

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

PENSACOLA REVIVAL OR REVELING?

by Albert James Dager

Without a doubt, this has been the most difficult issue with which I've dealt in the twenty years of our existence. It has consumed my time and energy like no single issue that has come before.

As much as possible I used first-hand sources, interviewing many people who have had experiences with this movement: principal leaders, church workers, other pastors in the area, law enforcement authorities, and individuals who offered personal testimonies of their experiences. My apologies for having taken so long, but in some cases it took repeated attempts over time to contact the necessary people in order to reach an accurate assessment of the facts. In addition, I have had to listen to many hours of messages, view over and over again several video tapes, and read and reread reports from many sources. For the most part, I refrained from reading critics of the Revival until I had done my own research and written my observations. Nothing I've read has caused me to alter what I have written. I believe that the final product is a truly objective analysis.

When the [holy laughter](#) phenomenon came on the scene, largely credited to [Rodney Howard-Browne's](#) impact upon the Toronto Airport Vineyard (now [Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship](#)), many heralded it as evidence of revival. The problems associated with that phenomenon aside, and for good or for bad, it did for a season seem to be impacting many souls. Yet there was far more human flesh than Holy Spirit in evidence.

Today, not much is heard about the [Toronto Blessing](#). Since [Vineyard Fellowship](#) International disenfranchised the Toronto Airport Vineyard, reports on the experiences there have been on the wane. At the same time, the stream of the movement is finding increasing acceptance within other churches whose leaders imported them from Toronto.

The movement has made considerable inroads into the Assemblies of God in particular. Many A/G churches are adopting it, and several national officers have endorsed it. The impetus behind that endorsement stems from one particular church's excursion into the experience.

The Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, is a hub for the phenomenon, not only among other A/G churches, but among many outside of that organization. It appears as if Pensacola has replaced Toronto as the focal point for the movement in North America.

On Father's Day, 1995, [Stephen Hill](#), an [Assemblies of God](#) evangelist, inaugurated what has come to be known alternatively as The [Pensacola Revival](#), the Pensacola Outpouring, and the [Brownsville Revival](#). (Brownsville is a suburb of Pensacola.) It was Hill's message at [Brownsville Assembly of God](#) - that started the movement after his having been impacted by the Toronto Blessing, not in Toronto, but in London.

[Holy Trinity Church](#) in Brompton had imported the Toronto Blessing to England. Hill, while visiting Holy Trinity, received a touch from the pastor, Sandy Millar, and brought the anointing to Pensacola. According to Steve Hill:

He laid his hands on me, and he said, "The Lord loves you—you're the bride of Christ," and that was about all he prayed.¹

From that simple statement there was infused in Hill a desire to bring revival to America. Since that time, Brownsville Assembly of God Church has reported over 100,000 conversions, changed lives, physical healings and other signs and wonders in much the same manner as was reported at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship.

LINKS TO TORONTO?

The leaders of the Pensacola Revival deny that their movement is an outgrowth of the Toronto Blessing. They say that it is an entirely new move of God. Yet the leadership of Toronto did directly touch the leadership of Brownsville A/G. *Destiny Image Digest* quotes Steve Hill as saying that he had been to Toronto where he had Carol Arnott pray for him.²

He also states that the method of prayer at Brownsville is modeled after that of Toronto.³ I asked Hill when he had been to Toronto and about patterning the model for Brownsville's prayers after that of Toronto. He responded:

I was holding a revival meeting up in Wisconsin; I went through Toronto on a Friday night. It was prior to Brownsville. The Brownsville Revival, as far as a connection to Toronto, we love those guys up there; we don't embrace everything that's happened up there, and I'm sure they'd make some changes with what's going on down here.

A lot of the stuff in the *Destiny* magazine—there's some good stuff there, and there's stuff I wouldn't have printed. They didn't print it the way I said it.

We do have a prayer team. As far as patterning, we have a prayer team, but



that's about as far as it goes. They have a prayer team, we have a prayer team. You can't handle the crowds without a team. But as far as the way we pray, it's different than the way they pray.

We have a deliverance ministry down here for those that are demon possessed; we don't line them up on tape like they do up there. We just pray for them in the crowd, in the sanctuary and in the hallways, wherever we can find a spot to pray for them. So there's a lot of stuff that's different.⁴

Speaking at Brownsville A/G, a guest preacher, Masel Ely stated that God told him to draw a tabernacle on a piece of paper. He was to then denote at the four directions the following: in the west, he was to write the words "Asuza Street"; in the east, "Cleveland, Tennessee"; in the north, "Toronto"; in the south, "Pensacola."⁵ This was to indicate a "spiritual cross" across America through which God would pour out His Spirit. This "prophecy" was received by John Kilpatrick and the Brownsville A/G leadership.

Shortly after the Pensacola Revival began, Kilpatrick's wife, Brenda, made some trips to Toronto. She came back so excited that Kilpatrick said he'd never seen her like this. He was thrilled, and wanted what she had.

He, too, started to go to Toronto, but en route, he thought he was having a heart attack, and pulled off into an emergency room. He checked out okay, but went back to Pensacola. He didn't make the trip, and some in the congregation felt that it was an answer to prayer.

However, his wife went up twice at least. Additionally, every weekend, van loads of members would go to Toronto, including some of the leaders. A former member states:

They try to deny any connection to Toronto. And Kilpatrick wrote a paperback book, and makes no mention that his wife went to Toronto twice. And our prayer team went up there to learn how to organize the prayer team. They had several sets of team members, so that one-half of the team would be catchers, and the other half would be pray-ers.⁶

Regardless of where one stands on the Toronto-Brownsville issue, there seems to be little point in denying all connections. Considering the links of Brownsville A/G to Holy Trinity, and Holy Trinity to Toronto, at least an indirect connection exists. But it is understandable that some would not want to be linked to Toronto in view of some of the embarrassment that still exists over the bizarre manifestations there.

DIFFERENCES

Despite the connections between Brownsville and Toronto, there are distinctions that should be noted.

In Toronto any manifestation was allowed to occur at any time. Whether during worship time, sermons, prayer, or whatever might be taking place, if someone began to exhibit laughter, barking, roaring, or other manifestations, it was allowed. At Brownsville A/G there is at least a semblance of order in that the manifestations occur at the time of "impartment"—the laying on of hands by either Steve Hill, John Kilpatrick or other members of the prayer teams. This is generally at the conclusion of the altar call and may take hours to complete.

Also, while the manifestations are similar to those in Toronto, there doesn't seem to be the same circus atmosphere. So far, at least, no one is being led around on all fours with a dog collar and leash. Falling down, groaning, shouting, shaking, jerking bodies, flailing limbs—these are Pensacola's primary manifestations, although also present are sporadic outbreaks of other, more bizarre phenomena similar to those at Toronto.

Reports directly out of Brownsville A/G and out of the Assemblies of God headquarters are positive, although there are admissions of problems which might accompany any move of God due to the fleshly response of some.

John Kilpatrick states that he will not tolerate what he perceives to be either fleshly or demonic behavior:

We stop that as soon as we discern it. All my ushers are so well trained that I can just look at them and they know exactly what to do. We don't make a spectacle of a situation; we may just take individuals by the elbow or speak privately in their ear. If they make a scene, we lead them out.⁷

There is also a difference between the Toronto Blessing and the Pensacola Revival which exists in the roots of their traditions. That difference is found in Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship's theology and philosophy of ministry, which came from the Vineyard signs-and-wonders movement, and that of the Assemblies of God, which is traditional Pentecostalism.

When it was founded in 1914, the Assemblies of God sought to blend biblical theology with the gifts of the Holy Spirit on a denominational foundation. While some of its understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit has been subject to question by Pentecostalism's detractors,

the denomination does hold to a biblical theology. The Assemblies of God was in the forefront of opposition against the Latter Rain Movement of the 40s and 50s, and has opposed other heretical intrusions into the Faith in recent times.

Vineyard philosophy holds to a sound Christology, but is steeped in psychology, inner healing, visualization, "deliverance" and other occultic, experiential practices. (See our special report, *The Vineyard: History, Teachings and Practices.*)

The messages at Toronto focus on experience with the hope of an evangelistic outcome. This is based on John Wimber's signs-and-wonders philosophy which states that the Gospel is ineffective without supernatural experiences.

Conversely, the messages at Pensacola focus on evangelism with the hope of an experiential outcome as evidence of the Holy Spirit at work.

In response to a question regarding the comparisons made between Brownsville, Toronto and Trinity Brompton Anglican Church in London, Steve Hill responded:

Well, I love John and Carol Arnott [of Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship], and I love Sandy Millar [vicar of Trinity Brompton Anglican Church]. I've been to both places and I believe they are both undergoing sovereign moves of God. I received a wonderful refreshing in Holy Trinity, and I've been up to Toronto where I had Carol Arnott pray for me. But we are dealing with different areas of the world. This church is not a "Vineyard-style" church, and Pensacola is not an international city like Toronto. God did what He did in Toronto so the world could come quickly and so freely to an international city. Toronto's cross-cultural flavor makes it one of the most unique cities in the world....

John and Carol Arnott came down here with members of their staff to visit us. When he said, "Steve, we want to see more of the evangelistic thrust," I shared with him, "God is using you, Brother, to touch the world right now. I don't think anybody needs to duplicate anybody else, and I don't think that's the problem." We've received a lot from the Toronto church on how to pray with people and care for folds. We model a lot of what is going on here from them.⁸

So while there are distinctions between Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship and Brownsville A/G, there is a connection between both movements in terms of their acceptance and encouragement of each other. It isn't an actual connection of combined ministry that is important; it is the likemindedness demonstrated in their mutual support.

SERVICES AT BROWNSVILLE A/G

The Sunday morning service at Brownsville A/G is generally a traditional preaching service led by John Kilpatrick. The members of Brownsville A/G are admitted first; visitors are allowed in later.

There is no Sunday evening service and the church is closed on Mondays. These are times to be reserved for family life.

The actual Revival services are held four days per week, Wednesday through Saturday evenings. Tuesday evenings are devoted to intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare on behalf of the Revival.

At the intercessory warfare services, the people gather around banners representing specific aspects of the Revival that they feel led to pray for. There will be a message followed by spiritual warfare disciplines and impartation.

In addition to the Tuesday evening intercessory service, intercessory teams gather for two hours each day the Revival services are held in order to do spiritual warfare for those services.

These intercessory prayer teams are led by Lila Terhune, assisted by Craig Howell. Since the intercessory meetings are considered crucial to the success of the Revival, I felt it important to find out more about them.

Lila Terhune was traveling when I called, but I was able to speak with Craig Howell. He informed me that the intercessory prayer team meets from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. each afternoon, Wednesdays through Saturdays, to intercede on behalf of the service for that evening. The intercession takes the form of worship, primarily, with an added dimension of spiritual warfare. It originally focused on the Revival, but evolved into intercession for the entire Body of Christ.

Besides Terhune and Howell, there are six other captains who help lead the intercession, one assigned to each night.

I asked Howell what takes place in the meetings.

Craig Howell: Well, we just spend time in worship until the Lord reveals to us what His heart is for the particular evening of intercession that we're having. And then at that point, we begin to share what the Father's heart is for the evening. It's kind of hard to explain in a matter of two or three minutes, or five minutes. It's something that takes awhile. We usually spend two days teaching it when we go out somewhere to teach it, but we just give the understanding that the Lord's given.

Al Dager: You said you teach it. Do you go to other churches?

C.H.: Yeah. Lila's in Australia right now teaching on intercession at some pastors' conferences.

A.D.: I'm trying to get a picture of exactly what takes place.

C.H.: As we're in worship, people see visions, they see pictures. Through watching other people in worship sometimes, the Spirit will reveal to them what they are interceding over. Sometimes the Lord just comes from Scripture. There are different ways that He speaks to the people. And they, in turn, come and let our facilitators—we'll have three or four people in the room on a given evening, that are there for the sake of receiving whatever the people are seeing or hearing from the Lord—and they let us know what the people are seeing and hearing. And then the Lord just identifies to us what the direction is for the evening.

Howell states that anywhere from fifty to a hundred people attend the intercessory prayer meetings, including visitors.

The Revival Services

Since the beginning, Steve Hill has preached every evening of the Revival. The reason is the desire for continuity of the messages. It is felt that someone else might lead in another direction.

The doors for the evening Revival services open at 7:00 P.M., but by then several thousand might be lined up, many having arrived several hours early. It is reported that the line now begins to form not long after the previous evening's service ends—as early as 6:00 A.M.

The service generally follows a set pattern: music, testimonies, evangelistic preaching, altar call, impartation. It often continues well past midnight.

The Music

The music is led by Lindell Cooley, a slender man with shoulder-length hair. Cooley has written several songs in styles ranging from worship and praise to traditional hymns to contemporary Christian with a soft rock beat.

The growth of Cooley's music ministry is described in *Destiny Image Digest*:

His parents took him with them when they led choirs in black church services on Friday and Saturday nights, and in white churches Sunday mornings. He grew up listening to all kinds of music, including the recordings of Gene Martin and organist David Davidson, musicians who worked with Evangelist A.A. Allen. Cooley later traveled with the late Rusty Goodman as his piano player and ended up in Nashville.

In March of 1995, he left a successful career as a Nashville record producer and worship seminar speaker to become worship leader at Brownsville. He told me he had once prayed, "Lord, I just want to know You. I've seen a lot of religion. I've seen men who were men of God, and I've seen some shysters. Lord, do You still heal people without medicine? Do You still deliver people from homosexuality, drug addiction, and alcohol without AA or anything else? Can You still do that? Or was that ever You?"

Then Cooley prayed this: "Lord, if You still do this, will You please put me where it's at? I'm tired of imitation Christianity. I'm tired of having great music, and seeing people come out just to get good, warm, fuzzy feelings. I want to see You shake people, mow them down, and do it right. I want to see them come out as soldiers." That prayer landed Cooley in Pensacola within a year.⁹

Some of the messages contain a militant dominion orientation. Most of the songs, however, do not have a militant flavor to them, but are more worshipful, or call for "revival fire."



Crowds gather in the early morning in anticipation of the evening Revival services. The line begins forming as early as 6:00 A.M.

Photo by Kathy Wood, courtesy of Brownsville A/G

The Testimonies

Often people are brought forward to share a testimony of how the Revival has touched them. Testimonies include salvation, healed marriages, deliverance from sinful activities and physical healings.

One of the most publicized testimonies is that of Alison Ward who went forward for the first time the Sunday after the Father's Day service. She relates a tremendous change in her desire to turn from the world to God.

"I just began to shake and weep," Alison says. "It went on for about two hours. I did not understand it. In my heart, though, I just knew it was God." For months after that, every time there was an altar call, Alison would go into this heavy intercession for the lost and hurting—along with the physical manifestation. She was so concerned about it that she talked to Brenda Kilpatrick, the pastor's wife. Mrs. Kilpatrick told Alison that she felt Alison was interceding, and that her body was merely reacting to the unusual weight or glory of God flowing through her being. "I didn't know anything about intercession. I wasn't afraid of it because I knew it was God, but I did wonder what was happening to me during those times."

Alison was asked to give her testimony during the revival, and she was reluctant to do it. "I just wasn't the type to get up in front of anybody to say anything. But my mom realized how much I had changed, and she encouraged me to do it. I finally agreed to talk for just two or three minutes...."

At one point, Alison sensed the glory of God falling in a powerful way. "I had never really prophesied before, but suddenly God took over my mouth and I knew I wasn't doing the talking anymore. I began to tell the people how much God loved them and ached for them to respond to Him, and the glory of God fell." On the videotape of Alison's testimony, her last words are, "the Lord is in a hurry." When she said that, Pastor Kilpatrick appeared to drop to one knee as if in prayer, but he later explained that he could no longer stand in God's presence, and his leg literally gave way. Within a short time, Alison went down on the floor completely as the entire congregation broke out in deep intercessory prayer, and then the pastor went down too. All the people up on the platform fell to the floor, and then half the people in the church were "slain in the Spirit."¹⁰

Alison's sister, Amy Elizabeth, had an even more profound experience where she went into an uncontrolled shaking and jerking for several days, even in her sleep. She testifies that her parents had to feed her through a straw and she couldn't

take care of herself because of the shaking. When it finally subsided, she says, she was a new person. This, she says, was God's way of cleaning her out.¹¹

It is reported that Alison and Amy periodically manifest uncontrollable shaking which can break out anywhere at any time, though not as often as in the first few months. Both are often asked to share their testimonies at the evening Revival services.

Others, not only at Brownsville, but at churches touched by Brownsville A/G, have also reported being unable to control their bodily movements for long periods of time, shaking uncontrollably, being slammed against walls, thrown to the floor, and similar experiences, sometimes in public, away from the meetings.

A School Impacted

Dr. Charles Woolwine, Vice Principal of Niceville High School in Niceville, Florida, tells of the impact that the Pensacola Revival has had on his school. It was after Woolwine's first visit to Pensacola that the kids in his home Bible study began to be impacted:

In my case, I already had a good positive relationship with the Lord when I went to the revival at Brownsville Assembly. I saw it and I liked it, but I left with no intention of returning. Then when I went back to the school and saw some of the kids, I said, "Hey, guess where I went!" They said, "You went to revival." I nodded and said, "Yep." Then they said, "Oh, you rat, we wanted to go too." I said, "Okay, we'll go again." So I went a second time. But on my third visit, I personally—now I was brought up Presbyterian—I was personally and drastically changed, although my relationship with the Lord was rock-solid before, and it was afterward. My wife was changed on the fifth visit. My son, who is an eleventh grader here, was changed. My daughter, who is a ninth grade cheerleader, was changed. Then their friends were changed.

This anointing, this boldness, this "real time in-touch" experience with the living Lord changes things. These kids who are on fire for the Lord—their behavior is better, and their study habits are better. Naturally, that impacts Niceville High School. I remember that the staff talked about how "quiet" last year was—the year the revival hit Pensacola. It was totally different from the previous five years. When certain problems plagued other schools in our area, it never even touched our school.¹²

So far no similar testimonies have come forth from Pensacola schools, although it is often stated that the community is being impacted mightily by God.

The Preaching

When Steve Hill takes the pulpit he first asks the people to repeat this prayer: "Dear Jesus, speak to my heart. Change my life. In your precious name, amen."

Hill's messages are old-time, fire and brimstone Pentecostal evangelism, interspersed with humor. He says that he wants every five-year-old to be able to understand.

Often he will use props to illustrate his message. For his sermon on "The Arrows of the Lord," he brought out a quiver of arrows handmade by rock star Ted Nugent. He challenged the people to respond to God's call upon their lives by recognizing the arrows of the Lord piercing their consciences. Holding two arrows to his chest while another man held one to his back, he walked about like one wounded, but denying that anything was bothering him, just as many deny the conviction of God upon their lives.

At one point he looked directly at the camera and made an impassioned plea to Ted Nugent to come to Christ.

His "White Cane Religion" message was augmented by a white cane and sun glasses, illustrating how the blind lead the blind into religious error.

Does your psychic have any clue about eternity? Maybe she can tell you what you had for dinner last night, but can she tell you about everlasting damnation tomorrow?

Perhaps your guru can meditate you into a sweet moment of peace on earth, but can he lead you into an everlasting peace in heaven?...

You turn on the tube—there they are, man. And they'll take somebody—they'll take somebody friend—our nation is so gullible! Don't be gullible! Don't be a fool!

Would you ever take a blind man and put him in the front seat of your car, and tell him to drive you home!? Would you ever say, "Blind man, pilot this plane!?" Would you ever say, "Blind man, sit at the helm of my cabin cruiser and take my family for a trip!?" Of course you wouldn't! But you'd put the very same people in front of your life to guide you!

Hill doesn't directly quote a lot of Scripture. In fact, he has stated, "I rarely have the folks turn to more than one Scripture."¹³ Yet he does refer to Scripture often while making impassioned pleas for salvation and for backslidden Christians to repent. If there is a weakness to his messages it is probably his inclination to promote the revival itself as the best opportunity for people to get right with God. If people don't come for-

ward, they may easily be left with the impression that they are rejecting any chance for salvation.

