

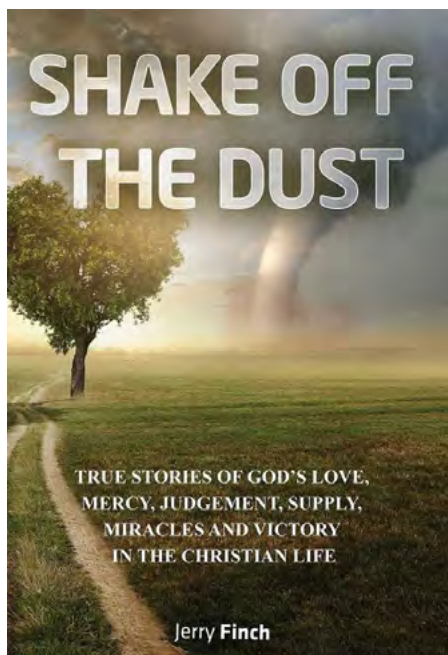


WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

The Tornado in Ontario, Canada 1985

January 7, 2024

This article is taken from the Book: 'Shake off the Dust' by Jerry Finch. This book is available in pdf upon request to our WCF email or also on Amazon Kindle.



Happy New Year and Growth in Jesus Christ this Year to all our dear friends!

We love you and will be praying for you.

Sometimes, I feel reluctant to share this shocking story with other believers, mainly because it IS shocking and also because it may be hard for the human to comprehend it. I will leave it entirely up to you to decide. All I know is that it happened to

me almost 39 years ago now.

The other reason is because we have not published this yet as an official article in any WCF edition so far.

Here we go:

I found out first-hand the truly shocking power of God in answer to prayer and according to the scriptural promises, in Canada in the two years we lived there in 1984-85. I lived in Mississauga, and often went to the various cities of Ontario and Quebec to witness and preach the gospel. We gave out Gospel tracts and leaflets, and talk with people personally and door to door, shop to shop and in many other places as the Holy Spirit directed us.

Canada is in many ways a great country and has a good tradition of wonderful pastors and missionaries, almost too numerous to mention. You Canadian Christians will know who they are for sure.

One particular day a Canadian Christian brother who was on furlough from Peru, and with whom I had frequent fellowship, suggested we go to Barrie, Ontario, a city not far from Toronto, to share the Word of God

at a shopping mall. It was deep winter in Ontario. This brother and I spent several hours offering Christian tracts* at the entrance of the mall to people coming in and out of one of the large malls there in Barrie. The entrance area provided some warmth with its powerful heating system and we were hopefully expecting to meet some people receptive to the Word of God, as we normally did in other parts of Ontario and Quebec Province (even in the freezing weather).

To our disappointment though, both of us found the people of Barrie very negative about our presence, and we were unable to pass out almost any tracts. This was highly unusual, and we felt disappointed and quite shocked. **You know it is not a light thing to dismiss the Gospel and the message of God.** Of course this is to be expected as Jesus said, but to meet a seemingly vast majority of people of the local community who were definitely not interested in hearing the Gospel, was the first time I had experienced this in over ten years as a missionary. It was frightening to me in a way.

We left feeling we had

wasted our time, but at the same time we felt we had clean hearts, had done our best in the right manner, and conducted ourselves in humility and friendliness, as the Bible had told us when presenting the Word of God.

On the road out of Barrie, I remember my brother, who was driving, saying, 'you know we should remember that Jesus said in Matthew 10:14 'And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet'.'

So he suggested that we do just that, as we were both grieved in the Spirit at the lack of receptivity of the people of Barrie, and that we stop the car, get out, and shake off the dust of our shoes against the city of Barrie for not receiving the word of God.

So that's we did, we got out of the car and stood by the side of the main highway just a kilometre or so out of the town, and as Jesus simply said to do, we banged our shoes together so the dust of that city would not stay with us. I had never done



this before and at the time this seemed exactly the right thing to do according to the Holy Scripture. And that's all we did, just obey the Scripture.

Jesus didn't say anything else; just we as His messengers should

do that when we encountered this type of situation. It seems serious to Jesus and God and you will note this message is recorded in 3 separate Gospels, which usually signifies importance*.

Shaking the dust off our feet seemed like we had some success, because we had at least obeyed the scriptural injunction.

We had no inkling or idea what else could possibly happen, or think anything more of it at the time.

(see also:* here are two more:
Mar 6:11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.
Luk 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.)

Several months passed and I had all but forgotten that sad morning in Barrie, Ontario, Canada, but chalked it up to a good experience from the Lord, as 'all things work together for good to them who love Him.' (Rom 8:28). Yes, it was a discouraging experience for me personally who was still quite young spiritually, to see so many people indifferent and even quite hostile to the Word of God.

