enhances the 'spiritual standing' of the channel of supposed healing, in this case, John Wimber, who then sets his seal of approval on the false Roman Catholic system by declaring its head [The Pope] to be a 'born-again evangelical'.

As a result of actual or faked healing [in relation to the activities of Satan God's Word refers to "power and signs and lying wonders" 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:9 and Mr Wimber's 2 best-selling books were called 'Power Evangelism' and 'Power Healing'] and the endorsement of a revered supposed 'healer' [John Wimber] upon the Pope and by default, Roman Catholicism, Satan's kingdom has received manifold benefits through all of this deception as related by Peter Jennings.

In his last contribution to the debate Peter Jennings challenged a medical opinion that had been advanced earlier by Professor Norman Nevin and William Crawley tried to gently remind Peter Jennings of the medical standing of Professor Nevin but it obviously didn't 'register' with him. So, to help you make up your mind on the ability of Peter Jennings to mount this medical challenge to Professor Nevin let me refer you [as promised earlier] to his 'credentials'.

On the website for the Roman Catholic Archbishop Vincent Nicholls of Birmingham located on <http://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/ourstandard.asp?pageid=109> we read – **This particular link is no longer 'viable' as Mr Jennings died in 2013 as you can read on <http://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/?s=peter+jennings> Once more you are going to have to take on trust the following comments I wrote based upon what was available to view back in 2008 -**

**Archbishop's Press Secretary and Press Secretary to the Archdiocese  
Press Secretary: Mr Peter Jennings, FRPSL, MCIPR**

The **FRPSL** after Mr Jennings' name stands for **Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society** - he apparently knows a thing or two about postage stamps. Then the **MCIPR** stands for a **Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations** – whether that qualification was obvious during the debate I leave to you to judge.

Turning to Professor Nevin we find the following on the Truth in Science [a Biblical Creationist website] website on <http://www.truthinscience.org.uk/site/content/view/217/63/> **(As Professor Nevin has since died, this link-information is no longer available to view)**

**'Professor Norman Nevin has authored over 300 peer-reviewed publications on various aspects of genetics, especially single gene disorders and congenital abnormalities. In his distinguished career, he has held the posts: Head of the Northern Regional Genetics Service, President of the UK Clinical Genetics Society, member of the Human Genetics Advisory Commission and of the subsequent Human Genetics Commission, member of the European Concerted Action for Congenital Abnormalities, Chairman of the UK Gene Therapy Advisory Committee (GTAC). In 2003 he received an OBE for his services to gene therapy'.**

On another website <http://www.whonamedit.com/doctor.cfm/985.html> we read -

**Biography:**  
**Norman C. Nevin is (July 2004) Professor Emeritus of Medical Genetics, Queen's University of Belfast and Head of the Northern Regional Genetics Service.**

The contributions to this debate by Peter Jennings have served only to reinforce the validity of the Scriptural concerns that people like myself and others [including Pentecostal 'watchmen' and women] have voiced in times past about Toronto and Pensacola and are again voicing about events in Lakeland, Florida and in other centres closer to home.

## **Comments on contribution by Professor Nevin**

I believe that the contributions from Professor Nevin brought much needed medical expertise and input to the debate. Over the years I have watched as supposed 'healers' like Benny Hinn, Morris Cerullo and countless others have made extravagant claims for healing from illnesses that have never been properly medically validated. He advanced a wide range of possibilities/explanations that should also be seriously considered when claims for healing are made. His calm and gentle approach to this matter was somewhat of a contrast to the fevered approach that the Belfast pastor, Brian Madden exhibited when conducting his 'healing' meetings.

Just today [26<sup>th</sup> June 2008] I was reading an assessment by Pentecostal 'watchman', Jacob Prasch of a document written by a man called Gary Greig in which he seeks to defend the actions and 'ministry' of Todd Bentley and we must bear in mind that Brian Madden attributes the motivation to hold these healing meetings in Belfast to his experience of visiting the Todd Bentley 'revival' in Florida. When the debate was finished Brian Madden actually gave me a copy of this Gary Greig document. In his assessment, Jacob Prasch wrote this –

**'Greig attempts to circumvent examining the "fruit" of Todd Bentley's personal life by elongated, semi-academic arguments avoiding the fundamental issue that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is *ekreitei*, or "self-control" (Galatians 5:23; Titus 1:8), and not the lack of it as observed in the Lakeland clone of Toronto and Pensacola. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is also *prautas*, or "gentleness" (Galatians 5: 23). Gentleness is not evident in Todd Bentley's claim that the Lord told him to beat a woman's legs on the ground like a baseball bat, or his knocking out a small Chinese gentleman's teeth'.**

Having watched via Internet connection, DVDs and YouTube segments many of the 'healing' meetings both in Florida and Belfast I have been struck by the total absence of 'peace' – whilst 'ministry' or 'praise' is taking place people are constantly walking to and fro, in and out whilst those involved in 'things technical' are totally oblivious to the supposed mighty presence of God. If the God of Heaven were truly manifesting Himself in these locations would such distracting behaviour be able to occur – I very much doubt it.