If you don't get serious about your relationship with the Lord while His Spirit is mightily moving through the land, there's coming a time, friend—if you don't do it—there's coming a time when you'll long for just a taste of what we experience in this revival night after night. I'm warning you.

While there is much truth about the need to get serious with the Lord, the impression often given is that to reject today will seal opportunities for tomorrow. I doubt Hill would say this, but that's certainly the impression given, especially to those who don't know the Lord.

This may result in more people coming forward, but it can also result in emotional responses that are not based upon a purposeful desire to know God and to serve Him. But that's a matter of the heart. Regardless of how scriptural we may be in pleading with people to come to Christ, there will always be those whose response is less than genuine.

Hill wants people to come to the meetings as often as they can, even though his message every night is evangelistic. He doesn't feel anyone can truly assess the Revival without coming often. He chides those who make a negative judgment after having come only one time.

While digressing on occasion to promote the Revival, Hill also has some harsh words for the critics of the Revival. He has mentioned Hank Hanegraaff's book, *Counterfeit Revival*, and stated that he grieves for him and the publisher for having to answer to God. At times he may even ridicule the critics.

After speaking for about forty-five minutes, he calls 15-year-old Charity James to sing "Come to the Mercy Seat." James' voice is melodic, sort of country, and well polished for her young years. The message of the song is suitable for the altar call that follows.

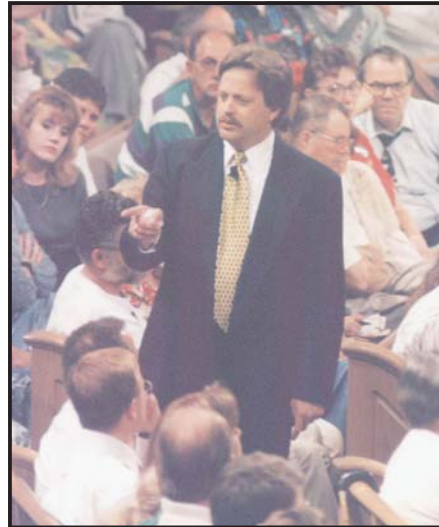
The Altar Call

Hill puts forth a strong, impassioned plea for the people to come forward and confess Christ with repentance. On one occasion, addressing those who are always going and coming spiritually, he says, "I'm sick and tired of rededication! You're a sinner!"

During one message he told the people that if they aren't convicted of the need to repent, God isn't with them:

Some of you are under incredible conviction. And I'm going to talk to you tonight about how to handle that conviction—what to do with that conviction.

The conviction—you need to first of all thank God that you're under conviction. Thank the Lord you're under conviction, man. That means He's with you! That means the Lord is dealing with you! What you need to be afraid of is if you don't feel the Lord—you don't feel His presence. If you feel Jesus tugging at your heart tonight, thank the Lord! You're under conviction!¹⁴



Evangelist Steve Hill often walks among the congregation while preaching an old-fashioned, fire-and-brimstone salvation message.

Photo by Cathy Wood, courtesy of Brownsville A/G

Sometimes many respond immediately to Hill's call; other times only a few might respond. But Hill doesn't stop there. He puts out another plea, warning again and again of the consequences for those who will not repent and come to Christ for salvation.

He will often tell the people to turn to the person next to them and ask, "Do you need forgiveness?" If someone responds in the affirmative he wants both the person asking and the person responding to come forward. This usually brings a few hundred to the front.

Hill hasn't finished, though. He will give a "last call" and count down sixty seconds. When the time has elapsed he tells everyone to repeat a simple prayer of repentance, then calls for the altar workers to pray for those who went forward.

The Impartation

After leading the people in a prayer of repentance, Hill and the prayer teams begin to lay hands on them, invoking the impartation. Many fall down under their touch as they rapidly move from one to another.

Hill's method of prayer is not so much an actual prayer as it is a calling for

more power from God—a "fire baptism." The model is to touch people on the head, usually placing the middle finger on the forehead just above the bridge of the nose, while loudly verbalizing something along the order of the following:

Now Lord! More! More! More! Jesus! Now Lord! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Now! Now Jesus! Fire! Now! Now! Now! Now! More! More! More! Now! Now Jesus! Now! Now Jesus! Now! More! More! More! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Now! Now Jesus! Fire!

The prayer teams are instructed not to pray for specific needs, or in the name of Jesus, but to invoke the generic impartation in this manner. Hill states that this is a prayer for the Lord to give the people more of His Spirit and power.

It is reported that many, while experiencing impartation, enter into the heavenly realm and have visions of angels. This has even been reported in secular newspapers. Parker Holmes of the *Mobile Press Register* relates the words of one A/G member:

"Just about all of our congregation has been over to the revival at Brownsville, and it has affected their lives in a positive way," says John Israel, business manager for First Assembly of God in Pensacola. The services at Brownsville Assembly begin with contemporary praise and worship music, and usually follow with testimonies, a sermon from Hill, and an altar call where hundreds pour to the front of the church for a dose of the Holy Spirit. Most are left enraptured. They cry, they report visions of angels, they claim healings from arthritis and back pain.¹⁵

By the time the people are dismissed, as much as six hours may have passed. Although not all stay for that length of time, many do. The Revival team certainly does.

Considering the intensity of the preaching, the music and the impartation, it's a wonder they can stand after such a full-day's work.

A thorough description of the impartation following the Father's Day message is found in another portion of this writing.

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE HILL

Sensing the distinctions, as well as the similarities, between Toronto and Brownsville, and striving for objectivity, I felt it imperative that I interview as many principals as possible that are involved in the Pensacola Revival. I began with Steve Hill who was very gracious and up front about his impressions of the phenomenon.

Hill, 43, is a pleasant, slightly overweight man whose voice is similar to that of Bill Clinton's. I asked him about the impartation.

Al Dager: When you pray for people, this what you call, "impartation," where you touch people and you say, "Fire! Fire! More! More! Fire! Fire! Jesus! Jesus!" is that what Sandy Millar did with you?

Steve Hill: No. He laid his hands on me, and he said, "The Lord loves you—you're the bride of Christ," and that was about all he prayed. And I pray that every night here. There are people that come to the revival, like evangelists or pastors. I've had little old ladies come up to me and say, "I want the fire; I want the fire of God." People want more of the Holy Ghost; they want the power to witness, and so there are times that I'll say, "Fire of the Lord! Fire," but a lot of times I'll just say, "More of Jesus," because if you're sick you need more of Jesus. If you're dry you need more of Jesus. It's pretty much a generic prayer. Basically it's "silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee." And we pray for folks.

Now, let me explain a little bit about the impartation. I don't understand all of that, okay? I'm not a theologian. We have a theologian on staff here, Michael Brown, who does theses on all this kind of stuff, and he writes commentaries for Zondervan and Word, and he's a brilliant man, and speaks five languages. He's excellent, I mean the guy's brilliant. And so, he does all the theological work at the revival, you know; he answers all these questions.

I don't understand, and I'm pretty much a meat-and-potato type of guy, just pretty plain. My messages are plain: "Jesus loves you, has a plan for your life. Won't you come?" Or, "a loving Savior will one day be a severe judge," you know, a judgment message, and just, sin separates. I'm pretty much a plain evangelist.

But the impartation. When I was in Argentina people came from all over the world to be prayed for by Carlos Anacondia who has led two million people to Jesus in Argentina. And he's prayed for me before, and I went out under the power out in the field. And I don't understand it. I'll be straight with you, I don't understand it. All I do know is that something happens.

The Bible talks about laying hands on one another, and the Bible talks about anointing. But for me to sit here and explain to you everything that happens to everybody, I don't understand how the Lord uses that.

A.D.: How did you come up with the term, "impartation?"

S.H.: Well I hardly ever use the word impartation. To impart is such as I have give I thee, but I am not God giving God to somebody. I am an evangelist. People come to the revival meeting all the time and they hear the evangelistic messages, and they hear the altar calls. They want that. They want that fire. Well, I can't give them what I am; that's impossible. But I can pray for them that the Lord will do more in their life. I lay hands on them and say, "Jesus, make them a fiery evangelist; give them a burden for souls."

I have an incredible burden for souls; I love people. I always have, ever since I got saved. And there are a lot of people in the ministry that do not love souls. They just don't love people, and how can you be in the ministry without that deep craving to see people saved? And so folks come all the time, and they want to have that burden for souls. And I've had pastors tell me after I've prayed for them they had a sudden compassion for people. And so, try to explain that, it's impossible. But it's happening.

I don't understand everything that's going on, and I'm one of the greatest skeptics; I always have been. Because I've seen so much in my twenty-one years as a Christian, I've seen so much that you get gun shy. But there's genuine change going on here. People are confessing sins; they're getting it out of their lives and they're going on with God. Backsliders are repenting; homosexuals are getting right with God; drug addicts are giving up their drugs. This happens every single night in the revival.

A.D.: I wonder if it would be possible to get some first-person testimonies from people that perhaps you know would be willing to give them to me. Exactly what happened, if there were any physical healings that are documentable or anything like that.

S.H.: Those are the only ones that, in a revival of this magnitude as far as so many people coming through, you can't control everything that goes on. When you hear the figures over 100,000 people have made decisions for Christ, we've had over 300,000 come forward. So the figures that you hear are about a third of what we've seen, because I hate inflated figures. I hate when somebody stands up and says, "I've been healed; I've been healed!" and then two weeks later they're dead. We have doctors document these things.

A.D.: Is that something you can send to me?

S.H.: I can contact the church, contact Rose Compton [Kilpatrick's administrative assistant], and have her contact you.

A.D.: Now, I'll tell you, I've read some pro, and I've read some con, but I make my own judgments. [I told him I waited to see where this was going before writing about it.]

S.H.: I'm the same way. I've lived here since the beginning of this thing. I've been here since Father's Day, and there are people that come through, they'll stay for one night, and then they'll go out and go, "I didn't like this, I didn't like that." We've been here since the beginning. If there weren't fruit, I'd have left here a long time ago. If there weren't legitimate life-changing fruit to where you could see and touch, and talk to, I would have left, because I've always been an evangelist. I've been after fruit. To me a true test of a move of God is ten years later. If it was a move of God, then ten years later you could look back and say, "Wow, this was changed; that was changed; this person came off drugs, now he's a businessman, it really did happen." But I've been here long enough now, and I like what you said, you've been waiting. A lot of times when things first break out, you know you're just skeptical, you give it time to see what's going to come of it. In this nation things come and go like the wind. It's like religious fads.

We're hitting two years now, here, of evangelistic preaching night after night. It's phenomenal what we've seen.

Let me give you an example of something that happened just the other day. A homosexual got saved in the revival—came forward and gave his life to Christ, and then got baptized on a Friday night. His homosexual lover was sitting in the congregation; he came out of anger—this guy was not a Christian—he came out of anger to watch his ex-lover get baptized, because his lover left him....

And as he was watching it, the Lord spoke to his heart and he stayed for the whole night, heard the message, gave his life to Christ, and then we baptized him the other night. And he shared his whole story. That's the kind of stuff we see, Al, all the time here. And so, you know, the critics can bark and howl, and say, "I don't like this; I don't like that person, the way they shake; I don't like that falling down; I don't like this; I don't like that." Well, I'm here to tell you, brother, you can shake all night long—you can shake and fall to the ground—it doesn't make any difference to me; what I want to see is a changed life. Afterwards, are you changed? If not, then you can keep the manifestations.

Saul of Tarsus, when he went down in Acts, chapter 9, he went down to the ground, he was blinded by a light, three days later, something like scales fell from his eyes—that was a powerful

manifestation of God. I mean, he was hit by God. But the bottom line is, he was radically changed; his life was never the same again. And so, the manifestations can come and go; I want to see a changed life.

A.D.: One of the things that really struck me about the Father's Day message, you mentioned that you go to public schools and you can actually preach the Gospel in the public schools. The ACLU hasn't come after you? How do you do it?

S.H.: It just depends on the school. There are places we have gone where they absolutely did not allow me to do anything but give my testimony, and then they said, "The part where you came to Jesus, you need to say you had a religious experience." But there are other schools where the principal brings all the kids together, they've let me just give an altar call. And I'm not about to give the names of the schools out, because the principal laid his life on the line when he did that.

A.D.: Have there been any repercussions from that? Have any of the students complained?

S.H.: If there were, the principal got it, but I didn't, because I just hit and ran. I was the one there speaking and I'm sure there were students that got all over him.

A.D.: I don't expect you to give me the principals' names or the schools' names, but could you possibly contact them and see if they would be willing to speak with me about it?

S.H.: Well, I could probably do that. Probably the most effective thing to do—because I haven't spoken in schools for about three years—but the most effective thing right now would be a call from an assistant principal at a local high school that is being used of God mightily in this revival—from a secular school—that brings students to the revival all the time. [This was a reference to Charles Woolwine of Niceville High School.]

A.D.: That would be good, too. But if you can perhaps just ask one or two of the others if they would be willing to—if they're not willing to, if they're concerned, I understand.

S.H.: The thing about the secular school system is, when I have had the freedom to do that—I have had the freedom probably on three different occasions to give an open altar call—It was a spontaneous thing, where the principal, we're in the gymnasium, and he said, "Steve, go for it." He knew what I was about, and he said, "Go for it." And for him to come public with that thing would be, if I was a principal I wouldn't want to bring more heat on me, especially now that it's something that we did several years ago.

A.D.: That's why I say, if he would be willing to. I wouldn't expect you to give the name or anything like that. But you

might ask him. But, another thing, you were talking about how the Baptists and the Catholics are coming, but where are the Pentecostals—of course, by now the Pentecostals are involved too—have you had any testimonies from Catholics that have come to Christ as a result of this?

S.H.: We've had Catholics; we've had Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Buddhists. We had ten Muslims saved the other night in the Revival, they just came together as a group, and they all got saved together. We've had Catholics come forward. The meetings are uncanny, because there are nights when we've had almost seven thousand people on campus. And the building itself—the sanctuary—holds two thousand, and then we have an overflow that holds a thousand, another overflow that holds about eight hundred, and we've set up a big tent outside that will hold over two thousand. We've had this place just crawling with people. And you can make an announcement from the pulpit, "Where are you from?" This week, by the way, they're from Norway, Sweden, Scotland, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, Korea—they're here from all over the world, all over Latin America, Argentina, Honduras, Guatemala, it's just amazing the people that come. But also, every denomination under the sun.

I remember one night when a large group of Amish were here from Pennsylvania, and you know, they just come. People are hungry.

A.D.: Have you had any testimonies from Catholics who have left the Catholic Church as a result?

S.H.: I don't know; I really don't keep up with that, but I know we had—I remember one particular priest from the area—I don't know the whole story, I just heard through the grapevine that he had been ousted because he's moving into things of the Spirit, and going after God. The Catholic Church has always pretty much kept an open door to the charismatic Catholics and those that are operating and having special meetings and stuff.

The rest of the interview was of no great consequence. It ended with Hill offering to send some videos and books containing his messages, to which I accepted.

CHANGED LIVES

One thing that cannot be discounted is the claim of thousands of changed lives and salvation testimonies. As of this writing, the Pensacola leadership claims that some 100,000 people have been saved as a result of their ministry. In addition, there are reports of marriages being healed, addictions broken, the demonized delivered, and physical healings.

The fact that many people have reported changed lives as a result of their experiences at Brownsville should cause us to look carefully at this movement. These things can be difficult to assess, simply because all experiences are subjective to the persons that have them.

Still, it's one thing to hear the revival leadership speak about these things, but it's something else to hear or read of the testimonies directly. The following testimonies directly from Brownsville A/G were recorded in *Pentecostal Evangel*:

Patrick Waters was thrown out of his house at 19, and fell deeper into a life of alcohol, drugs, and violence. Working as a bouncer in a bar led to dealing drugs. When he entered Brownsville Assembly, Patrick commented to his father that the choir sounded like angels singing. During the service, conviction of sin led to tears, but Patrick had no intention of changing his lifestyle or vocation. He refused to go to the altar for salvation.

Then Stephen Hill pointed to where Patrick was seated in the balcony, saying, "God knows about your drug problem." Patrick began weeping. His sins raced through his mind as he pondered the persons he had turned into junkies. He knew he had to find peace with God.

As he fell at the altar he felt "evil" leave him, he said. And when he arose from the altar, he knew his days of drugs and alcohol were over.¹⁶

Another, similar testimony was also reported in the same issue of *Pentecostal Evangel*:

Although he was raised in church, Joseph Justiss turned to drugs and the occult rather than to God. He was lured into homosexuality and later attempted suicide. Nothing—witchcraft, New Age, promiscuity, drugs—could quell his fear and anxiety.

He accepted an invitation to attend the revival at Brownsville Assembly of God. But during Evangelist Stephen Hill's message, Joseph sat stone-faced, attempting to call up evil spirits to hinder the work of God. He returned the following night, though tormented by more thoughts of suicide. When someone attempted to pray for him, he stood on the pew as if trying to scale a wall. He was trying to escape the conviction and presence of the Holy Spirit. He darted for a door, but Hill caught him in the foyer. There Christians gathered around and prayed for the young man.

Later in his home, with family members interceding, the intense warfare ended and Joseph surrendered fully to God. He gathered his crystals, witchcraft books, and CDs into a pile and torched them. It was the beginning of his new life in Christ.¹⁷

The testimonies of changed lives reach beyond Brownsville's doors. Janice Wolf, who is compiling the testimonies for the Pensacola Revival, told me of its impact upon a small island in the Pacific:

About a year ago there was a pastor from Guam that came to our church. As a result of that he wanted Brownsville to send a team of people to Guam. And we did; I was part of that team. There were five of us and we were all lay people. None of us have any degrees in ministry. We went to Guam, and we went to Yap, a little island—I think it's about 600 miles south of Guam. While we were there there were lots of people saved. This is a very dark island—black magic and the whole nine yards. But there were several people saved. We held meetings in a little hotel there on the island.

I got a letter this week from the two missionaries that are there; they really didn't even know why they were there—they were not affiliated with any church—all they knew was that the Lord said for them to go to Yap. And as a result of our going there there's a church rising up there, according to this letter that I got from her the other day. And they need help real bad. They need people that are grounded in the Word, because they've got all these new believers. I think there were three major tribes there that practice witchcraft.

Linda B. Smith, the program and youth director at Pine Forest United Methodist Church in Pensacola, related to me the effect that the Pensacola Revival has had on her fellowship. She stated that, although there are no reports of physical healings at her church, there was a family that has been brought back together. She sent me a copy of Good News, a Reformed Methodist magazine, which contained an article on Pine Forest United Methodist Church and the change that has occurred there since the pastor went to Pensacola.

Of course, only time will tell if any of these testimonies have lasting value, but Smith states that the article has had a tremendous impact on the denomination. Pine Forest United Methodist has received many calls from pastors asking for help, and has put out a call nationally, to pray for revival for the denomination by the year 2000.

Liberal and conservative elements of the United Methodist Church are currently embroiled in controversy over disputes on issues such as homosexuality, ordination of women, abortion, and other issues. Pine Forest United Methodist hopes that revival in the denomination will resolve that controversy.

PHYSICAL HEALINGS

One of the often-stated results of the Pensacola Revival is that of physical healings with documentable proof from medical professionals. In one of his messages, Steve Hill stated quite frankly:

We've had major, major testimonies of tumors shrinking and disappearing, with documented evidence from the doctors.¹⁸

After my interview with Steve Hill I called Rose Compton, John Kilpatrick's administrative assistant, to get some information on healing testimonies:

Rose Compton: We've had a couple of people to have them in their hands and get up on the platform and say it, but I've never received any. And I don't even talk about healings. People tell me, but until I have the documented proof in my hand I don't say anything.

Al Dager: So you don't actually have anything like that?