However, we didn't have long to wait to find out what happened. A few short months later, the evening news came on in May

31, 1985, that same year, that I watched in awe at what had happened to that very same city which had rejected the Word of God through us.

One of the most powerful tornados Canada had ever experienced formed out of the great lakes (that separate the USA and Canada just to the south of Ontario), and zigzagged across southern Ontario, bypassing several other major towns along the way until it came to Barrie. There the tornado unleashed all of its power without any mercy, it seems. Here are some reports below and there is much more information available about this.

Here is the news report:

'The 1985 Barrie tornado outbreak was a tornado outbreak in the Canadian province of Ontario, one of the largest and most damaging in the province's history. In total, thirteen separate tornadoes, with two of them rated at F4 on the Fujita Scale, crossed southern Ontario during the late afternoon and early evening hours of May 31, 1985. Twelve people died, 281 were injured, and millions of dollars in damage was done in the province of Ontario alone. **One of the tornadoes devastated the city of Barrie, nestled at the far western edge of Kempenfelt Bay, on Lake Simcoe.**

At approximately 4:00pm, all electrical power in Barrie went out, as the Grand Valley/ Tottenham tornado took out the main hydro transformers, southwest of the city (LeGrand, 1990). Few residents had any idea of what was looming over

the horizon, but many people were let off work 30–45 minutes before the storm hit due to these power outages. Had this not happened, the death toll would have undoubtedly been much higher.

The intensifying tornado first obliterated a pine tree forest plantation. Some 10-metre (33 ft) high trees were snapped at the 2-metre (6 ft 7 in) level. At this point the damage path was about 600 metres wide, moving steadily towards the east-northeast. It then entered the southern part of Barrie shortly before 5:00pm. (note: this 'southern part' was the area where we had been).



Visibility was very low as the tornado was cloaked in heavy rain and dust, thus making it very difficult to see. Extensive F3 (although some localized F4) damage occurred to an entire square block of homes in the Crawford Street and Patterson Road subdivision. Five people were killed in the area as some homes there were not well-built, and thus collapsed after being pushed off their foundations. [6] Two of these five deaths included a mother and son, killed when their Crawford Street home was completely levelled

(Bruineman, 2010). Most of the fatalities occurred in homes with no basements, where head and chest trauma resulted from an increased exposure to flying debris.'

(End of news report).

Of course there has to be the Meteorological explanation as well so people won't worry unduly and I have included it at the very end of this section.

A tornado in action.

Now after almost exactly 30 years (at the time of writing) as I look back, I find I do not wish

to comment further on this terrible event. Of course, this is a truly shocking event, one which most people (and insurance companies) would just put down to 'an act

of nature'. This disaster raises so many questions to the modern unbelieving mind that it seems virtually impossible to come to the question that God would allow innocent people, even children, to die like this.

For sure, the town of Barrie has never been the same. This tornado in 1985 put down an historical marker in all of Canada, just as Hurricane Katrina did in the USA some years later.

It is up to us what we believe and how we react to such events, and I am not going to claim anything by this chapter.

I can only tell you what happened to me and my brother on that day as we were so grieved in the Spirit of God by the reaction of the people of Barrie to the Gospel of Jesus Christ being shared with them. I personally believe, that throughout the world, and in whatever country you are, the 'blessings or cursings' of God depend on the people's reaction, collectively and individually, to the Word of God.

We should never take lightly the importance of our sharing the Word of God in some form with people and they, although not yet saved, often may not at the time be able to see its importance. As the Bible clearly says in

2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Meteorological explanation

The upper air pattern was conducive for a major severe weather event in the Great Lakes that Friday, May 31. An unseasonably deep low pressure system at 984 hPa crossed out of the Midwestern U.S. through the day, and then into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Very warm air surged in ahead of this system. Temperatures reached the upper twenties in Celsius (approximately 80-85 Fahrenheit) across much of southern Ontario, in addition to high dew point levels. An unstable atmosphere (surface based lifted indices around minus 6) was the by product of this.[2] Directional

wind shear was also present in the warm sector of the storm, in addition to high helicity values and a vorticity maximum approaching the lower lakes.

The situation was worsened by the presence of copious amounts of moisture, which would allow any storms that could form to become severe rather quickly. Also, this was supportive of the HP (high-precipitation) counterpart of the supercell thunderstorm (Verkaik, 1997). **All of this added up to the distinct possibility of severe rotating storms that were messy, hard to see, and extremely dangerous.** What was needed now was a trigger, and that came in the form of a trailing cold front behind the low. Severe thunderstorms and isolated tornadoes had already raked parts of the Midwest U.S. (particularly in Iowa and Wisconsin) the day before on May 30, associated with this same cold front (Grazulis, 1990).