I know I have digressed somewhat from commenting on what Professor Nevin said but I want to make one further point. Constantly in Toronto, Pensacola, Florida and at the Belfast meetings people/leaders regularly declare how 'hungry' they are for 'more' of God – His power and His presence. In an email to another recent inquirer I wrote this –

**I was actually reflecting just a couple of days ago about the likes of Todd Bentley who are always 'hungering' – the reason they're hungering is I believe because they're bored with their spiritual lot because they have never 'tasted and seen that the Lord is good' [Psalm 34] – the true Lord says to His people 'I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst' [John 6:35] and how does the Lord feed and give drink to His people – 'The WORDS that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life' [John 6:63] – the Lord feeds and waters His sheep through His Word.**

Returning to Professor Nevin I would say in closing that as a young believer I obtained a copy of a very helpful little booklet called '**Answers to Questions 1**' and amongst the articles in it is one called '**Was man designed or did he evolve by pure chance?**' The contributors to the article are Professor Nevin and another local scientist but now Evangelical Presbyterian minister, Dr Robert Beckett. This booklet is still available from its producers/publishers, the Tabernacle Bookshop in London and you can order packs of copies on <http://www.tabernaclebookshop.org/search.asp> (Sadly, this booklet no longer appears to be available from the Tabernacle Bookshop.)

## Comments on contribution by Pastor Madden

In the early part of this article I reproduced the newspaper headline of '**Teenager back from the dead after crash**' and as I stated this was the incident that led to the BBC organising the Sunday Sequence debate. Before addressing a couple of points made by Pastor Brian Madden during the debate I want to first address the claimed return from the dead by young Andrew Duffin. Let me reiterate what I said during the debate – we do truly give thanks to God that this young man is so physically well now and we pray that in the Lord's time he will be brought to a true saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for in the article Andrew is quoted as saying '**I am not a Christian nor a church-goer but I do believe this is a miracle**'.

One of my dilemmas over this incident relates to what actually happened when Pastor Madden went to visit Andrew in the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital. I watched a video clip on Pastor Madden's church website where he gave a report to the church of his visit and I reported what he said to his church members in my article on <http://www.takeheed.info/todd-bentley-his-healing-revival-in-florida/>

Here is the relevant part of what I wrote as quoted earlier in this article –

**‘... the Pastor tells of visiting a young man in hospital who he claims was clinically dead for 15 minutes [during which time he apparently ‘saw the devil’] but of how he felt led to ‘anoint the sides, head and foot of THE BED with oil’ and to ‘rebuke the spirit of death’.**

My dilemma is that when Pastor Madden was interviewed via the phone by Stephen Nolan during his Radio Ulster morning show on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June, **Pastor Madden told Stephen that during the visit he anointed Andrew** – no mention was made of his anointing THE BED as he had reported to his church members.

A further problem is that, **irrespective of whether it was the bed or Andrew that was anointed by Pastor Madden, there is no Biblical basis for either type of anointing.** In James 5:14 there are guidelines for elders to visit a church member [please remember Andrew has admitted he is not a Christian or a church-goer] and to anoint him/her with oil. The greek for ‘oil’ [*aleipho*] indicates that this was oil used for medication purposes and not ‘oil’ [*Greek – chrio*] for religious-ritual purposes so there would be no point in anointing a bed with medicinal oil and there is no Biblical basis to anoint a non-Christian with oil as Pastor Madden would not in this case be his ‘elder’.

As I wrote in my article I don’t dispute that Pastor Madden has great ‘zeal’ but **“he has a zeal for God but not according to knowledge” [Romans 10:2].**

Moving then to 2 points that Pastor Madden made during the debate he basically attributed power to ‘positive thinking’ and in support he quoted **Proverbs 23:7 “As he thinketh in his heart, so is he”** and he then stated **‘Think positive, believe in faith and there’s a good possibility things will get better’.**

The interpretation/application of this verse given here by Pastor Madden is a false interpretation/application and mirrors the sort of false teaching that would be put forward by ‘Word of Faith’ healers/preachers like Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer etc – in fact just today [now 27<sup>th</sup> June] I received an email from a believer informing me that when Benny Hinn was in Belfast a couple of years ago, Pastor Madden actively promoted the meetings and encouraged people to attend. Obviously, I haven’t been able to verify this information and if it is not true then I will readily withdraw it but in the light of current events it would appear to be a claim very much in keeping with Pastor Madden’s outlook on such meetings.

