

Revivalist Todd Bentley Accused of 'Sexual Perversion' With Male, Female Interns

Recent allegations of sexual misconduct against revival minister Todd Bentley have created a stir online within the charismatic community.

Stephen Powell, a revivalist at Lion of Light Ministries, accused evangelist Todd Bentley, president of Fresh Fire USA, of "sexual perversion" involving both male and female interns. On Aug. 22, Powell posted a Facebook Live video and a lengthy Facebook post detailing accusations against Bentley, under whom he worked from 2015 to 2017 before parting ways.

Powell also accuses other leaders, including Rick Joyner of Morningstar Ministries, of covering up the accusations against Bentley. When Powell went to Joyner with his concerns and allegations, Powell says Joyner did not initially respond apart from a short email from an assistant saying Joyner was looking into the matter. When Joyner did respond, Powell says he was not comfortable handing over sources' information as Joyner requested.

Powell went to Joyner because he was part of a team intent on helping Bentley find restoration after past sins while he was in ministry. In 2008, while leading a healing revival in Lakeland, Florida, Bentley entered into an extramarital relationship with a former staff member. In seeking restoration, Bentley submitted himself to the oversight of apostolic leaders Bill Johnson, John Arnott, Che Ahn and Rick Joyner.

"I love and honor [Joyner and Bentley] and that's why what I'm

about to say next is so painful and hard,” Powell says in his original post. “... Todd has an appetite for a variety of sexual sins including both homosexual and heterosexual activity. Down through the years Todd has made sexual advances toward (and in some cases engaged in sexual sin with) a number of different men and women outside his marriage, many of them interns and/or students under his leadership care in the church.”

In the post, Powell asserts that Bentley asked a young single female student to send him pictures of herself and asked what she was wearing on multiple occasions. He also claims that a male intern told him that Bentley offered to pay him \$1,000 to perform oral sex on him. That same intern also allegedly claims that Bentley often sent him sexual and naked pictures of his wife, Jessa.

Other accusations in the post include alleged testimonies of Bentley being caught with pornography, asking an intern to send him a video of the intern masturbating and being caught drunk or using crude, sexual speech.

Bentley has since responded to the public accusations with a statement:

“My accountability team has asked me to come forward and address the recent allegations that have been posted to the world now on social media, Facebook,” Bentley says in a Facebook Live video. “This has already been dealt with behind the scenes, but because an associate has now decided to address the world, I must now have to come public.

“Recently, accusations have been circulating about me and my wife, Jessa. These are by a former associate. The majority of these accusations are absolutely not true. Not all, but the majority. However, there are some that are true, some that even are partial truths. Much are exaggerated and are based on personal speculation.

“In 2013, ... I wasn’t involved in any whatsoever adulterous-

type affair. There has been no sex outside of my marriage connected to this incident. Over the last six years of text messages now, since 2013, these messages have come up. I had them with associates, interns. They were sexually suggestive. Some of these texts in nature were just outright inappropriate to have these conversations, even about Jessa, things that were in our marriage bed. ... These sins were despicable."

Powell tells Charisma News that although he had witnessed disturbing speech and actions on Bentley's part while he was still with his ministry, he had no idea about the alleged sexual sin. The two men parted ways in 2017, Powell says, when "the Lord began dealing with me at a much deeper level on holiness."

Powell's involvement in these allegations against Bentley goes back to June of this year, when he says God gave him a vision of courts in heaven.

"The Lord spoke to me very clearly that there was a case being tried in heaven and that there was judgment and the severe dealings of God that were about to be released upon the earth," Powell says. "He called me in the courtroom to be a witness in that encounter—to be a witness to what was about to happen."

Within a week of receiving that vision, Powell says, a young woman approached him claiming that Bentley had pursued her online.

"She was pretty emotional about it," he says. "She sat down that night and told me her story, sent me the screenshots later that night through [Facebook] Messenger."

From there, Powell made several more calls and found more people with disturbing testimonies about Todd's behavior. That's when Powell found out about the male intern from 2013 that Powell references in his original Facebook post. And although, Joyner and Bentley reference past sins in 2013 that

Bentley has repented of, Powell says testimonies indicate misconduct has continued as recently as a few months ago.

Powell says at that point, he compiled a report containing all the testimonies he had gathered. (Powell sent Charisma News copies of the testimonies he gathered to confirm they exist.)

Although Powell initially sent the report to select leaders, including Joyner, he says “somehow that private report got leaked and now it is in the hands of leaders all over the world.”

In a Facebook Live video of one of Bentley’s revival meetings in California—which took place before Powell’s allegations went public on Facebook—Bentley addressed the report. He says when Joyner learned of the allegations, he went to take counsel from Bill Johnson. But Joyner and Johnson, according to Bentley, “didn’t even read the email.”

In a Facebook Live video, Joyner said he had no authority over Bentley since he released him in 2012. But Powell tells Charisma News this is untrue.

“He is on Todd’s board,” Powell says. “He is the person with the biggest name and the most authority on Todd’s board. I believe other members of Todd’s board would include Todd’s best friend and his wife. ... So if that’s not having authority over someone, I don’t know what is.”

In his broadcast, Joyner also said Powell was operating in a spirit of “witchcraft” because he went public with the accusations “out of frustration.”

“When people come to me with pressuring, manipulating, especially threatening if I don’t do something their way, or in their time, I know that’s the devil,” Joyner says. “That’s in Scripture, counterfeit spiritual authority which is called witchcraft. That is not the Holy Spirit. We’ve got to start recognizing what is from the Holy Spirit and what is not.”

But Powell says he never once communicated with Joyner in a threatening way.

"I never once gave him an ultimatum on how he must deal with this," he tells Charisma News. "I never once demanded that he do anything. I cordially and respectfully requested a meeting, I respectfully requested on one occasion that he or his organization respond within a certain amount of time, and he ignored me for weeks. And then when he sent me responses, he never directly responded to me. He responded indirectly through his assistant. On one occasion he sent me word for word the same response that he sent to my friend the same day, which made me feel like it was more like an auto-response rather than a thoughtful, legitimate response."

Joyner also rebukes Christians who want to find fault with leaders who fall into sin. He says when he was first commissioned with helping Bentley find restoration, God gave him a word that Bentley would sin again.

"I felt that the Lord showed me in 2008 that this wasn't the last big public embarrassment that Todd was going to have, or mistake, or sin," he says. "I was given the Scripture in Proverbs, where the righteous falls seven times, even the righteous falls seven times, but they rise yet again. He said Todd would keep getting back up, he would fight on. But I never expected, when we released him, I think, in 2012, where we released him from our oversight, that it's going to go perfect for him. I knew he was going to have other problems, other major things."

Powell sees Joyner's actions up to this point, though, as an error "in the way of Eli." Eli was the priest in 1 Samuel who allowed his sons to operate as priests even though they sinned sexually in the house of the Lord.

"In my mind, leaders who have been in Todd's life, leaders who have had oversight over his life and ministry, have erred in

the way of Eli," he says in his Facebook post. "I believe that Rick Joyner, along with other senior leaders who have had oversight over Todd through the years, have failed the body of Christ in this regard. I believe many lives have been destroyed because of their unwillingness to appropriately discipline Todd in proportion to the seriousness of his sin, offense, and on-going lack of true repentance."