The day (May 31, 1985) started off on an active note with the warm front moving northwards. A possible tornado was reported near Leamington, accompanied by golfball size hail from widespread severe thunderstorm activity in southwestern Ontario. Following the warm frontal passage, skies cleared rapidly and temperatures quickly began to rise. The cold front began crossing Lake Huron towards the noon hour, and with it several thunderstorms developed shortly after 1:30pm EDT, with the northernmost cell soon becoming most dominant. Environment Canada issued a severe

thunderstorm warning at 2:25pm for Bruce County (complementing the special weather statement issued early that morning). At around 2:50pm, an F2 tornado touched down briefly in the Lion's Head area (north of Wiarton) before moving out over Georgian Bay and dissipating.[3]



A note about- 'Shaking off the dust of your feet' and 'cursing others'

We should mention here that the directive Jesus gave to 'shake off the dust of our feet against a town or city' or even individual, even included individuals in this.

Well all that should not be taken lightly. However, it's not a Carte Blanche for us as Christians to go around cursing every person we meet who gets on our nerves or whom we don't feel happy about. Remember, Jesus said that we are to 'love our enemies, pray for them who despitefully treat you and persecute you'. So, there is a significant balance in all of this.

Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

From the world's point of view,

and the unsaved people, they will often not realise what they are doing in opposing the Gospel, so it is also our duty to be sensitive to what the Lord may ask us to do in every given situation.

Consider this passage from the Book of Luke:

Luk 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

Luk 9:52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

Luk 9:53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

Luk 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Luk 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Luk 9:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

So Jesus even rebuked some of his closest confidantes, the brothers James and John. They did not know what 'manner of spirit they were'.

In other words, because we don't fully know or realise God's great Love for others it is easy for us to fall into that same 'destructive' spirit that James and John manifested here. So all that to say, that 'calling down fire' or 'shaking off the dust of your feet' against an

individual or city is really not something to be taken lightly at all; but rather only to be done in the utmost fear of God yourself in your own spirit.

In my own life it has only happened twice to me when I have done this. The other time (apart from the above in Canada) was in a shop in London where I was visiting several shops and sharing the Word of God with the owners. The Indian lady who owned this fashion shop in Wembley, North London was so hostile and belligerent against me, that on that occasion I also shook the dust off my feet against her shop and cursed the shop (business). I only came back to that area about six months later and was riding on a red double-decker London bus. I noticed with amazement that of the row of 20 or so shops leading left from the main road exit of the Wembley underground train station, her particular shop had been absolutely gutted by fire and was a black charred shell. All the other shops in the row were completely untouched. Awesome is a word that cannot do the subject justice.

If unbelieving people of the world truly realised the danger they are in, in God's eyes, when they fight, persecute and oppose His children and messengers and ambassadors, they would

leave them well alone, as is clear from some of the following verses below in this chapter.

In the western world of the first quarter of the 21st century it has become exceedingly common to speak against Christians. Some media people seem to enjoy it so much in much of the media and in many places.

I think because Christians have been influenced a lot by Jesus' valid teachings of 'turn the other cheek', people often misunderstand this and think that



Christians are easy prey for their persecutions, jokes or slanders or much worse.

But I think we (Christians) should warn *and have a duty to warn* people of the world (when necessary, and as the Lord leads us) that if they do 'mess with us' they often are definitely going to attract some form of retribution from God, as the Bible clearly tells us.

We are the apple of God's eye, the most sensitive part of His Body.

Psa 17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom;

So if someone wants to poke their fingers in God's eye, it's quite natural to imagine that God will do something to defend Himself and His eyes, wouldn't you?

If someone wants to poke their fingers in your eye, you would involuntarily try to stop them. Corrupt-minded people of this world should really be made aware that they are messing, not with the puny, weak and ignorant Christians, but with a mighty God, The Consuming Fire!

I think it is only fair to warn them. It may even help some of them (or you). The examples of all this in history and the Bible are almost infinite.

Let the wise take heed

2Th 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

2Th 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

2Th 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Heb 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Heb 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.

Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Mat 21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Jas 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Gone are the days when so many people were very receptive to the Gospel. There are still places, but we also now live, many of us, in the collapse of the Western (and other) civilizations. It is definitely a time to be sober and yet without fear.

God bless you,
love in Christ
Jerry and the WCF TEAMM



by God's grace:

- The Glory part II
- Respect, levels and rankings in God's Kingdom
- Missionaries and Pastors what do they actually do?
- Praying for and nurturing our Children and grandchildren
- The ANTICHRIST part IV (Final part)
- Thoughts, and scriptures about our earthly house, homes and dwelling places!

Closing thoughts:

What you have just read, is a totally true event and story. As we enter the new year, I feel we should pray and ask the Lord to help us stay mighty close to Him.



“COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.”
(MATTHEW 11:28-30 NIV)

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