This proverb actually warns that people can be two-faced by playing the role of an actor or a hypocrite. The words that sometimes come out of their mouth may be very different from what their heart really means. The heart, however, cannot forever be hidden; it will eventually reveal its true intentions and feelings in time [See Matthew 15: 8 & 18-20]. This Proverb helps us to understand this and thus protect ourselves.

**Matthew Henry wrote about this Proverb – ‘There are those that pretend to bid their friends welcome that are not hearty and sincere in it. They have a fair tongue, and know what they should say: Eat and drink, saith he, because it is expected that the master of the feast should so compliment his guests; but they have an evil eye, and grudge their guests every bit they eat, especially if the eat freely.’**

No faithful interpretation/application of this Proverb can mean that if we ‘think’ something then that will help it to come to pass. Let me repeat what I quoted earlier from God’s Word – **“which one of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature”? Matthew 6:27**

The second point of Pastor Madden's contribution that I want to comment on was his rejection of my understanding of the **"greater works"** mentioned by the Lord in **John 14:12**. In that verse the Lord tells His believing disciples that they will be enabled to do works similar to the miraculous works that He has demonstrated – this is similar to what He again tells His believing disciples in Mark 16:17-18.

Some people mistakenly think that these verses in Mark, in particular, apply to believers 'in general' but they were specifically for the believing disciples actually in the Lord's presence at that time. Looking at this passage in its entirety from verses 9-20 of Mark 16 we discover that TWO groups of believers and TWO groups of unbelievers are mentioned and it is vital that we establish which particular group is being referred to in a particular verse otherwise great confusion and misunderstanding can arise.

Going back to the start of the passage in verses 9-11 we read of Mary Magdalene going to the followers of Jesus, including His disciples (**"them that had been with him" v 10**) and telling them of her encounter with the risen Lord. How did they receive the news? In **verse 11** we read **"And they...believed not"**. So here we have people from a FIRST group who are unbelievers. Next, we find the Lord Himself appearing to these unbelieving disciples and what does He do? **"He...upbraideth them with their unbelief" (v14)**.

The Lord then goes on to commission them (**verse 15**) to preach the gospel and in **verse 16** we read of people from a SECOND group who will be either believers or unbelievers **"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"**. It is important to note that a **"believer"** in this group is qualified by the words **"and is baptised"**. In the next verse (**v 17**) we read at the beginning **"And these signs shall follow them that believe"**.

If these believers were the same SECOND group as those referred to in verse 16, why is no reference made to the requirement of baptism? I believe it is because verse 17 is not referring to those in the SECOND group who will believe (and are baptised), through hearing the gospel preached but rather it is referring to those amongst the unbelieving disciples, the FIRST group, who had earlier been 'ticked off' by the Lord for their unbelief but who would now believe as a result of being personally themselves in the presence of the risen Lord.

I believe that **verse 20** supports this interpretation that the miraculous signs would follow the ministry of the believing disciples, the FIRST group, and not the ministry of believers in general, the SECOND group. **Verse 20** reads **"And they [believing disciples] went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them [believing disciples] and confirming the word with signs following"**.

The testimony of scripture, particularly in the book of Acts, confirms that many of the disciples who believed did many of the things promised by the Lord that were listed in verses 17 and 18. This testimony of scripture also confirms the Lord's promise to His believing disciples in **John 14:12** that **"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also"**.

However, in **John 14:12**, the Lord, having told His disciples that they would be empowered to do works similar to the miraculous works that He had demonstrated, also told them that **"greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father"**.

In the broadcast debate, I explained that these **“greater works”** referred to the ‘spiritual resurrection’ of sinners who by nature were **“dead in trespasses and sins”** but who would be brought to spiritual life through the preaching of the gospel of the finished redemptive work of Christ on the Cross. This would be a **‘greater work’** because the benefit would last, not just for time, but also for eternity and would eclipse any physical miracle that would only be temporal and would not prevent the eventual physical death of the person involved. If you like I was explaining that the word **“greater”** was referring to the ‘superior quality’ of the **“work”**.