R.C.: No. I just haven't been wanting to—until it's a documented thing, I'm just not really interested in it.

A.D.: Well, that's wise.

R.C.: I don't mean I'm not interested; I'm glad they've had healings, but a lot of time most healings aren't necessarily documented anyway. It's just somebody's been in chronic pain, or they've had something so and so. Now we have a lot of testimonies, and I'm going to get someone to put them in different categories, like healing, and whatever else.

Compton told me that most of the testimonies come from out of town because most of the people who attend the services are not from Pensacola, and are not Brownsville A/G members. She couldn't think of any testimonies of healing from Brownsville A/G members, but referred me to her assistant, Lorraine Brown, whom I called the next day. I asked her for any healing testimonies that are verifiable.

After thinking for awhile, Brown stated that the only thing she had was a file where people had written to tell what had happened to them. She couldn't pinpoint anything in particular, but in response to my query about contacting these people—especially anyone from Brownsville A/G—she said, "Well, I don't really know. It would just be kind of like they told so-and-so who told so-and-so, and the word just kind of trickles in."

She stated that they don't tell people to contact them or put anything down in writing, so it's really difficult to know unless one just happens to hear about

something. She referred me to another volunteer, Janice Wolf, who has some of the files. Wolf also could not produce any documented healings.

Finishing with Brownsville A/G, I called Randy Glaubitz, pastor of Woodland Hills A/G in Lawrenceville, Georgia, who has reported miraculous healings at his church since he returned from Brownsville. Glaubitz told me about Doug Cruely, one of the fellowship's deacons who had been healed of sleep apnea. I called Cruely, and asked him to give me his testimony, which follows:

Doug Cruely: For two to three years, I had been using machines—CPAP machines—it keeps air pressure to keep my air passage open so I won't stop breathing while I'm sleeping. We had a prayer service one night, and I went down for prayer. It's unusual, because the pastor didn't even pray for people that night; he had the congregation come down, they just kind of walked through and had people pray. That particular night I was more interested in another lady that had rheumatoid arthritis—I was praying for her as I went through. But as I got home, I just felt impressed to leave my machine off. And for the first time in years I was able to sleep without it, and I haven't needed it since.

I was exhausted all the time, because I just didn't sleep. Every time I'd try to go to sleep I'd stop breathing and wake up. It was just devastating as far as being tired all the time.

One of the things I had talked to the doctor about at the sleep clinic was possibly having my tonsils out, because that would give a little more space. He wasn't sure if that would give me enough room or not, and the insurance probably wouldn't pay for it. So we didn't do that. A little later, after I had prayer, I said, "You know, this is amazing. I'm breathing steadily." My wife had been up. She said, "You're not stopping breathing."

I had an appointment with my regular doctor a month or so after this happened. I had the sensation of swallowing something all the time; my throat felt different. So I asked the doctor to check my tonsils—now this wasn't an eye, nose or throat specialist; this was my regular doctor, a lady. She looked, and her exact words were, "Well, your tonsils are atrophic." And I asked what that means. She said, "Well, it shrunk."

I asked, "How much?"

Her comment was, "Well, actually, I can't see them at all; they're gone."

I told her I'd been prayed for, and she seemed a little cool about that, but she said, "Well, I don't see any medical reason that this would have happened, so I'm willing to accept your explanation."

Due to the prohibitive cost, Cruey has not been back to the sleep center for a re-evaluation. Just before going to press I called him again and he told me he has still not had to use the CPAP machine. At that time almost six months had passed since he last had to use it.

Cruey told me about Stacie Pappenfus, a member at Woodland Hills A/G, whose broken toes were healed as a result of Pastor Glaubitz's prayer. Although Cruey gave a good accounting of this healing, I called Stacie Pappenfus and asked her to relate her testimony for me:

Stacie Pappenfus: I had hurt my foot on my bed, and went to the doctor the next day. And he looked at it and said, "It looks like your toes are broken. You can go and get an x-ray." There was a lot of bruising. And he said, "With broken toes, though, there's nothing that we can do for that, because we can't cast them. All we can do is give you pain medication and put you on crutches."

Pappenfus's mother and next-door neighbor saw how badly injured her foot was. For three days all she could do was lie down and take pain medication. When she called her mother to help her go shopping for groceries, her mother told her she could do so after she had gone to visit her pastor, Randy Glaubitz. When her mother came out of the pastor's office, Glaubitz suggested to his wife that they pray for Pappenfus, who had been waiting outside the office:

They began to pray for me—my mother, the pastor's wife and the pastor in his office. They began to pray for me and I felt this power that just went through my body from the top of my head all the way down into my foot. It was just a power surge that just went through me, and it just kind of took my breath away. And I just began to pray to the Lord, because I knew it was His power that was touching me. I began to pray to the Lord, and they got through praying for me, and I heard—you know how you hear your spiritual voice in your head—and I heard God say, "Do you trust me?"

And I was like, "Yeah, I trust you, Lord; I trust you."

And again the power went through me. I heard the Lord say to me—my foot was wrapped up and had one of those little skid socks on—and he said, "Take off your sock and unwrap your foot."

My foot was in such pain that I could hardly touch it or move it, and I began to unwrap it and I wasn't feeling any pain. And I unwrapped my foot. They were looking at it, and the bruise, which was black, was now green, and that was disappearing right in front of our

eyes. It went from like a light green to a yellow until there was no bruise whatsoever left on my foot. And I started to wiggle my toes, and I could wiggle them—actually wiggle them. When the doctor told me in his office to wiggle my toes I wiggled my toes on my other foot, because it was so painful, I couldn't even wiggle my toes before. And I got up and put my full weight on my foot, and it was healed. There was no pain—nothing.

Doug Cruey sent me several pages of testimonies of salvation and healing at Woodland Hills A/G. One of the more remarkable is that of Dianna Ellis of Tulsa, Oklahoma. She was not a member of Woodland Hills A/G, but went under unusual circumstances.

Dianna had been injured in an automobile accident in 1993. Suffering from excruciating pain for almost a year, she finally consented to surgery, but the pain continued unabated. She was talked into going to Brownsville by her pastor, Jeff Connett at Garnett Assembly in Tulsa, Oklahoma. But before going to Brownsville, Dianna went to her sister Soundra's church, Woodland Hills A/G, where



Doug Cruey holding CPAP machine after being healed of sleep apnea.

Photo courtesy of Doug Cruey

Randy Glaubitz prayed for her. He anointed Dianna with oil, and she was "slain in the Spirit."

When I sat up the second time the Lord told me to turn my TENS unit off. My right leg started jerking from the anointing of the Holy Spirit (remember it was the left leg that was hurt). Prior to this, I could not lie on my back or sit in one place for a long time, I could not ride in a car for any length of time (except to church and back), but when I sat up and my leg started jerking, the glory of the Lord came all over me and then I tried to

stop my leg from moving and then my right hand started moving. The pastor's wife, Janean, came over to me and said not to try to stop it, to just receive the anointing. When she said that to me I went out in the Spirit for the third time. When I sat up after that I leaned against the wall for a long time and I prayed and asked God that if He had really healed me not to let anyone come to help me get up, but to let me get up on my own power. (I had not been able to do that since the accident). Then I stood up, all by myself, and started shouting in the Spirit. I was healed! I have been back to the doctor since I have been home and he can find nothing wrong with me; his report is that I am completely whole.¹⁹

At the time we went to press I still was not able to track down any documentation from medical sources for any of the healings. However, I am willing to accept them at face value for the simple reason that, as far as healings go, I do not deny that God still heals today. Even if it can be proven that someone fabricated their story, it wouldn't prove that everyone had done so. Nor, for that matter, if someone is healed through a particular person's touch, it doesn't validate that person's ministry as being of God.

What has impressed me the most is the fact that, after more than two years, no healing testimonies could be gotten from Brownsville A/G in spite of their claims that they have doctors document them.

OTHER CHURCHES RESPOND

Other Assemblies of God churches offer testimonies of increased attendance, salvations, changed lives and healings similar to those of Brownsville A/G after the pastors and other leaders have been to Pensacola.

The March 9, 1997 issue of *Pentecostal Evangel*, the official publication of the Assemblies of God, featured a "Revival Report," offering testimonies from some of those churches.

First Assembly in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, claims that attendance for their Sunday night service jumped from 200 to 1,600 on average. This, after the pastor, Larry Sohn, got hold of a videotaped service from Brownsville A/G, rented the largest big-screen television he could find, and showed it to the congregation. "After the tape of the Brownsville service was shown," says the report, "people left their pews and filled the altars."

In Galena, Missouri, a town of just 400 residents, Pastor David Ellsworth saw attendance at his services rise from 16 to 115 after returning from Pensacola.

From small congregations to large, the Assemblies of God is reporting increased attendance since the outbreak at Pensacola.

Space does not allow for all the testimonies, but the following report from one of the larger churches in the forefront of the movement is typical.

First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is pastored by M. Wayne Benson. The editor of that church's Lamb Light newsletter for July 14, 1996, records the process of this church's incorporation into the movement:

It is known as the Pensacola Outpouring. The revival started June 18, 1995, when Brownsville Assembly of God Pastor John Kilpatrick asked his friend, Assemblies of God Evangelist Stephen Hill, to preach on Father's Day instead of him, due to the recent death of his mother. During the service, Rev. Hill issued an altar call and 1,000 people responded. He then prayed for Pastor Kilpatrick, saying, "more, Lord." He fell to the floor and laid there for almost four hours. Since then, five days a week at about 3:30 p.m., people are lined up outside Brownsville Assembly's front doors to attend the 7 p.m. services.

Some come as far away [sic] as Australia, Korea, Brazil, and Uganda. The same Holy Spirit that brought revival to Brownsville Assembly is visiting His people at Grand Rapids First Assembly of God.²⁰

Paul Kopenkoskey, Director of Communications for Grand Rapids First Assembly of God, also chronicles the impact of the Pensacola movement upon his church:

In May [1996], Pastor Benson and his wife, Kathy, traveled to Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla. where revival services have been held since Father's Day in 1995. People are so hungry for God that they often show up several hours before weekday services begin at 7 p.m. Between 150-500 accept Christ in each of Brownsville's services.

While there, Pastor Benson received prayer for a nodule that had been found on his vocal cord. The Lord gloriously healed him. And more. Brownsville Pastor John Kilpatrick and Evangelist Steve Hill prayed for God's anointing over Pastor Benson. For 45 minutes, the Holy Spirit moved in a dimension Pastor Benson had not experienced. "I felt like the three of us were swirling around the room, like the vortex of a whirlpool," Pastor Benson recalled. "I felt as though my body was being pulled apart. The Holy Spirit said, 'Wayne, I'm just crucifying your flesh.'"²¹

Pastor Benson's testimony demonstrates the power behind this movement. In a sermon given on June 9, 1996, Benson described his own experience of receiving the "impartation" in the office of John Kilpatrick at Pensacola:

That morning I got up off my back—afternoon, actually. "Kathy," I said, "what happened?" She told me what she saw. Of course, I didn't see anything; it happened to her. I was "gone."

We were there for probably forty minutes or so, in the office. From that time until this I have been aware of the power of God in a new way.

Now I'm not going to tell you they gave it to me, because that's not right. They didn't give it to me. But God used them to anoint me to lay hands. The River began to flow.²²

I called a number of other pastors in Pensacola to get their impressions of the Revival. As expected, I received mixed reviews. One of the most supportive of the Revival is Addison Peaden, pastor of Abundant Life Church. He was the first I called at random, and it turned out that he served as interim pastor at Brownsville A/G just prior to Kilpatrick's appointment.

Peaden, 60, describes his church as Full Gospel Baptist, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. He has high praise for John Kilpatrick:

Pastor Kilpatrick was a well-prepared man. I think his degrees come from Southeastern Bible College, which is in Lakeland, with the Assemblies of God, and he was just a well-trained and prepared young man when he came. And he was more mature than his age....He's just a great man in the Lord.

Peaden told me of Kilpatrick's desire for revival and how he had prayed for some time for it to come. As for the Revival, he says:

I think it's the greatest thing that's ever happened to Pensacola, Florida, and I have mind going back fifty-five years to things around here, and I just pray that it continues from now until the Lord returns. I really do.

Not all the religious leaders in the community agree. A number of pastors with whom I spoke feel that the activities are unscriptural. All of them told me that the Pensacola Revival is not having as great an impact on the community as the leadership would have us believe.

One pastor told me that the crime and the prostitution in the area has not diminished significantly, if at all.

I spoke with Monsignor James Amos of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Pensacola in order to find out how the Revival has impacted the Catholic Church there:

James Amos: I know that large numbers of people come, mostly though from the Southeast, I guess. I know they line up to get in. There's a premium on space over there. I've never been to it, and I do know some people who have been there, and they seem to be uplifted by what they have heard and the experience. I just kind of have a general feeling that whatever brings people to pray is good.

Al Dager: Have any of the parishioners that you know of gone there? Have they come back with any reports?

J.A.: I've never gotten any direct reports; some of the people that I know have been members of my parish, but they haven't given any specific description about what happened over there. They seem to be pleased with their experience.

A.D.: They're still remaining in the Catholic Church, though?

J.A.: Oh, yeah.

A.D.: You haven't lost anybody to the Brownsville church or to any others?

J.A.: Not that I know of. Although I hear stories sometimes about what a large percentage of some charismatic—some of these evangelical groups—I hear stories about what a large percentage of them are former Catholic people, but I have not, in my experience, I don't know the names of a lot of them.

A.D.: So you wouldn't say that it has impacted your parish in particular?

J.A.: Not to my knowledge, no.

I thanked the Monsignor and called Father Oliver Barrett, the pastor of St. Ann's, the Catholic church closest to Brownsville A/G. He told me that the revival has had little or no impact in his area in terms of social change, and that nearly all the people are from out of town. When I asked if any of his parishioners had gone to the Revival he replied that one had, but they said they wouldn't go again. They felt that there was too much pressure put on them through the "slain-in-the-Spirit" thing.

The assessment by these two Catholic priests is similar to that by some of the non-Catholic pastors in Pensacola. Those that are favorably disposed toward the Revival speak very highly of it; those not favorably disposed toward it pretty much state the same objections. None have noticed a great spiritual impact upon the local community, as is claimed by the Pensacola Revival leadership.

A/G LEADERSHIP FOLLOWS

Because of the visibility of Brownsville Assembly of God and its impact upon other churches, the denomination's leadership has looked into it. Overwhelmingly, it seems, they are willing to endorse it, some more cautiously than others.

This endorsement seems to have resulted from General Superintendent Thomas Trask's and other leaders' attendance in Pensacola. They have also been at a meeting at the Mel Tillis Theater in Branson, Missouri, and at a special meeting held in Springfield, Missouri, where the Assemblies of God is headquartered.

John Davis, a former youth director for the Southern Missouri District of the Assemblies of God, invited John Kilpatrick to Springfield to bring the experience to Assemblies of God ministers. The meeting was held at Central Assembly of God church, which could accommodate the 1200 to 1500 pastors that showed up.

The meeting impressed the denomination's leadership. As a result, the November 10, 1996 edition of *Pentecostal Evangel* was dedicated almost entirely to the Pensacola Revival.

In the July 28 edition, Hal Donaldson, Editor of *Pentecostal Evangel*, reported on the meeting in Springfield, cautioning his readers not to dismiss the Revival:

...May we be preoccupied with praying this revival sweeps across our nation; may we be consumed by a personal hunger for God. This time, let's leave the scrutiny to someone else and ask God to have his way.

The people of Brownsville Assembly of God believe this spiritual awakening has already begun in America. And those of us who attended the meeting in Springfield are more convinced than ever.²³

In another edition of *Pentecostal Evangel*, several officers of the Assemblies of God voiced similar sentiments. Thomas Trask speaks of the Revival affecting not only many A/G churches, but others:

The prophet Hosea spoke about it in Hosea 9:7 and Peter spoke about it in 1 Peter 2:12—that is, a day of "visitation." Many of our churches are witnessing a visitation from the Lord. This is not confined just to the Assemblies of God, but to those who are hungering and thirsting. I am seeing and hearing it from ministers and laity alike.²⁴

As it was with the Early Church, they were waiting upon the Lord when

the day of their "visitation" took place: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1).

It is without question a time of visitation, a time of restoration, and a time of multiplication. And, it is from the Lord. These times are resulting in the glorification of God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit.²⁵

The Assemblies of God leadership leans heavily in favor of the Pensacola Revival, but that favor is not unanimous by any means. The problem we have in relating any of the negative input from leadership is that those opposed to the Revival have been warned not to speak against it. This includes at least one district superintendent, several professors at Assemblies of God colleges, and other Assembly of God pastors. The climate of fear for speaking out is almost palpable. I did not feel it in the best interests of these brethren to name them or to quote them. Suffice it to say that they have serious problems with the unbiblical methodology based on the concept of a "new thing"—a new revelation—of God's work.

As news of the Pensacola Revival continues to spread, more and more church leaders are finding their way to Brownsville A/G's services. Where this will ultimately lead, and the degree to which it will result in a nation-wide or world-wide impact, remains to be seen. At this point it appears to be having an even greater impact than that of the Toronto Blessing.

IN THE BEGINNING

When on Father's Day, 1995, Steve Hill, then recently returned from London, was given the podium to share his experiences and to lead the congregation into what he called the "impartation," something both extraordinary and not so extraordinary occurred.

The not-so-extraordinary thing was the lack of any great response by the congregation to Hill's message and zealous prompting. The truly extraordinary thing was the publicity that followed the not-so-extraordinary thing to make it seem extraordinary. Unlike subsequent messages, Hill's message that day was not evangelistic, or even a teaching based upon God's Word. Rather, it was largely anecdotal, stressing the signs and wonders he claims to have witnessed in his ministry, and particularly since going to London.

In that message, Steve Hill repeatedly told the congregation what to expect from the impartation at his hands. At the conclusion, he had an altar call for salva-

tion, to which eight people responded. He then turned his attention to the congregation and simply asked for those that wanted a touch from God to come forward. A few hundred responded. At that point, we pick up Hill's address:

Now those of you that have come forward, I want to pray with you. Just because someone falls to the ground does not make them spiritual. But I want to tell you, friends, there's nothing wrong with it, okay?

You may just stand there and receive. That's beautiful. No one's pushing anybody down. You may just stand there and receive. But there's an impartation going along—some of you are not going to understand this.

A description of Hill's initial impartation illustrates how he fervently works to induce people to fall down. That description, transcribed from a video of the 1995 Father's Day service, follows.

I chose to present verbatim a large portion of his first excursion into the audience. Each subsequent excursion is described briefly, but the reader will understand more fully what took place each time after the first description. In fairness to the Brownsville people, nothing is embellished; nothing is understated. The following is an objective and accurate rendering of the "impartation" portion of the service.

How many want to be prayed for this morning? [Raises his hand.] Some of us are [barely raises hand].

Everyone who would like a refreshing from the Lord—you'd like God to touch your life—I want you to come forward, just stand right in here.

The people who had gone forward for the salvation altar call get up to leave.

Fill this whole area, friends.

And I'd like the musicians to play "The Name of the Lord is a Strong Tower." Y'all know that?

And I want to stay on this song for awhile, okay? Rather than moving, because it's going—we're going to stick with it because I don't want them to be singing other songs and changing. Let's just stay with this song, okay? Why don't you just start it, Richard?

As the musicians sing, most of the congregation goes forward.

Now this is what we're doing this morning. We're running into the sheltering arms of the Lord. That's why we're singing this song. I told them not to change the song for awhile. Just stay with this one song. We're running into the arms of Jesus.

Now if someone falls next to you, work with me, okay? Just work with me.

If someone falls right in front of you, help them down to the ground. We don't have people that are hurt, by the way. If somebody falls on you, don't worry about it. There's a lot of folks here. Let's enjoy the presence of the Lord, friends. Hallelujah.

The repetitious chorus continues; Hill joins in.

Go after the Lord, now! Go after the Lord! Sweet Jesus!

