

Workgroup "Back to the Bible"

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### Translation Dutch letter nr. 3

Kampen, September 11,1995

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

In our letter dated May 5,1995 we have explained why we are of the opinion that the "Toronto-Blessing" is not from the Lord. We ended the letter by saying that we would come back to the question as to where then these manifestations come from. We want to do that in this letter, and we take as our starting point the statement that these manifestations are either from man or from man plus other sources. But before going into this, we would like to say that we are not against the working of the Spirit of the Lord in meetings. We rejoice when there is joy, when there is encouragement through prophecies and speaking in tongues together with interpretations, when miracles happen, and when there is a sense of the Lords peace in the meeting. We write this to avoid misunderstandings as if we are against the original Pentecostal teaching. No, what we want to deal with is the unscriptural excesses, which we listed in our first letter, dated January 17,1995. And if we in the following discussion sound a little "clinical", then that is only for the sake of clarity and not because we are Christians who go through life with a critical attitude. Just like you we love to praise the Lord and to worship with all our hearts.

#### Christian en masse in trance.

In the secular world one speaks of being in trance or getting into a trance, when one for a time gets detached from one's environment. A person who is in trance cannot be reached and seems to be in another world. The resting in the Spirit in meetings seems to have the same characteristics. In some cases this period of trance is short, others cannot be approached for an hour or more. And what is happening to these people during that period? They are not asleep, they are not unconscious, but in spite of that they are not able to control their spirit and to act normally. People in favor of falling or "resting in the Spirit", say that God is working in that person while in this condition. In all sincerity some claim, that God is healing this man or woman inwardly, although there is no scriptural basis for such a belief. One uses mainly the personal testimonies as proof. The people involved say that God was working in them in such a way that they experienced an inner healing and felt wonderful afterwards. In spite of these positive testimonies, they strongly remind us of the treatment by means of some hypnotherapies. They put their clients into a trance by means of hypnosis and try during these sessions to help them. Would God use the same methods as these hypnotherapies to change us inwardly? Does this not go against our freedom of choice which the bible says we have? Would an earthly father, like you and me, ever use this treatment on our children? The answer is clearly negative. You and I would never put our children into a trance to correct and change them. Even less our heavenly Father. He does not put His children into a trance. A trance, by the way, is a dangerous condition, in which man has no defense against dangerous, demonic influences. We are not surprised therefore, that we already saw some examples. People who submitted themselves to the "Toronto-Blessing", but after initial positive testimony, suffered from depressions, fears and suicidal tendencies. Who then puts the Christian into a trance?

#### Pastors as shamans.

"There you go", Leigh Valentine says during her ministry and gives the people a little push. When a couple falls backwards together, she gaily dances around them. "Do not pray and keep looking at me", Rodney Howard-Browne says, while he lays his hand against foreheads. The catchers have their hands full. Benny Hinn

throws the power from his hands into the meeting hall or lets the whole group of people standing on the platform, fall on the floor together. Kenneth Copeland manages to let Rodney Howard-Browne fall on the floor, after a hilarious conversation. Kathryn Kuhlman is one of the first ones who let people fall backwards. Even after they gave testimony to be healed while sitting in the hall, she still gave them on the platform a push so that they fell on the floor. All these actions have something in common with the actions of the shamans in the world. A shaman is a magician with special powers. Because so many movements today are involved with the supernatural, the metaphysical, it is often not noticed. But all the same, the sister who, standing beside John Amott, with her left leg kicks "the anointing" into the hall and thereby lets people fall backwards, is acting as a shaman. John Amott says to expect that there are going to be many more new manifestations of the Spirit.

#### The barkeeper of the Holy Spirit.

"I am the barkeeper of the Holy Ghost", Rodney Howard-Browne says. When he ministers to people he regularly says: "Take a drink, take another drink". In this case the Holy Spirit is poured out like an alcoholic beverage. While he is doing this, he often keeps muttering: "drunk with the Spirit". Brothers and sisters, apart from the fact that this is untrue, it is also very sacrilegious. On the subject of being drunk with the Spirit, the latest booklet by Rev. van Petegem gives enough arguments for us to call it unscriptural and false. The fact however that Rodney Howard-Browne as a barkeeper pours the Holy Spirit into glasses and hands Him around, is absolutely unscriptural. The Holy Spirit is not an alcoholic beverage, but the Third Person of the Trinity: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. With this Person we may and must be filled. And that is how we bear the fruit of the Spirit. Being drunk however, is not the fruit of the Spirit, but the work of the flesh (Gal.5:21) Also in other verses in Scripture is being drunk never recommended or praised, but disapproved of as being sin. The work of a barkeeper belongs to the secular professions. That Rodney Howard-Browne has given himself this function, puts him in the world and his treatment of the Holy Spirit is a profanity. We can only call that sacrilege.