Pastor Madden however on air rejected this explanation and stated that the word **“greater”** was not referring to the **‘superior quality’** of the **“work”** but was referring to the **‘numerical quantity’** of the **“work”**. He stated that time-wise the Lord was only ministering here for three and a half years so the number of miraculous works that He had done was limited and would be far exceeded by the miraculous works that would be performed by His followers over the ensuing, many more years.

So, the question is, does the word **“greater”** refer to **‘numerical quantity’** as advanced by Pastor madden or to **‘superior quality’** as advanced by myself. To assist me arrive at confirmation of the correct meaning I consulted a Greek-Interlinear New Testament, Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, a website listing all the New Testament verses where **“greater”** appears and I also spoke with a well-respected, former Presbyterian Moderator who is well-known for his expertise in the Greek New Testament language.

In **John 14:12** the Greek word that is translated **“greater”** is **meizona** and we find this same Greek word in the following verses –

**John 15:13 “Greater (meizona) love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends”** – Is John here writing of a **‘superior quality’** of love or of a **‘numerical quantity’** of love?

**John 19:11 “Jesus answered...he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater (meizona) sin”** - Is John here writing of a **‘superior quality’** of sin or of a **‘numerical quantity’** of sin?

**Hebrews 11:26 “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater (meizona) riches”** - Is the writer of Hebrews here writing of a **‘superior quality’** of riches or of a **‘numerical quantity’** of riches?

In **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:31** Paul writes **“But covet earnestly the best (meizona) gifts”** – Is Paul here writing of a **‘superior quality’** of gifts or of a **‘numerical quantity’** of gifts?

I think the answer to the question that I have posed after each verse is obvious – the writer in each case is using the Greek **meizona** to refer to the **‘superior quality’** of the subject matter of the verse and not to its **‘numerical quantity’**.

In the New Testament, another Greek word **meizwn** is also translated on many occasions as **“greater”**. As you will see this is just another ‘declension’ of the Greek word found in John 14:12. Here are some instances of its usage.

**John 15:20** “The servant is not greater (**meizwn**) than his lord” - Is John here writing of a ‘superior quality’ of servant or of a ‘numerical quantity’ of servant?

**Luke 7:28** “Among those that are born of women there is not a greater (**meizwn**) prophet than John the Baptist” - Is Luke here writing of a ‘superior quality’ of prophet or of a ‘numerical quantity’ of prophet?

**Luke 22:27** “For which is greater (**meizwn**) he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth” – Is Luke here writing of a ‘superior quality’ of role or of a ‘numerical quantity’ of role?

**1<sup>st</sup> John 4:4** “Greater (**meizwn**) is he that is in you than he that is in the world” – Is John here writing of a ‘superior quality’ of indweller or of a ‘numerical quantity’ of indweller?

**1<sup>st</sup> John 5:9** “If we receive the witness of men the witness of God is greater (**meizwn**) – Is John here writing of a ‘superior quality’ of witness or of a ‘numerical quantity’ of witness?

Once more I think the answer to the question that I have posed after each verse is obvious – the writer in each case is using the Greek **meizwn** to refer to the ‘superior quality’ of the subject matter of the verse and not to its ‘numerical quantity’.

From Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words we learn that there is a Greek word for ‘great’ when ‘used of number’ and it is **polus polus**.

One example of its ‘numerical quantity’ usage would be in **Acts 15:28** where we read “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you [gentile believers] **no greater pleon** [According to Vine’s ‘the comparative of **polus**’] **burden**”. In this context, the church leaders at the Council of Jerusalem were trying to limit ‘numerically’ the ‘special’ requirements that those converts from a Gentile background would need to observe and they go on to list some of these in verse 29.

It has also been profitable for me to read some comments by influential Christian leaders from bygone ages and to see what they said in relation to these matters.

**John Wesley** in his notes on **John 14:12** wrote – ‘Greater works than these shall he do - So one apostle wrought miracles merely by his shadow, Acts 5:15; another by handkerchiefs carried from his body, Acts 19:12... But the converting (of) one sinner is a greater work than all these’.

**Bishop J C Ryle** wrote ‘Our Lord says “greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father”. The full meaning of this promise is not to be sought in the miracles which the apostles wrought after Christ left the world. Such a notion seems hardly borne out by the facts...What our Lord has in view seems to be the far greater number of conversions, the far wider spread of the gospel which would take place under the ministry of the apostles than under His own teaching...There is no greater work possible than the conversion of a soul’.