Hill goes into the audience, touches people on the forehead with one or two fingers (in some cases with his whole hand, or with his hands along side of people's heads), and begins to shout as he goes from one person to another:

Now Lord! More! More! More! Jesus! Now Lord! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Now! Now Jesus! Fire! Now! Now! Now! Now! More! More! More! More! Now! Now Jesus! Now! Now Jesus! Now! Now Jesus! More! More! More! Let Him melt you! Let Him melt you! Now! Now! More! More! More! Now! Now! Now! More! More! More! You're going to receive, sister! Now! Now! Now! Now! Now! Now Jesus! More! More! More! More! More! Now Jesus! More Lord! More! More! More! More! More! More! More! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Now! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!

Hill continues in this vein for several more minutes; he begins to perspire profusely. As he touches people, most stand still; eight women and one man go down. He gets back on stage, shaking his head, waving off the singers.

Look this way! Friends, listen! This is happening exactly like every single one of our services. What is happening? It's just a trickling going on. It's almost there's a river going by and some of us are doing this [mimics treading water]. Stay with what the Lord is doing. We've had the Lord move like this just gently, and then the power of God hits, friends, and I want to tell you, it is the most spectacular presence of the Lord! How many of you believe in the power of God? There's people already down here, receiving from the Lord—receiving miracles from the Lord! Wait on the Lord right now! Go after the Lord!

Hill goes back into the audience and repeats the impartation for several more minutes. No one goes down. He gets back on stage.

The Lord just spoke to me right here in this section—right here in this section [pointing to an area opposite from where he was]. I want everyone right here to go after the Lord right now. Go after the Lord.

[Speaking to people on the other side of the audience from where he was standing]: Don't everybody over here run over here. Stay where you're at. Right here! Right here! Right here! Right here! Richard, lead us in that.

Hill again goes back into the audience and confers the impartation for several more minutes. Five men and two women fall down. Pastor Kilpatrick takes the microphone from the pulpit and begins extolling the great things that he sees happening: "I've never experienced anything like it," he says. This appears to disturb Hill who senses the people's attention has been diverted from what he is doing. Hill gets on stage and takes over.

Pastor! Some of you, if you had any idea what the Lord is about to do for you! Just get back! I've had God hit people already in this place—thrown them to the ground! They're in heaven right now! They're not in Pensacola; they're in heaven right now! Just stay open to the Lord!

I questioned Hill's use of the word "already." By now almost half an hour had passed and very few had fallen down or had shown signs of anything taking place. Many were looking around, some were standing fervently, heads back, eyes closed, arms upraised, hoping for something to happen to them.

People start to file out. Hill urges them, "Don't leave! Don't leave!" Then, again, Hill goes back into the audience for several more minutes. This time one man and three women go down. He gets back on stage.

Hey! It's getting deeper, friends! It's getting deeper! Getting deeper! I'm going to pray right in here! Don't leave! We've had the Lord pour out His Holy Ghost en masse! I'm talking about, friends, where He just came down in the meeting! Don't leave! Sweet Jesus! Sweet Jesus!

Hill goes back into the audience for several more minutes. Two men and one woman fall down under his touch. He takes hold of a man, puts one hand on his head, the other on his shoulder, and appears to shake him violently, pulling him to the ground. (He didn't usually do this, though; for the most part he put his fingers or hands on people's foreheads with little pressure.)

While leaning forward to touch someone, Pastor Kilpatrick backs up, appears to trip over the first step of the stage and falls backwards. He continues to lie there for some time. Hill approaches a man who is obviously in an emotional state and yells, "More, more,"

etc. at him. Sensing that the man is about to go down, he takes him by the hand and leads him onto the stage for everyone to see. Hill backs away from the man and waves his hands at him Benny Hinn style, yelling, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! More! More! More! More! More! More! Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Now! Fire! Fire! Fire! More! More! More! More! More! More! More Jesus! More Jesus! More Jesus! More Jesus! More! More! More! More! More! More! More! Jesus! Jesus!"

The man doesn't go down, but with his head and arms raised he walks past Hill toward the steps. Hill and another man grab him and bring him back to the pulpit. Hill turns to someone and says, "Brother! Got a microphone?"

Someone hands the man a microphone. Hill asks him, "What's happening?"

The man cannot answer, but, with his eyes closed and one hand across his forehead, he begins an utterance in "tongues." Hill begins to work on the man some more to no avail. Finally, he walks away from the man who leaves the stage weeping.

Friends, let me explain something. We may pray with you, and you think, "Well, nothing happened." No, no, no, no, no, no! No, no, no, no, no, no! That's not what God's into. What are you looking for? You don't know what you're looking for. We don't know what we're after. Stay in the river! Stay in the river! You don't know what God has prepared for you!

But Hill had already told the people what to expect. His constant references to falling down "under the power" had set the stage for this failure. Why did he bring the man up if he did not expect something to happen—specifically, for the man to fall under the "anointing"? He continued by implying that, just because nothing happened at that moment, did not discount that something might happen to the man later:

We had one person prayed for, nothing happened—they said—came back, and voltage of electricity was just flowing there—(the pastor's out for the count, by the way! I don't know if you've seen it.) [A smattering of applause.]

Friends, stay with us! Stay with us! This is exactly gone on in all the services. There's times—there was one time right here when the Holy Ghost started hitting—how many were in that just a few minutes ago when the Holy Spirit started—look at these folks [no view, but he turns to the other side of the stage right away].

The Holy Ghost just hit, right there, just one right after another, hitting these people. [This did not take place where he was working at the moment, because very few people there evidenced anything.]

Can God do things like that? You talk to the folks afterwards, they say things like, "Sweet Jesus! Sweet Jesus!"

Stay in it, man! Come on, stay in it!

The singers start again on their repetitive song as Hill goes back into the audience. This time, several go down: two men and 18 women. After several minutes he goes back on stage.

I will stay here as long as we're praying, friends. Just go after the Lord!

You may be saying, "Well, what about me?" God's watching you, sis! God's watching you, brother! You're going to be touched; you're going to be touched! There's a lot of folks here. I'm having the time of my life! I'm having the time of—'cause people that are around me going, "Do you know who that is? Do you know what her problem was?" I like that statement: "Do you know what her problem was?" Allelujah! Sweet Jesus!

[To the musicians]: Do you know any camp meeting songs?

The singers begin to sing, "Soon and Very Soon" as Hill continues:

Those of you in the back, work your way up through here, come on.

Hill goes back into the audience. Two men and four women fall. One little girl falls, but he picks her up immediately and asks, "Did you lose all your strength?" She nods. Hill gets back on stage and waves to the singers to stop.

I want all the children! All the little children! I told them make room right here for all the little kids.

Heather! Come on up here, sis! Heather, come here. All the little children, right here. Rest of you just stay in the presence of the Lord. Some of you have a touch from God coming.

All the little children, I want right over here.

Some of you are thinking, "The way this thing is going, I'm never going to get prayed for." Friends, let me tell you what I've seen happen. As the people wait on the Lord—as they wait on the Lord—there have been times when I have turned to a crowd, and literally just walked through, and everyone was just hit everywhere by the power of God, 'cause they waited on the Lord.

Kids, I want you all right through here. You with me, Travis? It's Travis, right? What's your name? Eric. Where's Travis? Get over here, Travis! Where? Good. Hallelujah!

Now, kids, I want all you children to look at me. Were y'all in children's church? Okay, I'm going to be praying for you, okay? Some of you are going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that aren't filled. You're going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. One little girl who was eight years old—her parents brought her to me—I touched her, she went out to the ground, her hands went up, she began speaking in tongues, and her mom and dad went bananas! I mean they just—they were sitting there watching her, filled with the Holy Ghost instantly! Others of you, I'm going to pray for you, you're going to lose—okay, you're going to fall to the ground. Don't worry about it. You're going to love it. The Lord is touching your life.

How many of you want Steve to pray for them? Come on; come on down here. All the kids down here.

And I want all the parents, you go after the Lord, okay? We may begin doing this here, and He begins to fall right over there! Sweet Jesus!

Kids, I want you to just think about Jesus right now.

Hill begins the impartation upon the children, occasionally touching some adults. A few fall down; most don't. In all, two men, four women and one little girl fall down. Hill stops and goes back to the microphone.

During our meetings, parents, make sure the kids—push them up front. By the end of these things, they'll be leading the whole thing! They'll be leading it!

Hill leaves the children and goes back to the adults. This time more people begin to fall down—sixteen women and five little girls. Three men and five boys also go down. The crowd has thinned out, many having left the building or gone back to their pews. Hill goes down with a loud cry. He gets up and, after some more impartation, goes back to the platform.

Man, that's awesome! Wait upon the Lord! I like it when the crowd starts thinning out. Then the Lord starts coming down. We were at one church, two-thirty in the afternoon—a church about nine hundred—two-thirty in the afternoon—there was only like two hundred people left. And I told the church, I said, "The last shall be first." About two-thirty in the afternoon, all heaven—I mean all heaven came down. And that night, that night, they shared with the rest of the congregation what happened at two-thirty. Oh!

[Pointing to his left]: God has just moved over here! Lord, have mercy! I want to pray with every single person now! How many of you kids have been prayed for? Did God touch your life?

There is no visible response. Hill points to someone out of view and says, "Reconstructed his life."

Again, Hill goes back into the audience. Since he began, two hours have passed. The tape fades to black with no great signs or wonders having taken place, and most of the congregation having left.

THE POSITIVE

One thing that may be said about Kilpatrick and Hill: they earn their keep through hard work and a grueling schedule. Hill has preached four nights per week since the Father's Day, 1995, meeting, as well as traveling to other meetings during non-Revival nights. The Brownsville A/G Revival meetings last from 7:00 P.M. until after midnight.

Steve Hill has stated that he ministers until early morning, returning home at 2:00 A.M., only to rise at 5:00 A.M. to pray for the next evening's message.²⁶ Prior to the Revival he was a travelling evangelist for the Assemblies of God.

One may question the Pensacola leadership's methods and beliefs, but one cannot question their zeal. Nor could we apply Romans 10:2 to their zeal without compromising the context of that Scripture. Still, there does seem to be a misplaced zeal that is so desirous of revival that many extrabiblical phenomena coming in Jesus' name are accepted without proper testing by God's Word. This has given rise to much criticism from those both within and outside the Assemblies of God.

To the critics of the Pensacola Revival I would say that we cannot disregard the positive reports. There are quite a number not only from the leadership of Brownsville A/G, but from other A/G churches and churches of other philosophical persuasions—both charismatic and non-charismatic. There are many who are claiming that their lives have been changed for the better after having been touched by the Pensacola Revival.

It is because of certain problems that exist within any popular movement that we may tend to overlook or disregard—even denigrate—the testimonies of those who claim to have been touched by God through those movements. Because of so many overblown claims in the past, a kind of cynicism arises. We ask, "Yeah, but how long will it last?" "Is he really saved, or was it just an emotional response to an emotional message?"

It would be presumptuous on our part to discount such testimonies without testing the claims. For there is no doubt

that lasting good results seem to be in evidence within this movement. Again, however, only time will tell.

One of the problems in attempting to analyze these things is the assumption that, because of its links (however tenuous) to the Toronto Blessing, the Pensacola Revival must be the same thing in every respect. But this isn't true.

We must be careful to distinguish between those things that result from the preaching of the Word and those that result from experiences. Judging from the Revival messages we have observed, they are generally based on the preaching of repentance in conformity with God's Word. His Word will not return void; it will accomplish what He has sent it to do in the hearts of those who hear it (Isaiah 55:11). It is to this evangelistic message that many of the people are responding. By the admission of John Arnott, Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship's pastor, this is not the same message people hear there. This is a major difference between Toronto and Pensacola.

Before the impartation is entered into the people have already come forward in response to the evangelistic message. Anything that occurs subsequent to that message—impartation and deliverance—are distinct from the message, and must be judged apart from the message.

True, much of what is occurring may not be of God. I perceive that the world, the flesh and the devil are much in evidence. Yet while it may be of the flesh, or even of the devil, more than of God, we must be careful not to judge the hearts of the individuals involved.

However, we may—indeed we must—judge teachings and practices. And these cannot be judged accurately apart from God's Word. We agree with the Pensacola leadership that we must not judge something to be not of God merely because it has no precedent in Scripture. God may work in individual lives in unprecedented ways. But we also must not judge something to be of God merely because it results in changed lives for the better, particularly when it is presented as a "new move" which all must accept. Nothing without precedent in Scripture can be mandated or even promoted.

THE NEGATIVE

Just as it would be presumptuous to suppose that every aspect of the Pensacola Revival must be judged as evil, it would be presumptuous to assume that everything must be judged as good. It is no more proper to assume only good than it is to assume only bad. And I don't

mean acknowledging that demonic influences may be manifesting on occasion. I mean there are problems with some of the teachings and methodologies that are practiced at Brownsville A/G, as well as some of the manifestations that are attributed to the Holy Spirit.

To the leadership I would offer this caution: listen to the critics. Not everything they say is in error. Much of what they say should be heeded.

It is on this basis that I urge the proponents of the Pensacola Revival to consider some important truths. The foundation for this critique is based solely on God's Word, and it is imperative that His Word be the final arbiter of truth regarding all doctrine and practice.

Everything that comes in the name of God—whether truly of God or not—carries with it certain problems, particularly when it comes to discerning whether or not that thing is of God. There are only three sources for all spiritual teachings and practices: God, Satan and man. Often it is difficult to distinguish the source, and this for several reasons.

First, the human heart is deceptive. Our religious spirit convinces us that liturgy and ritual, or special methods of ministering, have an effect on God. But apart from what He commands in His Word, all methods are fruitless appeals to human pride. When we believe that God will act because we do or say something specific, we are attempting to control God. The excuse for this approach is found in an erroneous application of I Corinthians 14:32, which is often rendered "the Spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets." This is meant to imply that the prophets can control the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In truth, however, the full text states that the spirits (plural) of all the prophets are subject to testing by all the prophets:

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (I Corinthians 14:29-33)

Thus, those who insist that their teachings and practices not be tested or judged are deceiving those who must test them. The reason for the confusion that surrounds much of the subjective aspects of charismatic manifestations is that peo-

ple are intimidated into not judging. Even the "prophets"—the leaders of denominations and the ordained ministers of the establishment churches—are afraid to judge. Why? Because they are not sure themselves of the spiritual authority of all believers to judge these things. Also, they lack discernment to understand. They become paralyzed with fear or uncertainty, and thus do not take a stand when needed.

Second, Satan comes as an angel of light, and his ministers as ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:15). Satan's deceptions are not the same for God's people as they are for the unsaved. The whole world lies in wickedness that is palpable and overt. For those who love holiness or desire to follow God, Satan's deceptions come in the name of Christ and produce what appear to be good fruit. The objective is to lead steadily away from truth into spiritual error so that one's faith may be subverted or, at best, compromised. While those deceptions come in the name of Jesus with power, they cannot be validated by God's Word. Thus, those who do not adhere to God's Word as the only authority for doctrine and practice may be deceived, believing that the good they produce is pleasing God when, in fact, it is rebellion equal to that of the strange fire offered by Saul.

Third, God's ways are not man's ways.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: (Isaiah 55:8-10)

This Scripture is often quoted to affirm that we cannot understand God, and therefore we cannot judge what is of God, or of Satan, or of the flesh. But if those who think thus would read but one verse further they would see that God does make His ways known to His people:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

In other words, while God is inscrutable, and we cannot know anything about Him apart from what He reveals of Himself, His Word has been given so that we may know and understand His working

and His will. Therefore, all He does will be in conformity with His Word. To put it simply, whatever is important for God's people to know will be found in His Word. If it is not in His Word it is not important. If, therefore, someone brings a teaching or practice in the name of the Lord, but it cannot be verified by His Word, His people are not to be bound to it. Unless some experience or teaching is clearly delineated as either a command or a proscription in Scripture, it may be accepted or rejected on an individual basis. It is not to be imposed on either an individual or a corporate basis. However, it must be in conformity with the fruit of the Spirit and the whole counsel of God.

I believe in the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I believe that proper discernment of spirits and the casting out of demonic spirits is a legitimate ministry. But it is also apparent that much of what passes as discernment and deliverance is a fleshly attempt to emulate those gifts. Any truthful Pentecostal will admit that much of what passes as tongues and other gifts of the Spirit are really the flesh at work. This does not by any means discredit the true work of the Holy Spirit. But some people are so hungry for an experience they will often try to manipulate the Holy Spirit. And if nothing happens, well they'll just make it happen.

A certain amount of pride enters in, which results in a blindness to criticism: "God told me, I've experienced his touch, and no one will convince me otherwise!" Not only that, there often comes a spirit of defiance and a penchant not only to reject those who bring the light, but even to curse or ridicule them. When we are beyond correction because we assume that good results unequivocally prove God's blessing, we are being prideful. Next comes the fall. So I would urge the reader to receive the following concerns in the spirit of love with which they are offered. If my words seem harsh at times it is not for contentiousness, but for genuine concern that the leaders of the Pensacola Revival have allowed themselves to be influenced by others whose doctrines are not so pure.

I say this because of the biblical basis upon which most of their Assemblies of God background rests. No one would dispute that these men hold to the basic tenets of the Faith. But, for one reason or another, they have been persuaded to augment their Pentecostal and evangelical foundation with subjective charismatic religious practices that are not part of their tradition or Scripture.

SOME PROBLEMS

With these things in mind, I wish to address some of the disturbing aspects of the Pensacola Revival. It is not possible to address every instance of these problems manifesting themselves; the best I can do is offer a few examples from among those that I have observed.

This has nothing to do with judging any individual's heart or experiences, but rather some directions the Revival has taken which hinder the true work of the Holy Spirit.

Problem #1 - Spiritual Warfare

Knowing the aberrations of modern deliverance practices, I am greatly concerned about the method of spiritual warfare at Brownsville A/G. This method is not found in Scripture or even in Pentecostal tradition. It is based on a faulty understanding of spiritual warfare. This is not to say that everything taught and practiced is in error, but much is. And much is made of such spiritual warfare at Brownsville A/G, particularly on behalf of the Revival.

Satan and his demons are said to be attempting to destroy what God is doing at Brownsville. The answer seems to be employment of a methodology that grew out of modern deliverance practices.

A disturbing aspect of this spiritual warfare is the haphazard approach of what I call "shotgunning" into the spiritual realm. This consists of railing against perceived demonic powers believed to be surrounding the premises, and claiming victory over every detailed problem that may or may not exist (just to cover all the bases). This creates an end-around the Holy Spirit, placing the warfare in the hands of the people who are largely ignorant of what they are railing against.

Whether or not demons are present, no one can really say. Those who lead these things give airs as if they have some special discernment when they are as much in the dark as the rest of the people. Thus, they employ psychospiritual techniques and other fleshly methods, working themselves into a frenzy to expel the demons. Visually, it is not dissimilar to voodoo attempts to exorcise demons.

In truth, the only way to confront demonic spirits is by the biblical model: should they, on occasion, clearly manifest themselves, they may be addressed under the true anointing of the Holy Spirit, and commanded to leave. To haphazardly address demonic spirits is nowhere found in Scripture and is a dangerous and presumptuous practice.

Of course, the argument for this method is that it is not forbidden by Scripture. However, II Peter 2:9-22 and Jude 1:3-21 are reason enough not to do so. And, again, anything that is important for believers to know regarding doctrine and practice is found in Scripture. If it is not in Scripture it is not important, and should not form the basis for ministry.

There is no basis for shotgunning demands and claims into the spirit realm, particularly against the principalities and powers of this world. This is a method used by those who hold a mistaken idea of the spirit realm. That idea is based on Greek and Roman mythology. It has been integrated into the Church through the apostasy of the Roman Catholic system, and passed down to Protestantism due to lack of understanding. This erroneous concept forms the basis for Brownsville A/G's intercession services.

