



CTF Founding Pastor John Arnott

“You’ve got to remember in 1994, the Internet was just starting. I think our church was one of the first five churches in Canada to have a website,” said Mr. Long. “In 1994, we had every major television station in Canada and the US, England, Germany, Brazil, camera crews came from around the world. Often they’d be here for a couple of days and then tell their story.”

Media outlets would often cover attendees’ testimonies, but there was the “bizarre and weird coverage” too. The National Enquirer tabloid often reported about aliens having landed there, while the U.S.-based television show *Hard Copy* seemed to seek out the weird rather than the norm.

Of course, what was happening at Catch the Fire Toronto was considered unusual for many, and it garnered criticism of all kinds. For those who didn’t believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit for example – prophecy, speaking in tongues, healings or miracles – or that these existed outside of Bible times, what was happening there proved to be a hard pill to swallow.

“If that doesn’t happen today, how did that just happen? The normal response from evangelicals, would be an interesting one because they would normally say people are in deception and this is demonic. The problem with that is that most evangelicals don’t believe that a follower of Jesus can have a demon. They have a couple of little challenges theologically to figure out.”

Mr. Long went on to say that as for questionable manifestations of the Spirit of God that individuals’ experienced, John Arnott made it a practice to interview them in front of everyone. There was one such memorable example with two families from Kentucky.

“That’s something John did. If something weird happened, he didn’t hide it. He’d bring it on to the stage and say last night when you guys were prayed for, it sounded

to us like you were barking like a little Chihuahua.” They had been, but as soon as a church historian on site heard where they were from, he was able to identify that there was a revival where they lived in Cane Ridge in the early 1800’s where the predominant manifestation was the sound of yelping.

There was also a Chinese pastor from Vancouver, named Gideon Chiu who was heard roaring like a lion. Apparently after being ministered to, he had a vision of a demonic dragon over the Chinese people, but Jesus came as the Lion of Judah and roared, breaking the chains. Mr. Chiu began to roar too as his way of saying amen.

All that happened during those twelve years was extensive. But some of what started then and its fruit is still evident today.

“Heidi Baker, who was a speaker (at the conference), she had her God moment right in front of the stage in 1994 and she and her husband have started 11,000 churches all around the world,” said Mr. Long. “There’s a gentleman who came in October of 1994, pastoring one little church in California and now he has 16,000 churches that he leads around the world. Bill Johnson came in 1995 and all the Bethel stuff went crazy after his experience here in Toronto.”

Mr. Long went on to say that because of a prophetic word, it was a strategic choice to end the nightly meetings years ago and

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transition from gathering people to sending them along with church planting.

According to Linda Ferrante, many people who’ve tasted and seen God at work through this have made their decision too. “Once that line in the sand is drawn – where you have a personal encounter with the power of the Holy Spirit – you want to see the presence of God moving, so you can’t really go back to just sitting in church and just receiving all the time,” she said. You just get so filled up with power and possibility that you want to do exactly what that banner at the back of the church said, ‘take God’s love and give it away.’ Twenty-years later they continue to do just that.

Soundtrack to a Revival

The music of Catch the Fire has had an impact in Ontario and around the world

by David Mann

Excitement for the miraculous may not be to the same international degree that it once was at what used to be known as the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (now Catch the Fire), but the Charismatic congregation has only continued to seek the Lord earnestly.

Prior to the revival, founding Pastors John and Carol Arnott were challenged to both commit their mornings to prayer, and interact with others who were anointed. One of the ways that the church has continued to seek God has come through music.

“In the 80s and 90s there was this real transition in worship from songs that were sung about God to songs that were sung to God. And suddenly there were these really intimate songs, and that’s something that really marked the revival, the idea of singing face-to-face with Him. I think it’s that encounter aspect that’s really still marking what we do now from what happened then,” said Jonathan Clarke, Worship Pastor at Catch The Fire Toronto, along with his wife Alice.

“One of the amazing things about worship is we worship to pour out our love and our adoration on God, but I feel it’s like He almost can’t help himself but pour his love back on us,” said worship leader Alice Clarke. “I think when we worship it’s intrinsically linked to experiencing the presence of God.”

Both Jonathan and Alice came to Toronto from England to study at the Catch The Fire School of Ministry, following high school.

“It totally changed my life, it was one of the best decisions aside from following Jesus, and marrying Jonathan, and that also wouldn’t have happened had I not come,” said Alice Clarke.

The formative year left a lasting impact on both Brits, whom after completing university back in the UK later returned to Toronto to be Worship Pastors.

The church makes it their mission for their people to come into the presence of the Lord each Sunday, and the Clarkes are passionate about creating a culture where this is conducive.

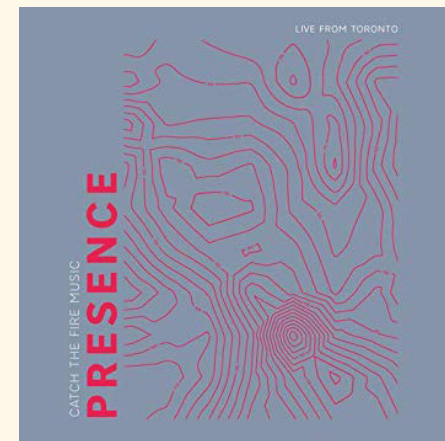
“We have a high value for excellence in worship. I’ve been on staff for seven and a half years, they didn’t have a full-time worship pastor for a while, but they really wanted to invest in that,” explained Jonathan. With our team we take it literally when the Psalmist says, ‘come before the Lord and sing a new song,’ verses like Psalm 33:3.”

Just like during the revival, the Catch The Fire Worship team has not limited their

music to only the local church. The talented team of trained musicians has released songs all around the world.

“I think that people also get to experience God as they listen to those recordings, and that’s really what I love in worship that I listen to. It’s not just pleasing to my ears, but it draws my heart towards God, it draws my heart towards Jesus, and it helps create atmospheres where I can encounter God,” said Alice Clarke.

Success of Catch The Fire in gaining radio airplay and producing music that’s become a regular resource for other churches can only be attributed to one thing.



“I think it’s just the grace of God,” described Alice Clarke. “It amazes me that little me from a little town in England that not many people have heard about get to be part of this and get to be part of releasing music that blesses people and people listen to, and it boggles my mind really.”

The church’s investment in music has also come in different forms like worship training days, and conferences such as the recent Revival Twenty-Five anniversary. Their hope is to help equip followers of Jesus beyond to encounter the Lord as He can be.

“For any other churches looking to record songs, my advice is unless they are very seasoned set musicians in the studio, the best way to do it is to practice, practice, practice. Make sure that you’re super comfortable with the songs, that you’ve played them a million times, and that you’ve worked them down to a place that you’re comfortable with, and then to record them live because it’s really cost-effective doing that.”

Catch The Fire’s most recent album ‘Presence’ was recorded live and was released at the end of January.