Commenting on **Matthew 4:18-25** Bishop J C Ryle also wrote **'The miracles by which the Lord confirmed His mission were miracles of mercy and kindness...These miracles are meant to teach us our Lord's power. He could heal sick people with a touch and cast out devils with a word. He is able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by Him [Hebrews 7:25]. He is almighty. These miracles are meant to be types and emblems of our Lord as a spiritual Physician. He, before whom no bodily disease proved incurable, is mighty to cure every ailment of our souls'**.

Turning to present-day Christian leaders, Dr Peter Masters, Minister of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London [Spurgeon's old church] in his book **'Charismatic Phenomenon'** wrote [pages 22-24] **'Think how great our Lord's works were! They were undeniable and spectacular....The Lord Jesus healed...but we must remember the whole truth about these people whom He healed. Every single one of them died anyway...When we think about these things, we begin to see what our Lord was implying when He said "Greater works than these shall he do"...His work [Calvary] was to pave the way for a "greater work" by the shedding of His precious blood and His resurrection from the dead...He made it possible for us – His disciples – to do the "greater work" which is to take...the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and to proclaim that message...Every year since the work of Christ was completed thousands of people have heard the Gospel message and by the Spirit of God have believed it. Then a miracle has been performed...they have become alive for ever...a miracle which is a permanent solution to their every problem...eternally forgiven and saved...Can we deny that this is a far "greater work" than that of superficial, temporary, physical healings...?'**

Pastor John MacArthur in his book **"Charismatic Chaos"** wrote on page 152 **'Greater works does not mean more spectacular miracles... What is a "greater work" than raising the dead? John 5:20-21 indicates it is the giving of spiritual life to sinners'**.

## CONCLUSION

With hindsight, there is one point that I would and perhaps should have made during the debate and it is as follows. God's word reveals that sickness, does serve a sovereign purpose under God's **'permissive will'**.

On page 27 of his book **'A Look at the Modern Healing Movement'** Dr Charles W Mayes wrote the following under the heading **'DOES SICKNESS HAVE A PURPOSE?'**

**'One of the purposes which God has in the sickness of His saints is revealed in Hebrews 12:5-11. Now if healing were in the atonement on the same basis as the forgiveness of sins, our healing would be a finished work of Christ on the cross. Perpetual healing could be appropriated and thus we would prohibit God from chastening His people with sickness, \*which he apparently does at times. He chastened Paul with a bodily ailment and it is unlikely that modern believers will always escape. The scriptural teaching on the subject of chastening and a healing which is a finished work in the atonement, would certainly bring confusion to the plan of God in dealing with individuals'**.

**\*Paul, when confronting the Corinthians about their slack and sinful approach to observing the Lord 's Supper, told them in 1 Corinthians 11:30 "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep" - Paul was telling them how God's chastening hand had been and was upon them.**

The reality is that our bodies are day and daily 'perishing' and 'wearing out'. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 4:16 "but though our outward man perish"** – Paul was here acknowledging that our physical bodies are subject to all the debilitating ravages of physical life here on earth. Paul then went on to say that, in contrast to what was happening to us physically, spiritually we were undergoing a different process entirely. Unlike our **"outward man"**, our physical body, which is perishing, our **"inward man is renewed day by day"**.

Paul certainly did look forward to the time when all believers would have perfect bodies [**"incorruptible"** and **"immortal,"** – see **1 Corinthians 15:53**] but he knew that would not happen until eternity would be ushered in by the return of the Lord for he wrote in **Philippians 3:20-21 "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body"**.

It is right that Christians should pray for healing for their friends and for themselves. Paul instructs believers in **Philippians 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God"**. There is no matter or concern that is too small or too trivial for a believer not to bring it to God in prayer. Paul continues in **verse 7 "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"**. This guaranteed **"peace"**, in the case of a praying, sick believer, comes from knowing that he has laid the matter that concerns him before the **"throne of grace" [Hebrews 4:16]**

**'Healing'** in this life is not guaranteed to God's saints, but God's grace to cope with each and every situation of life is assuredly promised. To Paul, who wanted the removal of his **"thorn in the flesh"**, but didn't receive it, God said, **"My grace is sufficient for thee" [2 Corinthians 12:7-8]**. And as regards the **"throne of grace"** referred to above, the full verse reads **"Let us therefore [in the light of having a great High Priest in heaven (Christ) who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities] come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" [Hebrews 4:15-16]**.

It is to Christ, and to Christ alone that we come to **"find grace to help in time of need"** and not to the latest raucous and ungodly **'healing revival'** stirred up and engineered by those who have **"become vain in their imaginations" [Romans 1:21]**.

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008