An Intercession Service

The following is an accurate account of an intercessory prayer meeting at Brownsville A/G, taken from a video of that service. It is not embellished, nor is it toned down in any way.

In August, 1996, John Kilpatrick spoke of how he had for some time, even before the Revival, been the target of witches who sought to pull him down. They had threatened to cause a scandal and to slander him. One night, he said, witches came into the service dressed in black, blue and white garb, waving horses tails and other charms in an effort to hamper God's work. Evidently the witches even went to New Orleans (where it is said witchcraft is the strongest in the United States) to bring in "heavyweights" to ruin the Revival. Kilpatrick then introduced two women who claimed to be Christian psychotherapists and credentialed ministers, and who work in the area of "deliverance."

These women told the congregation that what they have in the Revival is purity and holiness. They had felt the demonic there, but the prayers of the congregation had washed it out. They encouraged the congregation to ask the Lord to "make you sensitive to demonic powers in the service."

Where is the biblical precedent for this? Demon-chasing has become fashionable of late among the so-called "deliverance ministries." Every conceivable problem—every sin—is attributed to demons. (See our special report, Deliverance: Demonization and the Christian.)

Now, it would be foolish to think that Satan and his minions are not at

work to destroy souls. But the deliverance message and the methods employed by charismatic, psychology-based “ministers” is as much a deception as any of Satan’s attempts to meld truth with error.

The sensational aspects of the deliverance message become more bizarre with the passing of time. These women, who claim to have worked with ministers and elders who have had curses put on them unawares, relate their experiences:

We worked with ministers who, where Satanists really have gone on into their homes at night, gotten on in and drugged them and taken them to rituals, and bring them back home, and they don’t even know anything’s happened, but through prayer, through deliverance, through words of knowledge and wisdom, we’re able to break these things with them, and then they get relief; they get deliverance.

In other words, after these women practice their “Christian” psychotherapy these ministers experience repressed memory syndrome and begin to recall these bizarre happenings. No doubt these women’s “words of knowledge” helped them remember what they had forgotten.

While relating this story one of the women said something very interesting:

We have gone into some churches in New Orleans that are talking about revival, and have claimed to have had revival, and there will be people—there will be witches in the services—and they will begin to cry out or laugh, and you can—I will feel a shift—a whole shift—like a break in the atmosphere and then a shift happens, and then the anointing is cut off, and whatever comes out in the Spirit after that is just like knives hitting you in the back.

And sometimes it’s like dead air—you can’t breathe; it’s a suffocating feeling, you can just—to discern to know when the Holy Spirit is here and how to keep that, and then to know how to do the warfare is a deciding factor.

What does this mean? Does demonic power “cut off” God’s anointing? Can it turn the Holy Spirit’s work into a force against God and His saints by causing it to hit people in the back like knives? Are we to believe that Satan’s power is greater than God’s power? By such irrational statements, that is exactly what they are saying: witches not only can cut off the anointing of God through their magical spells, they can turn that anointing against the saints!

But, no, witches cannot cut off God’s anointing. And to think that witches can turn God’s anointing against God’s people so that it hits them in the back like

knives is to assume that the Holy Spirit is some impersonal force.

Affirming His protection against His people, God speaks through Balaam, an unworthy prophet, who spoke the truth to Balak when he said:

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! (Numbers 23:23)

If our Father would not allow any divination against Israel, how can anyone say that divination will work against His saints and children? Witches may have influence if God gives permission to Satan to work—but they have no power against God’s power. Nor do they have any power against God’s saints without God’s permission.

The ways Scripture reveals that God will allow Satan or any of his minions to even touch a child of God are 1) to prove our faith (Job); 2) to keep us humble (II Corinthians 12:7); 3) to chastise us (I Corinthians 5:5).

Our Father will never allow us to be tested above what we are able to stand, but will always provide an escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

Yet those who practice this unscriptural form of “deliverance” imply that God is impotent without us, and Satan can have his way with us at will. The woman went on to state how, “in our business we discern spirits, fleshly spirits,” and how she discerns the complete purity in Pastor Kilpatrick—a purity “that is without precedence in pastors.” She explained, “purity means no contamination.”

I won’t let anybody lay hands on me because I don’t want to be contaminated, but he and Steve [Hill] and the other pastors—the other ministers here—are pure. And that is something that Satan will try to attack deeply and desperately. And he will come wherever your weakest area is, so an admonition is, know what your weakest points are.

This is a pretty incredible statement in view of the apostle Paul’s confession that he was the chief of sinners. But it isn’t only the statement that causes a problem. It is the acceptance by John Kilpatrick that presents just as much of a problem. How would Paul have reacted to such accolades? In every instance in Scripture when God’s men have been lauded for their service they have vociferously rejected such praise. Should not God’s men today do the same? We must give God the glory, not man.

Flattery has no place in the Body of Christ. It engenders pride in those flattered, and opens the door for deception by those who bring the flattery. It is also a trapping of ecclesiasticism which sets those flattered above the brethren.

Of course we may, within reason, commend our brethren for their service. But to place one above others performing a like service (i.e., pastoring), is beyond good taste, let alone godliness. This may be considered minor by some, and no doubt men who receive such praise often do not consider how prideful they may become by accepting it. But it places men in the position of receiving other men’s praise and glory, which, in regard to spiritual matters and truth, God will not share with anyone.

After the accolades, Kilpatrick again prompts the congregation to warfare, calling for the “Banner of Warfare” to be brought out. The Banner of Warfare is emblazoned with the words, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.” The people are told to look at it as they rail against Satan.

As Kilpatrick makes his way among the people to “slay them in the Spirit,” another member of the Revival ministry team, Dick Reuben, takes the microphone and urges the people to get violent with Satan and his demons:

Let’s get violent! It’s time to get violent against the forces of darkness! Lift your voices! Lift your voices! Cry out against this evil! Cry out against darkness! Lift your voices! Lift your voices! Lift your voices! Lift your voices! Lift your voices!

Satan! We put you at naught for anything you’re trying to do through your witches! Through your warlocks! Through those who would bring blackness to this congregation! We speak that we be set free—set free—set free—in Jesus’ name!

And while this woman won’t let anyone lay hands on her lest she become “contaminated,” Reuben urges everyone to lay hands on someone next to them. This indiscriminate laying on of hands is also unbiblical:

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure. (I Timothy 5:22)

It may be argued that this has to do with ordination to ministry, but that is an ecclesiastical application of this verse. Ordination is of man; anointing comes from God. Any attempt to anoint someone, whether for ministry, healing, deliverance or anything else the Holy Spirit might do through such wholesale means as is ex-

hibited in the Pensacola Revival is a serious error that may result in spiritual harm either to the one laying hands on someone, or having hands laid on him—or both.

To think that teams of people can be taught how to anoint others in such a fashion is to presume upon the power of God and the will of God. This is important to remember as we observe the subsequent spiritual warfare into which the people are led.

Pandemonium reigns as Kilpatrick moves among the pews touching people, causing them to fall. People begin twitching and jerking spasmodically. One of the woman psychotherapists, and other women on the platform, wave their hands in front of Brenda Kilpatrick as if brushing something off of her. Brenda is seated, bending back and forth as if in pain. She is experiencing what is known as “birthing” the new thing from God. Women (and sometimes men) go into birthing pains, grunting as if in labor. Brenda, between grunts, cries out, “Make this your birthing station, Lord!” It is not a pretty sight.

Other women bow repeatedly, some spinning their hands as if turning a crank, others waving toward the pulpit. It is the women who are taking the strongest visible role in the warfare, gesturing in all sorts of manners, as Reuben continues:

Louder saints! Give it to the devil!
Take that, devil! Take that devil!

He calls for the deliverance teams to go into action, and the women begin to take over. One of the psychotherapists presumes to take authority over demonic spirits in the second and third heavens; she binds the spirit of sorcery. She rails against the spirits of everything she can think of. Some people fall into a trance as she makes her “war cry!”

It’s beginning to break! It’s beginning to break! It’s beginning to break!

Throughout the audience women are gyrating wildly; the men are trance-like, relatively calm. Some are merely observing. Through the pandemonium can be heard grunts, screams, barking. In spite of the scriptural truth emblazoned on the Banner of Warfare, it becomes evident that human power and might are the source for victory. And the name of Jesus is used as a mantra of sorts:

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

Just say “Jesus”! If you don’t know anything else to say, just say, “Jesus”! That’ll get the job done! That’ll get the job done! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Oh, Jesus!
Oh, Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Jesus! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!
Oh, Lord!

Set the captive free, Lord! Set the captive free, Lord! Set the captive free, Lord!

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

Nowhere in Scripture is such an idea put forth, that all one need do is say the name of Jesus and the job will get done (whatever the job may be). But Reuben continues:

The blood of Jesus! The blood of Jesus is in this place! The blood of Jesus! The blood of Jesus is against you Satan! The blood of Jesus is against you Satan! The blood of Jesus is against you Satan!

Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord!
Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord!

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Oh, set the captives free Lord! Oh, set the captives free Lord! Oh, set the captives free Lord! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Come on folks! This is the power of this church right now! This is where we get our power from! This is why things are happening here, because we’re pressing in! We’re pressing in! We’re pushing back the forces of hell! We’re driving back the forces of darkness! Come on! Come on! Come on! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Get violent! Get violent! Hallelujah! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus Lord! Jesus Lord! Jesus Lord! Oh, Jesus Lord! Jesus Lord!

Be delivered! Be delivered! Be set free! Be set free! Be set free!

Let God heal your marriages today!
Let God release you! Let God release you today! Hey, be set free! Be set free! Be set free! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

The people are given instructions on how to defeat the devil through loud wailing, groans, grunts and screaming as they faint or sway back and forth in a trance-like state. Reuben discloses that this is the strength of the Revival:

This is the strength of the revival folks! This is the strength of the revival! You don’t know it, but we have an intercessory prayer group here, and they do this all the time! They come here at four-thirty in the afternoon and begin to do what we’re doing right now! And they stay until the service time! It’s hard work! But I’m telling you, this is why God is showing up in this place, and why the forces of hell are being driven back! It’s because people are doing warfare! They’re pouring themselves and their energy into this thing!

So much for “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.” This reveals more about what transpires in the Revival-day intercession meetings than Craig Howell told me.

It’s because the people are driving back the powers of darkness through their sweating, screaming “warfare”—pouring their own energy into it—that God can manifest Himself. As if He would be powerless to do so otherwise:

And this is the reason God’s moving here, and the reason His presence is so great! We’re [not God?] driving back the curtains of darkness! Oh, folks! Come on! There are thousands of souls that will be saved this next week because of what’s happening right here, right now! Come on! Come on! Come on! Come on! Put your energy into it!

[Not by might, nor by power?]

Let’s go! Let’s go! Let’s go! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

Thank you for what you’re doing here, Jesus! Thank you for what you’re doing here, Jesus! Thank you for what you’re doing here, Jesus! Thank you for the deliverances Lord! Jesus! Thank you for deliverance Lord! Praise God! Praise God!

There are some critical spirits—pastor and Steve have dealt with this over and over again! God will release you from a critical spirit right now, friend! If you’ll just confess that thing, and give it up, and surrender it, get into the aisle and get prayer, you’ll be set free from that thing! You’ll be set free from that thing! God’s here today to release you! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Let Him do His work! Let Him release you today from that thing! It’s cancer! I’m telling you, it is a cancerous thing! And it will sour your spirit in a heartbeat! You know that! You know that! Release it right now! Release it right now and be delivered!

In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus!

Again and again, the name of Jesus is used as a mantra—a magical incantation that will cause people to shed their sins. But what about repentance? Unlike Hill’s evening messages, it is hardly in the equation. This is evident in Reuben’s “altar call” for salvation to which only a few people respond. His prayer of repentance is weak. There is no explanation of what it means to follow Christ; there is no counting the cost. Some of those responding to the call for salvation were among those most strongly engaged in the spiritual warfare exercises. The question arises as to how they could wage spiritual warfare before being saved.

And, typical of the “impartation,” there is no ministry of God’s Word. It is pure emotionalism, devoid of biblical teaching or precedent.

Scripture warns against those who would rail against principalities and powers, even those under Satan’s domain:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (II Peter 2:9-19)

Jude 1:3-21 also speaks in a similar manner to these things.

The reason for these harsh words from God is that such behavior reflects an attitude of rebellion against authority. As much as we may not be comfortable with it, or understand it fully, God’s authority rules through Satan who is allowed to continue for a season to test the hearts of men. To rail against Satan is to rail against God’s authority.

I would not identify all who rail against Satan as evil-minded or fitting the full description of those spoken of by Peter and Jude. Rather, this is merely one sin that has crept into the churches through false teachers. These have persuaded otherwise godly people to follow their error—even pastors and teachers who otherwise hold sound theology but, in their zeal, receive such teachings without careful testing by God’s Word.

Notice that Peter, in verse 18, speaks of those who, “though clean escaped from them who live in error” are allured through the lusts of the flesh by false teachers. He is speaking about believers. They are not being led into sexual immorality (although that has happened at times); they are led into fleshly religious practices, making them slaves to those speaking great, swelling words. They are bound to the leaders and to the religious exercises they think draw them closer to God than they could be without them. This nullifies their freedom and their close relationship to the Father that was purchased by the blood of Christ.

It is understandable how human reason would assume that Satan, as our enemy, is usurping authority and must be stopped. I believe this is the case here. The leaders at Pensacola are not evil-minded. They honestly believe they are serving God in this manner. But they have been persuaded to trust some formula for spiritual warfare that they learned elsewhere.

The question is why believers wish to continue in it, to make excuses for it, and to be identified with the evildoers described in God’s Word by acting in the same manner.

Problem #2 - Misapplying Scripture

Often, when Scripture is referenced at Brownsville A/G, it is used as a proof text and mishandled badly. This is especially evident in Reuben’s appeal to the Book of Acts to justify what these people were doing:

I know there’s some of you in here, you’re wondering, “What in the world is this all about?” Well this is normal service. You see, we’ve been—that’s right, it’s normal. You read the Book of Acts. You read the Book of Acts.

You say, “Well, I don’t see some of this happening in the Book of Acts.” Listen. The Holy Spirit couldn’t put everything that He did in the Book of Acts. As Steve has said, “If God did everything He—if God had reported everything He did on the day of Pentecost in the Bible, you’d have to

have a wheelbarrow just to carry Acts 2 around.”

And so God didn’t put everything in the Bible that happened!

This is convenient. How can one argue against such reasoning? Of course not everything God did has been recorded. But how He manifested Himself and what he requires of us is recorded. And for the churches, when the people come together, all things are to be done decently and in order. If anyone has an utterance in an unknown language, and speaks it forth, the congregation is to wait for an interpretation. If no interpretation is forthcoming, they are to remain silent for the duration of the meeting (I Corinthians 14:27-31).

But what is happening at Pensacola is not prophesying in an unknown language. It is pure babbling whereby no one interprets. Even allowing for a “heavenly prayer language” apart from prophesying in an unknown earthly language, nowhere is this permitted in the assembly. The gathering together is to be for edifying, teaching and other body ministry. Not once among such ministry is being “slain in the Spirit” or other such behavior mentioned.

If someone should fall down under the weight of conviction, I see no problem. But to create an emotional atmosphere in order to induce people to fall down is wrong. The leaders’ stated intentions aside, the programmed response to impartation is to fall down. That not everyone responds by falling down doesn’t negate the programming aspect of the method.

Once we allow for the idea that just because it isn’t mentioned in Scripture it is allowable in the assembly, we open the door for all sorts of evil. To add to the confusion, Dick Reuben, in the aforementioned intercessory service, claimed that God’s acts are chaotic:

If you read the Book of Acts you will discover some pretty strange and abnormal things going on. People, they looked on and they marvelled. Let me tell you, the church through the years, we’ve become organized and we’ve learned how to do church, and we’ve depended upon the hand of flesh, and we’ve devised programs. We’re talented and gifted people and we can carry on this thing without God being within a million miles. But listen, when God shows up, it gets kind of chaotic. Did you know that?

Sometime, just read the Book of Acts. And read underneath what’s going on, and you will see beneath those words total chaos.

I mean, even on the day of Pentecost when those people came bursting out of that upper room, something was happening, brother! I mean, they fell out into the streets of Jerusalem, and people looked at them, and they said, "What in the world, it's nine o'clock in the morning! These folks must have found a bar that opened early this morning, or one that was all night! They're drunk!"

Can you understand if you'd been on the streets of Jerusalem and you saw this hundred and twenty people come out of that upper room, and what was going on in their lives? I mean, you would have been amazed at that. And you look at it. Two people fell over dead in church because they lied to the Holy Ghost!

Did you ever stop to wonder what went on through the minds of the members that were there? I'm telling you, they looked at that, and mouths fell open. And I'm sure they said, "I've never seen anything like that before."

So what's happening here, friends, is we're getting back to the normal. And it appears to be abnormal because we've been abnormal so long until the normal appears to be abnormal.

So just relax! Just relax! God's in this place!

Listen! What's happened here could not have happened if God wasn't here. There's no way a person could engineer what has occurred in this church in the last year and two months. No way. Nobody's smart enough. This is God. So you just back off if you don't understand. Just commit it to God, and God will let you know what the truth is.

The Bible says the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, and He will bear witness with you if you will just be open in your mind and in your heart.

You don't have to understand it.

As so often happens when people try to justify unscriptural behavior, Reuben misapplies Scripture. Romans 8:16, in context, states that the Spirit bears witness that we are children of God:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:15-17)

Paul was not saying that if we will withhold testing by opening our minds and hearts, the Holy Spirit will bear witness that unbiblical or extrabiblical experiences are of God.

What about those who "sense in their spirits" that what is taking place is of the flesh—or of the devil? Whose spirit is correct? It is precisely because subjective experiences are placed alongside Holy Writ as evidence of truth that such confusion reigns. Those things that cannot be substantiated by Scripture cannot be depended upon for a witness to truth. The only way the Holy Spirit will bear witness to any claims of divine authorship is if those claims can be substantiated by Scripture. Otherwise we are left with the confusion that results from one man's reasoning conflicting with another man's reasoning as to what is truth.

Contrary to Reuben's claim, we do have to understand it:

Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (I Corinthians 14:20)

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:17)

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:9-10)

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2-3)

Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. (II Timothy 2:7)

Is God the author of confusion? If so, then Reuben is correct in saying that His works are chaotic. If not, then everything He does will be in accordance with His Word. Any claims to a move of God must be in conformity to the Word of

God. He is not so capricious as to allow His children to have to guess at these things. Nor would He tell us not to seek understanding. His Word continually prompts us to knowledge and understanding of His workings in order that we not be deceived.

Lack of understanding is the reason many people profess Christ without a genuine conversion. This is where many modern evangelistic messages fail, including that of Pensacola. Without giving unbelievers (those to whom any evangelistic message must be directed) understanding of who Jesus is, and why He can save them from their sins, they may not be directed to the true Jesus.

Mormons can concur with the Gospel, but their understanding is that Jesus is a created being—the brother of Satan. Jehovah's Witnesses can concur with the Gospel, but their understanding, also, is that Jesus is a created being—the archangel Michael. Muslims believe Jesus to be a man worthy of honor—a prophet of God. None of these believe Him to be the eternal Word of God incarnate.

Where Scripture is relegated to the same authority as one's subjective reasoning, which includes reading "underneath what's going on" and "beneath those words," there is the deception of the enemy. As much as I believe in the gifts of the Spirit, this has been a weak characteristic of the charismatic movement, which is steadily infecting otherwise sound Pentecostal fellowships. Regardless of what Scripture says, one's experience often takes precedence as truth.

And to suggest that chaos reigned on the day of Pentecost is to take the words of the scoffers and apply them to everyone. The fact remains that the people for the most part heard the Gospel proclaimed in their own languages and many repented and followed Christ. There was no chaos there; there is no chaos in the presentation of the true Gospel.