#### A conversation in tongues on the platform.

From the platform Kenneth Copeland invites Rodney Howard-Browne to come to the steps of the platform. Then these two start a conversation in tongues. Each speaks in his own "tongue-language". There is also no interpretation. The conversation is loud and can be clearly heard, but cannot be understood. But both speakers behave as if they understand each other, because they laugh loudly during their "talk". And sometimes they almost double up laughing. This show, because that is what it reminds us of, continues for about ten minutes. Finally Kenneth Copeland gets down the steps and ministers to Rodney Howard-Browne and lets him rest on the floor for a while. Brothers and sisters, the video which shows all this, is being sold by the Rodney Howard-Browne Ministries to promote this movement. We, however, judge this show to be sacrilegious and completely unscriptural. Does speaking in tongues have so little value these days, that we have started to use these scriptural manifestations of the Spirit for a "funny" conversation on a platform? Or is this a manifestation of another spirit? Are we dealing here with false spirits perhaps?

#### Away with religion!

"Let us step on the demon of religion" Larry Lea screams from the platform in a meeting of about 2000 people in London. For emphasis he stamps his feet on the floor and jumps around on the platform, to defeat the demon of religion." Just come forward with a piece of clothing or something like that and put it down on the platform" Ashley McGuicken asks during a conference." This way you symbolically put off religion with all her structures. All the old has to go. In America it took 15 years before the new could come". For the Netherlands and Europe Ashley estimated this period to be 3 years. After his preaching the listeners could collect their property. But now it had become a symbol of the new that was going to come. During another conference preacher David Fisher invited people to accept the "anointing" for leadership. Then they were prayed for (about 100 people) in connection with their return to their own churches. Although it was not specifically mentioned, the suggestion had been made, that these people had to return with the purpose to bring changes in their own

meetings. Many pastors will have experienced the results of this. We ask ourselves, who inspires these foreign preachers to make such statements. Our congregations and churches may not be perfect, but they certainly don't need to be turned upside down. We as workgroup therefore reject these statements as not being inspired by the Holy Spirit. We put them into the category of "the flesh" and "impertinence".

#### The origin of all the new manifestations.

Where then do these new manifestations come from? Who introduced them to the evangelical market? Quite a number of people have asked these questions and they have also found the answers. Alan Morrisson from Great Britain made a survey (see Appendix) He has made a detailed study of the "Toronto-Blessing" and we are grateful to him.

And many of you sent us information and shared your observations, and helped us to reach our conclusions. It is very unpleasant to have to conclude that the origin of the "Toronto-Blessing" does not lie with trustworthy, God fearing people. People who are deeply spiritual and have spiritual insight. No, it rather lies with people, who are known because of their unscriptural opinions and practices. The author D.R.Connell, former pastor of the Cross-Road Church in Amsterdam, strongly warns against them in his book "A different Gospel". He based his opinions on a lot of evidence and his study is generally considered to be trustworthy. As a workgroup we have read "Bible studies" by E.W. Kenyon, we have listened to cassettes with pronouncements by Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, and Morris Curillo and we have seen videos from Kenneth Copeland, Rodney Howard-Browne, Kathryn Kuhlman and Benny Hinn. We are of the opinion that, knowing the origin of the Toronto-Blessing, we cannot be positive in our judgment. On the contrary, it adds to our uncertainty concerning the scriptural trustworthiness of the Toronto-happenings.

#### The conclusion of the workgroup.

The world, that is, all who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (1 Joh.4:1-6) is showing an increasing interest in the supernatural. In New Age circles old ritual religions receive new values. Big companies increasingly send their higher personal to training courses where by means of yoga/meditation techniques, is taught how to do business and to relate to other people. Gurus in India are doing big business, with Westerners taking part in their training courses. They even come to the Western countries with all their followers. Where in the past more and more evangelical bookstores opened in villages and towns, there are now more and more stores that sell a wide variety of occult material. It is getting more and more normal for occult people to hold forth in magazines and on TV. The world with satan as her god, is trying to influence us Christians. If we are not careful we'll get involved in it without noticing. As a workgroup we believe that this occult, worldly influence can be found in the "Toronto-Blessing". We even think that some preachers are acting in an occult manner. We think hereby especially of Rodney Howard-Browne, Kenneth Copeland and also Benny Hinn. It struck us therefore as very painful that a number of well known names are to be found in the committee that recommended the meetings of Rodney Howard-Browne in Amsterdam. We want to finish with the following question:

#### Is it a sign of spiritual maturity to long for signs and wonders?

Our Lord Jesus did very many supernatural miracles when He was here on earth. But in not even one single case does He encourage people to make propaganda or to pay much attention to them. On the contrary, many times He asks emphatically not to talk about them. When He was asked for a sign, Jesus said: "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.(Math.12:38-41) He points to the Scriptures and calls them a wicked and adulterous generation. Is this not an indication that we should not set our minds on the supernatural? Did Jesus already for see that we would be tempted to do so? Is that the reason that He is so harsh in His answer and points them to what the Scriptures said? We too want to do that with the words of Paul: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold on to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter".(2 Thess.2:15).

As from the workgroup, Rien van de Kraats

The meetings in Amsterdam, which we attended, confirmed us in our convictions as stated in our letter.

## GENEALOGY OF THE TORONTO-BLESSING

