

Todd Bentley, Wife Separating

The leader of the 'Lakeland Outpouring' is leaving Florida and will reportedly receive counseling.



[] In a stunning revelation by his ministry today it was announced that evangelist Todd Bentley, who has led nonstop revival meetings in Lakeland, Fla., since April 2, is separating from his wife, Shonnah, due to “significant friction in their relationship.”

The board of directors at Bentley’s Fresh Fire Ministries released a statement Tuesday afternoon that praised the “outpouring” in Lakeland led by Bentley, but also acknowledged “an atmosphere of fatigue and stress” that more than 100 daily meetings had created, which “exacerbated existing issues in [Bentley’s marriage].”

Though the “outpouring” came with the “blessing and the burden of exponential increases,” the board of directors stressed in the letter that the meetings were not to blame for the break up of Bentley’s marriage. They expressed hope for restoration, but neither promised nor guaranteed it—instead focusing on “growing the Global Outpourings” that have spread via the Internet and GOD TV. “We know that many of you will have questions, for most of which we presently have no answers,” the board members stated.

Bentley has spent most of the last four months away from his home in Abbotsford, B.C., where his wife and three children reside. Shonnah Bentley has flown to Lakeland and has appeared on stage with her husband periodically. The statement released by Fresh Fire Ministries on Tuesday emphasized the separation was not due to infidelity by either spouse.

Stephen Strader, senior pastor at Ignited Church where Bentley's revival was first sparked, told *Charisma* the separation was for "a period of time while they both continue to receive counseling."

Lynn Breidenbach, who until yesterday was a spokesperson on Bentley's staff, told *Charisma* on Monday that she had no knowledge of any impending separation between Bentley and his wife and that rumors of such a separation received by *Charisma* were apparently false. However, according to the *Lakeland Ledger*, Bentley called a staff meeting later on Monday and acknowledged his plans to separate from his wife.

Bentley did not respond to *Charisma's* request for comment. At press time, members of the Revival Alliance, a group made up of prominent charismatic ministers who ordained Bentley as an evangelist in the Lakeland meetings in June, had not yet commented.

According to Strader, Bentley turned over the spiritual authority of the meetings to him last Wednesday—more than two weeks earlier than the August 23 date announced earlier this month. Strader said Bentley's

official departure
will occur during this Wednesday night's meeting in Lakeland,
when Bentley is
scheduled to thank the crowd, while also "commissioning his
interns" to continue
the revival. **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**