Another error is to claim that the chaos is proof of God's presence because no one is smart enough to create it. Satan can create such chaos. In fact, the trance-like state induced by some of the methods used in the Pensacola Revival is exactly what has been witnessed among the devotees of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and similar eastern mystics.

The uncontrolled jumping, writhing on the floor, dervish-like dancing, walking about in a stupor—virtually all the manifestations at Toronto and Pensacola—are exactly what take place under the control of the psychospiritual cults. It is

the same as that found in voodoo, Santeria, and virtually all forms of witchcraft. All these point to changed lives for the better to prove their own version of "truth." To attribute such manifestations to the work of the Holy Spirit simply on the unfounded belief that only God can do such a thing is irrational.

Not only do we find misapplication of Scripture on the part of Brownsville A/G's leadership, it is found in statements from the denomination's leaders. James K. Bridges, General Treasurer of the Assemblies of God, cites James 5:7-8 as evidence that this is the fulfillment of the promise of a "latter rain":

To be effective the church must be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of the last-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this period is referred to as the days of the "latter rain" (James 5:7,8). It is a season of harvest just before the "catching away" of the Church....

...Many are again experiencing the latter-rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit for this last-day revival.²⁷

This Scripture that Bridges cites is an admonition to be patient in enduring hardship at the hands of others. James gives as an example of patience the farmer who waits for the produce of his soil until it gets the early and the late rains. It is not a prophecy of a "latter rain" movement within the Church. This is the problem with allegorizing God's Word instead of reading it in context. Again, a departure from traditional Pentecostal exegesis in favor of charismatic subjectivity.

Allegory is at the heart of Charles E. Hackett's response to the Pensacola Revival. Hackett, Executive Director for the A/G's Division of Home Missions, credits a hunger for the supernatural, a spirit of unity, increased laborers in the field and Promise Keepers as evidences of God's visitation upon America.²⁸

Incredibly, Hackett cites these things as the fulfillment of Acts 2:17.²⁹ But Acts 2:17 was not a prophecy either; it merely records Peter's affirmation that the first-century Pentecost experience was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32).

Even the very head of the Assemblies of God, Thomas Trask, has been too zealous about trying to find scriptural justification for these things. As quoted earlier, he cited Hosea 9:7 and I Peter 2:12 as pointing to this as God's visitation. But Hosea 9:7 is a warning of God's judgment against rebellious Israel!

The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. (Hosea 9:7)

And I Peter 2:12 speaks of God's judgment upon our enemies at the return of Christ!

What a sad commentary that all of these examples are convolutions of God's Word from men in high positions within a major denomination.

These are but a few examples of many such errors in citing Scripture among those involved in, or promoting, the Pensacola Revival. How often God's people quote II Corinthians 11:13-15, yet do not take it to heart where their favored teachers are concerned:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Satan's ministers preach righteousness no less than do God's true disciples. This is how he is able to deceive so many that, were it possible, even the very elect of God would be deceived.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before. (Matt 24:23-25)

How is it possible for a deception to be so great that it could almost fool the very elect of God? Obviously it must come in the name of Jesus with sound theology and Christology—and power. The only way it can deceive is through power that appears to glorify Christ, but cannot be substantiated by His Word. Extrabiblical teachings or practices do not glorify Christ. And if they do not glorify Christ they are not of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would glorify Him, that is what He meant—the Spirit would confirm Jesus' words. He didn't mean the Holy Spirit would merely offer lip service in praise songs and breathing the name of Jesus. His Word is truth; any spiritual teaching or practice apart from His Word is at best unimportant, at worst a deception.

Problem #3 Priestcraft

While rebuking the spirit of religion, the leaders of the Pensacola Revival are practicing the worst kind of religion themselves. There is a strong emphasis on the clergy-laity concept which separates those in authority from the rest of the Body of Christ. Whether purposefully or not, they have established themselves as priests who have a special anointing from God to impart spiritual power.

In an article in *Pentecostal Evangel*, Thomas Trask even makes the distinction between ministers and "laity." This is priestcraft (shamanism), not ministry in the Spirit, which cements the clergy-laity concept in the minds of these pastors' followers. Worse, it cements it in the pastors' own minds.

At one meeting, held at the Mel Tillis Theater in Branson, Missouri, John Kilpatrick, the "man of God," as he was called, assumed the role of Elijah in I Kings 17. Near the conclusion of the meeting he had the audience write on pieces of paper the number one thing they wanted from God. The requests were brought forward in buckets and spread out on a cot brought onto the stage. The "man of God" then spread himself over the requests and affirmed that many petitions would be granted before the people returned home.³⁰

Such a ritualistic approach severs the relationship between the believer and his heavenly Father, establishing the "man of God" as an interloper.

Reports from eye witnesses reveal that Kilpatrick's message did not follow the evangelistic thrust characteristic of the regular Revival messages delivered by Steve Hill. Most of the time was spent explaining and defending the Revival practices. A significant amount of time was spent attempting to raise funds for a bus to take the ministry team of about thirty to forty members from city to city.

The music was carefully orchestrated to create the proper emotions for the business at hand. And most of the evening was devoted to impartation.

Priestcraft at Brownsville A/G is certainly evident in the "altar of incense" officiated over by Dick Reuben. Reporting on the April 23-26 Ministers Conference held at Brownsville A/G, where more than 1,200 pastors, ministers and wives attended, the June 30, 1996 edition of *Pentecostal Evangel* states:

Dick Reuben, a Messianic Jew who regularly ministers at the ongoing Brownsville revival, was a featured speaker. His message on the golden altar called for ministers and their wives to

come forward to cast all of their heartaches, wounds, and problems on the burning altar of incense, an incense that had been ground as a picture of personal brokenness. Each pastor and his wife in singlefile [sic] literally cast incense on the burning golden altar as a symbol of casting their burdens at the feet of Jesus. The smell and smoke of the incense filled the sanctuary. Each release of pain seemed to thicken the presence of the glory cloud of God.³¹

Who would be so presumptuous as to construct an “altar” and expect that God would honor any use of it? There are no altars commissioned by God today. To offer such an altar, even as a token or symbol of casting ones’ burdens on Jesus further establishes a priestcraft practice that is forbidden by Scripture. Any altar not specifically commissioned by God is an affront to Him. This, too, was the practice of strange fire that will result in further deception for those who partake of it unless they repent.

When church leaders begin to lose their focus on their role as servants, they often assume the role of Old Testament prophets, and implement Old Testament practices, in order to get the people to follow. And they lack in sound exegesis of Scripture. The focus centers on experiences past and present. And what develops is a kind of cult mentality which refuses to see the problems and will not receive correction. They and their followers often become entrenched in their error because of the good they perceive being done at their hands. I would caution the Pensacola leadership to beware of this trend toward autocracy.

As pastors continue to succumb to the deceptions they are so prone to follow because of naiveté, lack of understanding, pride, or whatever, they inevitably infect their followers with those deceptions. The few pastors who recognize the deceptions and attempt to help other leaders see their error are made to feel less than a part of the denomination. “Laity” who attempt to help their pastors understand are generally dealt with harshly to the point of excommunication from the fellowship.

Whenever supernatural (or seemingly supernatural) experiences occur among a select group of people, there usually develops an elitist mentality that separates the “haves” from the “have nots.” This appears to be occurring among the Pensacola revivalists. There the elitist mentality implies that those who disagree—or even seriously question—that this is God’s revival, are unspiritual. Some have been

told to leave their churches if they do not want to “get into the River.”

We have heard from some who, after lovingly confronting their pastors with reasons for not involving themselves, have been told to leave the congregation.

Such an attitude not only intrudes upon the individual believer’s freedom in Christ, it severs vital relationships within the Body of Christ. The results have even included shunning of the “dissenters.”

While we may acknowledge that Pensacola Revival is distinct from the Toronto Blessing in many ways, its roots



Dick Reuben at his “golden altar of incense.”

Photo from Pentecostal Evangel, June 30, 1996

are found in the “Toronto Blessing.” The Toronto Blessing, in turn, traces its origins to the signs and wonders philosophy of John Wimber and the laughing phenomenon of Rodney Howard-Browne. (For a biblical analysis of these men’s teachings and practices see our special reports, *The Vineyard: History, Teachings and Practices*, as well as *Holy Laughter: Rodney Howard-Browne and the Toronto Blessing*.)

This present carryover from the holy laughter movement must be held to the same scrutiny as any other phenomenon.

I would not say that all involved in this movement are false prophets. Many are merely deceived for a time by the false prophets from whom they received their “anointing.” But they have failed to heed the warning of Scripture. They have chosen to allow sight to take precedence over God’s Word, and have judged unworthy those who do not follow blindly. We must all be willing to suffer the rejection of well-known leaders, and others whom we love, in order to stand for biblical purity in all teachings and practices.

Problem #4 - Impartation

The clergy-laity concept is further entrenched through spiritual exercises at the hands of the “clergy.” At Brownsville A/G it is most evident in the “impartation.”

It would seem as if the baptism in the Holy Spirit was merely a prelude to the Pensacola Revival. Steve Hill proclaims:

God is doing something fresh! He’s doing something new! And if you’re not careful, you’re going to miss what the Lord is doing! Be careful! Be careful!³²

During the spiritual warfare service described earlier, Dick Reuben stated:

You say, “Well, I don’t see some of this happening in the Book of Acts.” Listen. The Holy Spirit couldn’t put everything that He did in the Book of Acts. As Steve has said, “If God did everything He—if God had reported everything He did on the day of Pentecost in the Bible, you’d have to have a wheelbarrow just to carry Acts 2 around.”

And so God didn’t put everything in the Bible that happened!

But God did put the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Bible. And if He were going to do something “new” and “different” that would transcend that mighty act, it seems He would have at least given us a clue. Particularly if this new thing—which exactly duplicates certain practices of the Latter Rain Movement—were necessary for spiritual growth.

Concerned with the terminology, the A/G headquarters has asked the Pensacola leadership not to use the term “impartation.” But they continue to use it anyway. In a recent sermon, Brownsville A/G’s theologian, Dr. Michael Brown, prepared the people to receive the “impartation” from his hands:

I want to pray for you for fresh impartation of the Spirit.³³

Indeed, Brown prayed, “May there be an impartation of your Spirit.”

The insistence by the A/G leadership that the Pensacola leaders not use the term “impartation” has little meaning. Even if they were to refrain from using the term, what would it matter? The activities are the same. If anything, it is dishonest not to call what they are doing “impartation” as long as they believe that that is what they are doing.

Hill readily admits that he doesn’t understand the concept of impartation. At his suggestion, I spoke with Mike Brown about it. His answer offers little clarification:

Al Dager: One of the aspects of the Revival has to do with the impartation and the ministry of the laying on of hands.

Mike Brown: Well, certainly the Scriptures talk a lot about impartation through laying on of hands. For example, when someone would pronounce a blessing. Jacob pronounced a blessing over his two grandsons, in Genesis 48, and specifically laid his right hand on the younger, and his left hand on the older, because the right hand symbolized strength and blessing. So which hand he laid on the son, it was of symbolic importance. The Israelites would lay their hands on the sin offering so as to symbolically transfer their sins to that animal; the high priest would do that in Leviticus 16, with what's called the scape goat, on the day of atonement. Explicitly it says in Leviticus that he would put the sins of Israel on the goat. It says about Joshua in Numbers and Deuteronomy that Moses laid his hands on him and he received the spirit of wisdom, because Moses laid his hands on him.

And then in the New Testament you have the laying on of hands for the impartation of the Holy Spirit. In Acts, the eighth chapter, Ananias lays his hands on Saul of Tarsus—he's just been converted, the ninth chapter—that's when he receives his sight. People are healed through the laying on of hands. Mark 16, Acts 28, etc. So it seems clear that the element of human contact as a vessel through whom the blessing comes is important. Exactly how something is transferred, since it's a physical contact and a spiritual transfer, that's the mystery of it. But we lay hands on the sick and they're healed; we lay hands on people to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and they're filled with the Holy Spirit; we lay hands on people asking for a fresh touch, and that's what, in particular, happens in the Revival. And there's an impartation, but it's not an impartation of the human spirit. In other words, if I lay hands on you, you don't receive the spirit of Mike Brown.

Some critics who have a problem with, let's say, one phase of renewal in the Body—let's say Toronto, for example—if you at one point were prayed for by someone in Toronto, and were blessed, and then you came and you prayed for me, and I went and started preaching and revival broke, people would discount that because, somehow, I received the Toronto spirit through you. But it's not the human spirit or the spirit of the movement that's imparted, it's the Holy Spirit, or the anointing of the Spirit. So that's a misconception that has caused some confusion. And the critics seize on that, so if they reject one thing, then they reject the whole chain that flows from it.

The other aspect with laying on of hands that I believe is important, is that it joins people together in the sense of interdependence. For example, the Samaritans did not receive the Spirit until the Jewish apostles from Jerusalem came and laid hands on them. Saul didn't receive his sight in Acts 9 until Ananias came and laid hands on him. So there's a sense of no one is an island. And maybe a Methodist teenager prays for me, and I'm touched through that, and I pray for an Episcopal minister, and that Episcopal minister prays for a Pentecostal minister, and the blessing is transferred and imparted from one to another. But there's the recognition of the fact that we're all one Church, one Body. I think that's another element to it.

A.D.: You say that the critics might be concerned about any impartation from Toronto to Brownsville. Would they not have a legitimate concern if they felt that the doctrines or some of the practices or teachings at Toronto were somewhat aberrant?

M.B.: This is what I would say would be valid, and this would not be valid. Although the critics widely associate Brownsville with Toronto, really we're not directly related in any way. We're not critical of Toronto; we believe God blessed many people there, and refreshed many people there, including a few leaders from Brownsville proper. But the two movements are very distinct and different—as anyone can tell by attending both—In terms of the emphasis and the thrust, etc. I would say it's a valid concern if someone thought that we were just cloning ourselves after Toronto. Or, if they actually felt that this was demonic, what was happening there, and therefore the spirit imparted was a demonic spirit, then that would be a valid concern. If either we were just a clone of Toronto—which of course, we're not—or what was happening there was completely from the devil. Therefore, if they prayed for you, and you prayed for me, what I received and what you received would both be demonic. That, of course, is a scary position to me.

Well should that be a scary position. Were Brown and the other leaders of the Pensacola Revival to investigate the background to Toronto's beliefs and practices they might be convinced that what was happening there is of the devil. In any case, is the impartation, as Mike Brown has stated, the same as Jacob pronouncing a blessing over his two grandsons? Or Israel's high priest laying his hands on the scapegoat?

Not really. One was a patriarch of Israel acting as a prophet of God to bless, according to God's will, one under his di-

rect authority. The other was the anointed high priest of Israel acting in a manner specifically commanded by God. The scapegoat did not take the people's sins away except symbolically, and righteousness was imputed only to those who partook as an act of faith.

Nor is a precedent found in one of Brown's example of Moses laying hands on Joshua. In this case, Moses transferred his mantle as the leader of Israel to take them into the Promised Land. That anointing was not distributed throughout the nation. It was unique to Joshua for leadership, not for impartation of Holy Ghost power through being "slain in the Spirit." And, again, it was in specific obedience to God's will in choosing Joshua as Moses' successor.

The laying on of hands to receive healing is scriptural, as in the case of Ananias laying hands on Saul to receive his sight. But there are no healings (at least none that are documented) out of Brownsville's congregation. And, again, Ananias was acting specifically in response to God's specific command to do so. It is this quality—obedience to God's specific will—that must guide all ministry in the Spirit. There is no precedent in Scripture to lay hands indiscriminately on everyone for the expressed purpose of transferring power or to receive the Holy Spirit.

As far as receiving the Holy Spirit, many of those whom the Pensacola leaders lay hands on already claim to have the Holy Spirit. What the impartation would be then, is some additional empowerment of the Holy Spirit besides the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples to wait for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But, as I ask elsewhere, where are we told to expect anything more than the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Yes, the laying on of hands is scriptural. But it is within the authority of an apostle or a prophet to lay hands on those to whom God specifically commands it for His specific purposes. It is not something to be taught to anyone who wants it.

And here is the crux of it: the anointing of God cannot be taught, which is what the Pensacola leadership is doing with the impartation. The prayer teams, made up of both men and women, learned from Toronto that there is a methodology and a specific teaching of the impartation that is conveyed to whomsoever will receive it. This is no different than Simon the sorcerer pleading with Peter to sell him the anointing; the only difference is that the Pensacola leadership does it for a free-will offering.

We must all be sure that when we perform any service to God it is in full accordance with His will. Otherwise it is strange fire, no matter how powerful it is or what seeming good it produces.

Were the leaders of the Pensacola Revival really led by God to lay hands on the people extrabiblical, then everyone would receive healing, deliverance, and other blessings from God, simply because they would all be in His will. If anyone does not receive good, or receives evil—or receives nothing—it is evidence that not every instance of laying on of hands is done in the will of God.

To do anything other than act in strict accordance with His will is to be presumptuous and makes merchandise of God's blessings, even if offered freely.

Steve Hill asks a legitimate question in response to those who claim that the people are not being touched by God through this method. In essence he asks if God would give a stone when we ask for bread (Luke 11:11).

Unfortunately, the answer is that God will give stones—or nothing—to those who ask amiss, or who seek to consume what they receive for the benefit of their own lusts (desires, good feelings, etc.) (James 4:3). To act out a "new revelation" is to ask amiss—it is practicing strange fire. The consequences could well be a deception that looks genuine.

In assessing the original impartation from Steve Hill to the congregation at Brownsville A/G that Father's Day, we find some interesting facts. First, the message to which the people responded was not an evangelistic message. Rather, it was largely anecdotal, and centered on Hill's experiences on the mission field and with Sandy Millar at Holy Trinity. Thus the sparse response to the altar call for salvation. God's Word was not going forth in that meeting.

Second, the subsequent call for those who wanted to be touched by God to come forward did bring a few hundred to the front, but nothing really extraordinary happened.

An objective person would leave the scene wondering what all the excitement was about. Alongside a Benny Hinn meeting it was unspectacular. Hill worked feverishly for hours to accomplish far less than Hinn does in a few minutes of "impartation" to his audiences. Yet we're made to believe that nothing like this has happened since Pentecost.

Since, according to some reports, some fifteen hundred or more people were in attendance, not very many "got it."

Third, the ratio of women to men who went down at Hill's touch is noteworthy. Counting girls and boys, sixty women and seventeen men (plus a few unknowns due to camera angle) went down under Hill's touch. This equates to almost eighty percent women, although the ratio of the audience was pretty evenly divided between men and women.

Coupled with the fact that women comprise the majority of the spiritual warfare teams, and exercise great influence over the men in the fellowship, the danger of subjective, emotion-based religious error is all the more possible.

In fact, we found that women and even children are taking prominent leadership roles in many of the churches involved in both the Toronto and the Pensacola Revival movements.

No, not all women are prone to such error, and many men are. But the Lord gave his instructions for women not teaching or taking authority in the fellowship for good reason. To ignore His Word is to invite disaster, not because women are less capable than men, but because rebellion against the Word, even when perceived as more advantageous for the moment, is a sin that removes God's protection. It, too, is strange fire that brings God's judgment. It isn't up to us to question why God says something; we must only obey.

The first time I viewed the video tape of the Father's Day service I felt sorry for Steve Hill. He was working so hard to get something to happen, prompting the people, telling them what great things they were going to witness and experience. Any objective person would have been embarrassed for him. But those caught up in the excitement came away thinking they had actually seen unprecedented evidence of God's power.

The second time—and every subsequent time—that I viewed the tape, I felt sorry for the people. This is because, as I was transcribing Hill's message, I was also examining the faces of the people. They were filled with fervent expectation that God was going to do something to or for them. It was obvious that they wanted something to happen, but most were honest enough not to fall down just because it was the thing to do. This was the first such meeting, and they were not preconditioned to know or to expect any particular manifestation. Most just stood in place or swayed just a bit as Hill touched them.

Subsequently, however, those attending the Pensacola meetings, and meetings

held under the auspices of the Pensacola Revival, do know what to expect when they attend. And they are not all the same people who were in attendance on Father's Day. That day the regular congregation was in attendance. Many in that congregation have left as a result of the direction Brownsville A/G has taken, although that is not generally publicized. Now, for the most part, the people attending are from out of town and even from abroad. They come seeking an experience, and they go down in droves. They go to the meetings with the expressed desire to get the impartation.

Preconditioned by the publicity, placed in an altered state of consciousness through the playing of carefully programmed music, standing with heads tilted back and eyes closed, bodies tensed with expectation, it doesn't take much effort for them to fall.

Where Did Impartation Originate?

The actual practice of imparting "Holy Ghost fire" is lost to obscurity. But in the late nineteenth century, Benjamin Hardin Irwin, serving as a traveling evangelist in the Wesleyan Methodist church, began teaching a "third blessing" called "the fire." Wherever he went, he began organizing Fire-Baptized Holiness Associations (FBHA), the first in Iowa. In August, 1898, he organized an international FBHA in Anderson, South Carolina, with regional associations in eight states and two Canadian provinces.

Irwin's teachings included a strict holiness code as well as adherence to the Old Testament dietary laws. He also encouraged his followers to seek further experiences of what he called the baptisms of dynamite, lyddite and oxidite. The mainstream of the Holiness movement condemned his teachings as "third blessing heresy."

In 1900 Irwin fell from leadership after confessing to "open and gross sin," after which leadership passed on to his young assistant, Joseph H. King.

Around 1902, under the leadership of King, the word "Association" was dropped in favor of the word "Church". Thus, the FBHA became the FBHC—the Fire Baptized Holiness Church. In 1907 the church accepted Pentecostalism and became one of the first denominations to officially teach the "initial evidence" theory of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In 1911 the major stream of the movement merged with the Pentecostal Holiness Church (PHC) in Falcon, North Carolina, to form the present PHC.³⁴

The Fire-Baptized teaching was further refined by Franklin Hall, an independent “healing evangelist.” Hall taught a “body-felt salvation” through the application of the fire baptism.³⁵ This, he said, would ultimately lead the believer into immortalization. His disciplines around fasting and open-eyed prayer as a means to achieve body-felt salvation, the impartation of fire baptism through the laying on of hands, and other extremes, brought condemnation by evangelical leaders.

Hall, though largely unknown among today’s Pentecostals, was responsible for introducing many teachings into the Pentecostal elements that launched the Latter Rain Movement and the Manifested Sons of God in the 40s and 50s.

In the fall of 1946, Hall established a “major fasting and prayer daily revival center” in San Diego, California. He claimed more than one thousand converts in the first year of the center’s existence. Alleged appearances of the Holy Ghost in fire and smoke were also claimed:

Once or twice the Fire Department was briefed by folk seeing the Holy Smoke and Fire through the windows upstairs. They came running up the steps with the hoses to put out the fire. Some of the firemen, seeing that it was not a natural fire, sat down in the large revival center hall and worshipped the Lord getting saved.³⁶

In 1946, Hall wrote his book, *Atomic Power With God Through Fasting and Prayer*, which was to have a significant impact upon both Pentecostalism and the neo-Pentecostalism that was just emerging. Gordon Lindsay’s publication, *Voice of Healing*, helped spread Hall’s fasting message, as did Thomas and Evelyn Wyatt’s worldwide radio broadcasts.

Hall’s newsletter, *Miracle Word*, tells of how well-known preachers of his day received his message:

Rev. Walter Frederick, former Assembly superintendent in Canada, sent Brother Hall’s literature to every Pentecostal preacher in Canada....A few of the others (not too well-known then) ministers who had major fasting experiences by our writings in the 1946, 1947 to 1950 fasting era and who also became famous are:

Wm. Freeman, Gordon Lindsay, A.A. Allen, O.L. Jagers, Gayle Jackson, Oral Roberts, David Nunn, Wm. Branham, W.V. Grant, Wm. Hagen, Dale Hanson, [and] Tommy Hicks.³⁷

Although Hall’s teachings on fasting and prayer were the basis for his renown among Pentecostals of that day, his teachings on body-felt salvation were to be-

come the focal point of his work. He claims to have experienced body-felt salvation in the early to mid-fifties:

BODY-FELT SALVATION! I know what it is. I have possessed this experience upon my body for fourteen years. It is the miracle of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the body. Your body is then saved. It is just as great an experience as the heart-felt salvation because the body is a part of one’s self. It has even greater feeling than the inner salvation, especially when one only has the inner salvation without the body-felt salvation. It is just wonderful and beyond words to describe to one. Even though I would attempt to describe it, the average individual would hardly believe it. Most saints without it are too naked, unclothed and carnal to accept it, even when they hear about it.

Body-felt salvation has revolutionized my physical body. I get sick no more. There simply are no more headaches. If I should slam the door on my hand or foot it does not hurt or harm me. I have no more accidents to my body. I have no colds, fevers or sickness any more and have not had since getting the miracle upon my body. This is more than perfect health or even divine health. My body has been saved from the root Adamic sickness that all are born with.³⁸

Like all the other “prophets” of God who claimed immortality, Hall, too, has gone the way of all flesh. And in his last years he did suffer infirmity in his body. Yet the body-felt salvation, said Hall, is the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Body of Christ, which would result in perfection and immortality as part of the “latter rain”:

There is good news concerning the fullness [sic] of a complete and perfect work of salvation that is coming about in the last days, yes, these very last days that we are living in. These truths thus presented by all of the prophets. There is the former rain and there is the latter rain. It will be complete and full. It will be in such abundance that it will be **POURED OUT UPON (UPON, UPON, UPON, MIND YOU) ALL FLESH** (Acts 2:17 and Joel 2)....

...The abundance of this supernatural rain of glory is an intensive concentration of the latter rain of not only the out-pouring of His Spirit to come inwardly but also to come upon us outwardly, just exactly in the same manner sometimes even greater than it came about on the day of Pentecost. (Emphasis Hall’s)³⁹

Notice that Hall misapplied the same Scriptures that James K. Bridges misapplied in justifying the “latter rain” out-

pouring at Brownsville A/G. This has commonly been done by latter-rain proponents since the 1940s. Notice, also, that Hall predicted this would be a new, greater outpouring than that of Pentecost, just as is claimed by the Pensacola Revivalists.

According to Hall, the body-felt salvation is even greater than the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues:

The deeper fullness of complete baptism, which is far beyond the speaking in tongues, has been almost completely rejected by the church today. In so doing, the present day church has rejected the Holy Spirit which brings the “**NOW GLORIFIED CLOUD OF FIRE BODY OF CHRIST**” to them. (Emphasis Hall’s)⁴⁰

...The author speaks in tongues a lot. However, it is the Cloven tongues from God’s glory, healing firecloud, that is going to actually bring about the very perfection needed to cause the tongues to cease! Interesting news, we believe, to all. Why? For the simple reason to everyone that is in process of obtaining the fundamental Body-Felt salvation—so likewise is in the process of perfection coming about.⁴¹

We see that Hall called perfection a process, meaning that we can become perfected—sinless—while in the flesh before the Lord’s return. But Scripture tells us that our translation to perfection will not take place before the dead in Christ are raised first, and that, only at the coming of Jesus to receive His saints:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (I Thessalonians 4:15-18)

Hall taught that body-felt salvation is a process that will make the believer immortal, ready to subdue the earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron:

Our Lord is looking for a group of perfect people. He is looking for a people who will receive and accept all of His fullness. Those who will recognize all of His atonement and be filled with not only the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the inner man, but who will also have His

“clothing of power” upon their bodies. When his new creation comes into the fruit bearing experiences of John 15:1-8 and of Ephesians 4:12-16, they will be ready and able to “rule the nations with a rod of iron,” as Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; tells us they will.⁴²

Hall calls the perfected saints the man-child of Revelation 12:5 who will destroy God’s enemies:

The man-child company will have dominion of this planet first. Those who possess a house may decide who shall occupy it. In the same manner, as a group from the church take up their authority and rulership of the planet that God gave them, they will likewise be able to choose whom they will, to occupy it. Of course, the wicked who will not accept Jesus must have a showdown. This great showdown is whether or not they will accept the Gospel of the kingdom. If not, it will be a witness against them, by even bringing about their own destruction.

The man-child (small portion from the church) will have complete authority over the elements. The earth will be subdued by these overcomers. (Rev. 2:26, 27.) These are the same as the man-child of Rev. 12:5, the perfect man of Eph. 4, the group of “much bearing fruit” saints of John 15:1-18, who understand how to abide perfectly and completely in Christ, having the faith words of the Lord on their lips to execute John 15:7; they are also the same group that is described in Daniel, second chapter, verse thirty-four, as the smiting “STONE”. These are the same identical group, because the stone smites the nations. (Emphasis Hall’s)⁴³

What Hall has done is take the authority of Jesus and the resurrected saints, as well as the prophecy regarding Jesus’ kingdom as the mountain of Daniel 2, and applied them to present-day saints who will become perfected, sinless and immortal while in their present flesh, and before Jesus comes again.

Whether it was Hall’s influence upon men like William Branham and other pioneers of the Latter Rain Movement, or their influence upon him, is unclear. What is known is that this theory evolved into Manifested Sons of God theology which taught immortalization through the perfection of the saints—a teaching that wreaked havoc in the churches during the 40s and 50s.

Important and relevant to this study is the method by which the saints would achieve perfection. According to Hall the method of receiving the body-felt salvation is through the impartation of the “fire baptism” through the laying on of hands. Hall’s writings explain:

As the Holy Ghost Fire comes about by IMPARTATION FAITH, so likewise will the Holy Ghost LIQUID STREAMS OF LIQUID LIGHT of LIFE SUBSTANCE come forth, along with other Bible and FAITH factors. The Saints will begin not only feeling the Fire but also will “Arise and Shine.”

Just as the sweet smelling, supernatural fragrance from Jesus’ Body comes about through impartation from anointed teachers and prophets of God, (also by FASTING-FAITH) so does the supernatural STREAMS of LIQUID LIFE BLOOD from Jesus’ Body come about. This may come about by impartation FAITH from one anointed brother or sister to another. We will literally fulfill the saying of Jesus in John 6 Ch. We will literally eat His Flesh and Drink His Blood. We will drink from the liquid living streams of liquid LIGHT BLOOD.⁴⁴ (Emphasis Hall’s)

To literally eat Jesus’ flesh and blood, Hall said, would bring about “Body-felt Salvation” through “the power of Transubstantiation.”⁴⁵

Hall’s unintelligible rantings were the product of blending biblical truths with esoteric, occult philosophy. He believed Edgar Cayce to be a prophet and gave credence to his sayings. He believed that the new age of Aquarius would usher in an era of great revelations and power from God. He taught that prayer without fasting was ineffectual—that pagans who fast will have their prayers answered by the Great Spirit, while believers who did not fast would not have their prayers answered. He believed and taught the validity of astrology, UFO’s, and new spiritual revelations beyond Scripture.⁴⁶

Soon great things will be in the making for the saints that have the progressed mind; greater truths than she has ever known will be received. Truth and revelation that come about by fasting and prayer, will bring about a new kind of revival that will not be recognized by the average or present kind of sleeping church. We are on the threshold of this new revival now.⁴⁷

Hall claimed that God gave him the new revelation of impartation of Holy Ghost fire after Hall had fasted and prayed for a time:

When the author received this revelation, he was able to increase his deliverance more than two hundred percent, by the power of Jesus Christ. When the Lord graciously gave to him the gift of imparting the Holy Ghost fire into people’s bodies, through fasting and prayer, four hundred percent more folk received it when they looked up with their eyes

open, in Jesus’ dear name, than those who shut their eyes!⁴⁸

GOD HAS SHOWN US BY REVELATION THAT THIS MESSAGE THOUGH IT HAS A SMALL BEGINNING, LIKE A SMALL FLAME OF FIRE AT FIRST, WILL GROW AND SPREAD. (Emphasis Hall’s)⁴⁹

Except for some modifications, Hall’s “prophecy” has proven true. The impartation, though dying out after the Latter Rain Movement waned, is coming back through the Toronto Blessing and the Pensacola Revival.

Reading Hall’s account of impartation of Holy Ghost fire, and knowing the impact this had on Pentecostalism a half century ago, we can understand why today’s leadership of the Assemblies of God is attempting to discourage the Pensacola leadership from using the term “impartation.” This is where it originated, and it precisely describes the methodology of the Pensacola impartation.

I have said that impartation prayer is not really prayer, but a commanding of fire upon the person being touched by the “anointed” man of God. This, too, reflects Hall’s teaching on the ability to command fire upon those touched. Describing how a skeptic was converted after having allowed Hall to lay hands on him, Hall states:

As Dr. Jumper stood before me, I commanded the Holy Ghost fire to descend and come all over him. The cloven tongues wrap around clothing did come upon nearly every part of Brother Jumper’s body. He testified to it being hot upon his physical flesh.⁵⁰

...It requires fasting and prayer to operate the Holy Ghost.⁵¹

Can men command God? Can we “operate the Holy Ghost”?

Obviously not. Yet, in spite of the Pensacola leaders’ insistence that the impartation words are prayer in the true sense, the commanding of God to work is what is being practiced at the Pensacola Revival. The command words, “Fire! Fire! More! More!” are all that is needed for Holy Spirit fire to be imparted. This was Hall’s method as well. He states that it wasn’t necessary to pray anything more than the command word:

I thank God for the speaking of FAITH WORDS that work. In some instances, all that I did in Jesus’ name was just to speak the commanding word and Jesus Christ fell all over people, including sinners.⁵²

Similarly, the Pensacola Revival prayer teams are told not to pray for spe-

cific needs, but to only speak words in this fashion. Coincidence? Or did someone infected by Hall and/or the Latter Rain Movement infect them?

The Brownsville A/G leadership say they do not believe in Manifested Sons of God theology. They claim to hold to traditional pre-millennial eschatology. But there are just too many parallels between Franklin Hall's teachings and practice of impartation and that of the Pensacola Revival for it to be mere coincidence. These things came before Pensacola.

As evidence of impartation being of God, the Pensacola Revivalists point to what they call the "fruit" of these things—visions, changed lives, healings, deliverance from drugs and alcohol. Franklin Hall had the same testimonies which he called the fruit that proved the validity of his work. For brevity's sake I'll mention only a few:

Visions

As you came to minister, and to command the Holy Ghost Fire to come upon our bodies, I, too, came up and received this wonderful protective covering on most of my body....As I learned to look up with opened eyes, after many hours of worshiping the Lord, and a little later in the meetings, there appeared unto me the yellow or golden cloud of fire above the audience. When, by faith, you had folk to stand up to receive the white raiment garments of fire, I saw the beautiful long, triangular, white wrap around garments of the cloven tongues like as of fire, come right down and set upon the organs of believers that were ripe to receive them. (Rev. Alvin Weeks, Atlanta, Georgia)⁵³

According to Hall, there were many such testimonies of "heavenly visions."

Changed Lives

The joy of the Lord enervated my whole being as I sought Him in a deeper fulness [sic]. I was hungry for more than I had received up to the present time. He rewarded me. The Baptism of Holy Ghost and fire came in tangible form to my body. I had already had Him in my soul. I discovered this Holy Ghost substance to be the tangible substance from the very body of our PRECIOUS LORD JESUS CHRIST. (Esther Devries, Colorado Springs, Colorado.)⁵⁴

I was so hungry for deeper spiritual things of the Lord. So many of the churches offered little or nothing more than they had had years ago [the same claim the Pensacola Revivalists use to distinguish their ministry]. Our prayer group was delighted when you came to our area and brought to us deeper understanding on the Holy Ghost and fire. (Sister Peggy Barlow, Toronto, Ontario)⁵⁵

Healings

In a command of faith Brother Hall gave to me for the purpose of bringing upon my body the Holy Ghost healing fire, the blessing came to me like an electric shock. This was on Monday night. Tuesday morning I felt the divine heat in my feet, lungs and lower back. It was something like sitting in the sun, only this was God's sunshine. It felt warm at first then the healing substance just began to penetrate clear through. You can feel the heat as it goes deeper inside your body.

One time I felt the healing fire inside of me warming me right through to the outside. The pain in my heart that was hurting me, quit, and the Holy Ghost fire kept me well and strong. My husband and I also felt the healing heat in our bodies in a deeper manner after every sermon that Brother Hall preached. We find that it not only heals when needed, but also it prevents further sickness from getting to you.

Some may think the hitting on the wall three times or doing some other faith thing that Brother Hall tells you to do foolish, but Jesus also had folk do seemingly foolish things to release their faith. (Brother & Sister Clarence Warren, Colorado Springs, Colorado)⁵⁶

In addition, there were testimonies of deliverance from demons, deliverance from drugs and alcohol, the ability to sustain life in the midst of fire when all around were being burned to a crisp.

Hall relates:

The warm healing Substance of Life radiates into all directions. Many testify: "Something unusual about that person." "I feel something wonderful when around him or her." "I do not hurt anymore." "I see the glory of Christ round about him." "It is heaven to be around that person." "The power of God on him (or her) just seems to lift me out of my worries and troubles." "I can feel something, but I do not know what it is." "I would like to have the experience they have etc." "I have a new love for everyone. I can love my enemies now."⁵⁷

Since this form of indiscriminate laying on of hands is not found in God's Word, it would be reasonable to judge it as an error. This doesn't mean that individual lives may not be bettered by it, but such good results are also realized through false religious systems and human potential teachings.

Of course, it may be argued that what Hall did was a counterfeit of the genuine; the genuine is what is manifested at Pensacola. This seems reasonable except for four things:

First, Hall invented the impartation of Holy Ghost fire; it didn't come from Scripture. According to Hall, it was a new revelation from God.

Second, prior to Hall there was no genuine for him to counterfeit. Both Hall's and Pensacola's impartations are extrabiblical and come in Jesus' name. Since there is no biblical precedent for either, and both are identical in practice and in results, they can be classified as the same thing.

Third, one cannot teach others how to impart the Holy Spirit, as Hall did in his day, and as the Pensacola leaders do today.

Fourth—and most important—the very concept of imparting Holy Ghost fire is based on an erroneous understanding of John the Baptist's words in Matthew 3:7-12:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

The fire baptism, it is said, is the full and complete baptism in the Holy Ghost which purifies the soul. But to whom was John the Baptist speaking, and what did he mean by the baptism of fire?

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matthew 3:7-12)

Luke 3:16 tells us that he spoke these words to all the people. In context they mean that there are two baptisms: the baptism in the Holy Spirit for those who believe in Christ, and the baptism of fire for those who reject Christ. The only instance where fire is said to be for purification is I Peter 1:7:

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

But, again, what is the context? Peter is telling us that the trials and tribulations of life that we endure purify our faith as fire purifies gold:

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:7-9)

It is our faith that is purified, not our bodies or spirits. Our spirits are purified by the blood of Christ, not by impartation. And our bodies will remain sinful until we die or are changed at the return of Jesus.

The impartation is not a trial or a tribulation of life. In its origins it was an attempt to apply a quick fix to one's sinfulness that would result in perfection and immortalization. Although the Pensacola leadership might not realize this, or would deny that they believe in such a thing, they have been touched by others who have been touched by others who, somewhere down the line, do believe this. We see how subtly a deception may be introduced into the Body of Christ through ignorance and misplaced zeal.

If God is touching people while under the impartation, it is because of the people's faith in Him, not because of the ritual itself. The Lord has proven Himself faithful to His people who, in spite of their ignorance in approaching Him through ecclesiastical and liturgical systems, exercise their faith according to as much light as those systems have allowed to be conveyed.

Problem #5 - Latter Rain Teaching

There are many aspects of the Latter Rain Movement that are manifesting themselves anew at Pensacola through subjective experiences and misapplied Scripture. One is the belief that this is the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Since the days of the Latter Rain Movement, many other movements have laid claim to these Scriptures. Earl Paulk and the Kingdom Now proponents lay claim to it; the Kansas City "prophets" lay claim to it; the Toronto Blessing lays claim to it. Now the Pensacola Revival lays claim to it. But the fact is that this prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 2:16-21:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

What Joel was prophesying was the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was to continue from the day of Pentecost after Jesus' Resurrection until the day He returns, at which time the other aspects of the prophecy will fulfill it in its entirety.

Problem #6 - Do Not Judge

Another problem is the insistence that the manifestations not be tested or "controlled," but that they be accepted based on the anecdotal "evidence" of changed lives. To insist that others not test our teachings and practices is contrary to God's Word. And it doesn't matter how many positive reports we may be able to engender.

To accuse of not wanting revival those who do not go along with subjective experiences, or who wish to test

these manifestations—no matter how many testimonies the Pensacola leaders can produce to support these experiences—is an intrusion upon the individual believer's freedom.

This is not to accuse the Pensacola leaders of evil intentions; it is to demonstrate the failure to apply God's Word as the final authority for all doctrine and practice in their ministries.

Nor is it stated with malice or lack of sensitivity to these men's love of the Lord. It is merely to show how zeal for Christ can sometimes manifest itself in aberrant ways, even by the most devoted believers. We must all guard our hearts lest we fall into the same trap.

In spite of differences on both sides of the issue, we must look at the Pensacola Revival from as objective a standpoint as possible, the Word of God being the basis for that objectivity.

I realize that this does not set well with the leaders who tell us not to try to analyze these things, but just "get in the River," or with those who tell us that we should not try to understand it. But we are not speaking of analyzing from the standpoint of human reason or religious presuppositions. Our analysis must be based upon the inerrant Word of God. Such analysis is not only important, it is commanded by God's Word:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

Quench not the Spirit.

Despise not prophesyings.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

While we do not wish to quench the Spirit, we must also prove all things. And the only way to prove all things is to test all things by God's Word. To not test by God's Word is to truly quench the Spirit, for the Spirit of God and the Word of God are always in complete agreement.

One flaw is the admonition to "leave the scrutiny to someone else," as Hal Donaldson, editor of Pentecostal Evangel, said. Just as with Toronto, the Pensacola advocates tell us not to judge or analyze lest we miss the move of God. This is the first defense of a false teacher. It should be a caution not to follow experiences, but to follow Christ. And again, to follow Christ is to obey His sayings:

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. (Luke 4:4)

And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it. (Luke 8:21)

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Of course, there are those who say that we can't judge if we haven't been there; the atmosphere cannot be conveyed on video tapes. So are we to believe that only those who attend can judge—especially when they go seeking the experience? Everyone else is to keep mute?

Such a “mindless-set” doesn't allow for the Holy Spirit to give discernment based on God's Word as the measuring rod for truth. Actually, it is those caught up in the excitement who are least able to discern the truth—especially when they are told not to question, not to try to analyze, but to just “get in the River.”

God will not act contrary to His Word, or use experiences not supported by His Word as proof of His activity. Nor will He require that we adopt them in order to be in conformity with His will. What one person experiences may be what God is doing for him, but unless it is commanded by God's Word, we should not be told that we are missing God if we don't join in or accept it for ourselves. Otherwise God would be the author of confusion. His Word is the final authority on all doctrine and practice.

Problem #7 - Curses/False Prophecies

There is a serious problem that has developed both at Brownsville A/G and at churches that have been touched by their prayer teams. That problem is the penchant to curse, or at least ridicule, those who do not get involved in the impartation of Holy Ghost fire. The most visible example has been John Kilpatrick's “prophecy” against Hank Hanegraaff, president of Christian Research Institute (CRI).

In April, 1997, Hanegraaff, guesting on CNN's Larry King Live, made a statement that the Brownsville leadership took as comparing them with the Heaven's Gate cult. Alarmed, Kilpatrick responded with a warning that Hanegraaff must repent and stop speaking against the Revival or God would bring him down within 90 days—by July 4 at the latest. In fact, Kilpatrick, on April 6, 1997, stated clearly that he was speaking prophetically:

I want to say something this morning to Hank Hanegraaff... If you want to keep any kind of a semblance of a ministry you better back off from this revival and what God is doing. You better back off, because I am going to prophesy to you that if you don't, and you continue to put your tongue in your mouth on this move of God, within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down. I said within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down. And I speak that as a man of God. I don't speak that out of vengeance, I don't speak it out of selfishness, and I don't speak it out of a hurt feeling, because my feelings are not hurt. I feel as normal today as I've ever felt. I don't have a chip on my shoulder, I don't have an ax to grind, but this is a move of God and you better leave it alone.

And I want to tell you something else: if you don't want your head to start shaking—you make fun of someone in the choir shaking—come here a minute, girl. Come down here a minute. Hurry up. Hurry up. If you don't want your head to do like this, you better lay your mouth off of her.

I want to close by giving ten proclamations about how things are going to be. Mr. Hanegraaff, and all other devils, listen up... I'm making a proclamation. I'm speaking this not just to you, friends, to impress you, but I'm saying this as a man of God from behind this holy desk in this holy environment of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I'm saying this in the ears of God: Father, let some heathen, let some devil-possessed person load up a truck full of explosives or put a bomb in a bag. Let 'em do it. Father, I say in Your ears, You're great. You sent angels to take the wheels off the chariots in the Bible. You told men to blow a trumpet and walls fell down on the ground as the people shouted. Lord, there's so much glory and praise in this place that even if a bomb is brought on this campus, I make a proclamation, Lord, it shall never, ever go off, in the Name of Jesus.⁵⁸

Mike Brown states that, previous to the CNN show, Hanegraaff had been engaged in dialog with Brown, and had promised to stop attacking Brownsville A/G. In a taped interview, Brown stated:

It was after the Larry King Live statement—this was after his apologies that I conveyed to pastor, and after him telling me, “You'll see a difference in tone,” and so on—that pastor felt moved on to say, “If he keeps speaking out against this, and doesn't learn to put his tongue in his mouth, the Holy Ghost will bring him down in ninety days.”

Pastor spoke that, and there is a time of judgment. And even though Hank's done a wonderful amount of

good in many lives through exposing error in different ways, and helping Worldwide Church of God come into mainstream, and exposing junk, he's also slandering what God is doing in many ways—being divisive and hurting people. And I believe that was a genuine warning.⁵⁹

As the day of reckoning drew near, Kilpatrick sent Hanegraaff an apology and issued it over the Internet:

Dear Hank,

I called your office yesterday (6/17/97) at 12:30 Pacific Time. I talked with your secretary Lisa and wanted to speak with you personally. When Lisa asked what the purpose of my call was, I told her I wanted to apologize to you personally. She relayed the message to you and she got back with me and said you'd return my call last evening or today A.M. It's now been more than 24 hours since I made contact, so I want to send this communiqué.

Hank, I do sincerely humble myself and ask your forgiveness for unchristlike behavior. I repent before Jesus and I've asked Him to forgive me. I pray you will forgive me and I also ask the Body of Christ to forgive me. I was wrong.

I take full responsibility for my words and behavior. The statements I made in April were made in an inflammatory way against you and CRI. They were spoken during a message I was bringing to my congregation entitled “God's Ears.” I was emphasizing how God said that all that Israel had said in His ears he would do to them. It was taken from Numbers chapter 14, especially verse 28.

You had just appeared on Larry King Live that Friday night before and had made reference to a church in Pensacola and it was in the context of a discussion about cults and especially the Heaven's Gate cult in California where scores of people had just committed suicide [and] with our nation feeling such disgust and I myself feeling nauseated with such deception, that well-meaning people were so deceived that they took their own lives to meet up with a space ship.

When I heard our church linked with such cultic deception, it caused me to feel anger and indignation. It's much like a mother dog when her puppies are fooled with. She bites. I bit you and it wasn't right. I should not have responded to the criticism. But most of all I felt indignation and anger and it was not appropriate to link my negative feelings with a sermon. I called you (and by implication others) a devil. That was wrong. I said, “Let Hank Hanegraaff and all the other devils, etc.” That was wrong of me. I ask your forgiveness.

When I said, "I'm going to prophesy as a man of God that the Lord bring you down in 90 days," I was not speaking that as a prophet but as a shepherd putting something in the ears of God. I did not say, "Thus saith the Lord" it was a "Thus saith John Kilpatrick," putting these words into God's ears in the context of the message I was bringing. Let me reemphasize again that was me speaking.

I don't want to be a "son of thunder" and have Jesus turn to me and say, "You don't know what spirit you are of." I had a wrong spirit. I was a son of thunder. That was wrong.

I know my congregation. I've pastored Brownsville Assembly of God for the last fifteen and a half years, through thick and thin. I have buried their dead, married their living, cried with them, laughed with them, dedicated their babies, and in April I got in the flesh and lashed out at you.

I want to emphasize also that I did not wish you any harm personally. I was talking about your ministry, I was saying, "God bring down your platform for crying out and associating us with a cult." I did not nor do I wish you any harm. I ask your forgiveness if you thought I meant any harm to you personally. Honestly, before the Lord, I had your platform in mind, not the person Hank Hanegraaff.

This is by no means to be interpreted as an attempt to wiggle out of prophecy. I would like to grant you the right to continue to count down the days and continue to comment about the 90 days. It's ammunition that I gave you in April. I only want you to know it was me speaking that and not a "thus saith the Lord."...

Finally, I would like to ask the Body of Christ to forgive me for unnecessarily polarizing us by attacking Hank. I realize I attacked a man that is beloved by his followers and peers. I ask you to forgive me. I also know the Body of Christ has had to endure this kind of stuff for years and it has turned off many and hurt the cause of Christ. Now I have been guilty of doing what has hurt us all through the years.

What's going on at the Brownsville Revival is about holiness and repentance. Those themes are the most prevalent characteristics of this visitation of the Holy Spirit. Every revival brings to the surface impurities. It has brought impurities in my life to the surface and it's ugly to have to deal with them. In keeping with the spirit of this revival I want to lead the way with public repentance.

Even though there is a revival going on here of great magnitude that is touching the world, it is being pastored and led by human beings that are flawed. I guess that's the way its' always been, and that's the way it will always be. We strive to demonstrate integrity, impec-

able character, and dignity. Those are the ideals. Yet this treasure is in earthen vessels.

This communique and public statement of repentance has been entirely my own doing. I have not been instructed or contrained to do this. I am accountable to the leadership of my church and to the Assemblies of God, whom I love and respect, but this statement has been my own doing. I have been wrestling with this for some weeks and finally pinned my pride to the mat. I hope this brings healing and relief to the Body of Christ.⁶⁰

Was Kilpatrick copping out? Only he and the Lord know for sure. Regardless of what he says, his words carried the weight of prophecy. But when a man repents, asks for forgiveness, and does all he can to correct the situation, he should be given grace. Hanegraaff seems to have followed this approach in a statement issued on July 7, 1997. According to Hanegraaff, he and Kilpatrick spoke on June 23, and Kilpatrick made the following concessions:

- Apologized for calling Hanegraaff a "devil";
- Acknowledged that he had deceived followers by claiming that his prophecy was a word the Lord had given him;
- Confessed that what he had claimed to be a direct communication from God was in reality a fabrication;
- Acknowledged that he had been speaking in anger and "in the flesh" rather than from God;
- Agreed that the context of his April 6th message unmistakably demonstrated that his words were prophetic in nature;
- Agreed that at least some of the bizarre behavior at Pensacola was human and even demonic in origin;
- Acknowledged that he had mischaracterized Hanegraaff's statements about Pensacola made during Hanegraaff's appearance on Larry King Live;
- Acknowledged that Hanegraaff had not made fun of the lady in his choir who for one and a half years has been shaking her head wildly from side to side each time she comes into Brownsville A/G church;
- Did not apologize for prophesying that Hanegraaff's head would start shaking like hers, but promised that he would "try to get her some help."

Hanegraaff has accepted Kilpatrick's apology, but views it as damage control. In reality, what Kilpatrick said was tantamount to a false prophecy.

Now, before we judge Kilpatrick as purposefully proclaiming false prophecy, we must realize that there is a penchant in some people to receive mental impressions as the voice of God. How often people say, "the Lord spoke to me," when all they heard was the desire of their own heart. This is not something to be laid at the Pensacola Revival's feet alone. It is endemic to Pentecostalism and illustrates the danger of relying on subjective feelings for establishing what is truth.

However, if the mental impressions are the desires of their own hearts misinterpreted as the voice of God, this is no less serious. It reflects an attitude of hatred and unrighteous anger to desire that harm come to a brother in Christ. It is contrary to God's command that we love even our enemies, and pray for them.

Further, such a widespread false prophecy should cause Kilpatrick to consider seriously if his ministry is of God. Anyone who is so careless as to publicly proclaim such a false prophecy, while open to forgiveness upon genuine repentance, should leave active leadership in the Body of Christ. He should submit himself to godly men for discipline and a time of restoration to prove his worthiness. This, Kilpatrick has not done. Nor have the Brownsville A/G leadership, or the national leadership of the Assemblies of God required it of him.

What has developed is not about this case only. We have heard from many who have been subjected to warnings that if they say anything negative about the Revival, they will suffer dire consequences. They are warned that their marriages will fail, they will be stricken in their health and even die. They are shunned and spoken against. This does not occur only at Brownsville A/G, but at other churches that have been touched by the Revival.

These are brethren who recognize the same problems related here, but are shut out from being heard. There is much wounding of the Body of Christ occurring. If the leadership of the Pensacola Revival wish to present the "fruit" of good experiences as the litmus for God's anointing upon what is happening, they must also consider the "fruit" of divisiveness that has manifested itself.

Problem #8 - A False Unity

To the dismay of many, the leaders of the Pensacola Revival seem to be unconcerned with the disunity caused by their insistence that this "new move" be accepted without question. It has become the central aspect of unity for them.

At one Brownsville A/G service featuring General Superintendent Thomas Trask as guest preacher, John Kilpatrick warned of opposition to the movement, after which he stated:

It may be the starting of the last great revival that God sends before the coming of Christ. And if it is, don't be surprised if there are those in churches that say, "We don't want any part of it."

So although we don't want it—we love everybody and we want to keep everybody that we possibly can—but still, we can't have unity at the sake of neglecting revival. There has to be a move of God.⁶¹

Of course, if God is at work there will be opposition from the ungodly, even in the churches. But this doesn't mean that, just because one faces opposition or rejection, he is right. False apostles as well as true apostles face rejection.

Kilpatrick, in the presence of General Superintendent Thomas Trask, made the incredible statement that "there are Assembly of God churches today that don't want revival."⁶²

How does this make those godly pastors and A/G members feel who do not accept the Pensacola Revival as a genuine move of God, or at least do not wish to involve themselves in it based upon its subjective manifestations?

And what about the godly people that do not see this movement as a genuine revival, but as a fleshly attempt to bring about revival?

There are many such who will not go along with this, but will allow those who wish to be involved to do so without shunning them. Are they to be disenfranchised from the Body of Christ by those who insist on total cooperation?

Considering Kilpatrick's statement on unity in the presence of A/G General Superintendent Thomas Trask, who did not offer any contrary opinion, where does that statement leave other A/G pastors and members who do not accept this alleged revival?

Is Trask willing to allow Kilpatrick and the Brownsville A/G to dictate such a policy on unity? His silence would seem to indicate so.

But since when has God commanded that unity be based upon subjective experiences that are not even found in Scripture? Unity in the Spirit is to be based upon two things: love of the brethren and sound doctrine:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (Romans 16:17)

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-15)

There is no other Scriptural basis for unity besides love and sound doctrine. It is those who resist sound doctrine that cause division (Romans 16:17), not those who insist on sound doctrine. Those who insist on unity based on subjective experiences are hindering the freedom in Christ that we are all to enjoy. When we make subjective, extrabiblical, and even unbiblical, experiences the criteria for fellowship we are sinning against Christ and His Body. In the first two years of its existence the Pensacola Revival has demonstrated a callousness toward those who love the leadership but reject the experiences upon which that leadership demands unity.

And this has nothing to do with wanting or not wanting revival. No true believer would be against true revival. Are all who are critical of the Pensacola Revival evil-minded enemies of God? No—no more so than those who embrace the Revival.

There are many saints whose quiet, humble service and worship is every bit as genuine as that professed by those who follow after the Pensacola Revival.

Problem #9 - Ecumenism

Another flaw evidenced by statements of the movement's protagonists is the idea that God is breaking down denominational barriers.

Pastor Richard Daniels of McCullough Christian Center (formerly McCullough Baptist Church) in Escam-

bia County, Florida, has left the Southern Baptist Convention partly under pressure from other local ministers due to his charismatic leanings.⁶³ Daniels is quoted in the November, 1996 Charisma and Christian Life magazine by Jim DeWitt and J. Lee Grady:

"I don't understand how any denomination can oppose the Pentecostal experience in this day and time—because people from all faiths are being filled," Daniels said. "God is destroying denominational lines. I believe the Southern Baptists are having to face that today. They don't want to, but they're being forced to."⁶⁴

Part of God's plan to test the saints in the last days is to bring about a strong delusion that would deceive even the very elect if possible (Matthew 24:24). That means it must come in the name of Jesus with power. Otherwise such a deception could not occur.

Recent events strongly indicate that part of that delusion will be an ecumenism based on experience rather than on doctrine. And at the heart of the delusion is Satan. Those following the delusion are increasingly preoccupied with breaking down the walls that separate denominations.

Now, it's true that separation of true believers is not God's will, for His Word speaks of the necessity for unity in the Spirit. And nowhere in Scripture is denominationalism allowed for. In fact I Corinthians 12:1-13 condemns "denominationalism":

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

But if denominationalism is not of God, neither are attempts to break down the barriers between denominations.

If this sounds contradictory, allow me to explain.

The move to break down the barriers between denominations is one based on experience, not on adherence to God's Word. Were it based on adherence to God's Word, the denominational leaders would not merely be co-fellowshipping; they would be dissolving the denominations and their clergy-laity structures. Yet they still operate as denominations, still operate under the clergy-laity structure, and still attempt to bring about God's purposes through human effort. That they are beginning to do this in unison does not negate these facts.

The experiential road to “truth” leads to error. And waiting for all inhibitions to be broken down so that she can accept the “separated brethren” back into her fold is the mother of all these harlots, the Roman Catholic Church. As more and more pastors succumb to this deception, they will impact their churches with it. Soon, the lines of distinction drawn by doctrinal purity will become so blurred as to not exist.

DeWitt and Grady recognize the blurring of this distinction in regards to the Pensacola Revival:

As sinners and backslidden Christians find their way to Brownsville’s altar, a growing number of churches throughout the United States are being influenced by the Pensacola Revival, primarily because so many pastors have visited the services and then taken a newfound spiritual zeal home with them. Although the majority of visiting clergy are Pentecostals and charismatics, others from Southern Baptist, Roman Catholic and Episcopal backgrounds have been attracted by the fervor.⁶⁵

Why are so many attracted by experiential fervor rather than by God’s Word? Obviously God’s Word has not broken down denominational barriers for the simple reason that denominations are not the target of God’s affection; individuals are. If that is the case, should we not wonder if the experiences themselves—at least some of them—might be deceptions?

There are already no barriers to unity in the Spirit. I and many brethren I know have enjoyed unity without regard to denominational affiliations. Why, then, is this thought to be something new?

I believe it is because the denominations’ leaders have lagged far behind their constituents in seeking unity without regard to denominational structures. Now they are trying to get their constituents to believe that God is doing a “new thing” when, in fact, it is not new except for them. By doing so, however, they can maintain some degree of control over the real revival that is taking place—the coming out of Babylon’s religious establishment which is decimating the structured churches. This is the true revival that is occurring in obedience to Jesus’ command in II Corinthians 6:17 and Revelation 16:13). This revival is a threat to the established powers of the “clergy” over the “laity.”

The real danger to believers lies in ecumenical unity orchestrated by the priestly class of denominational leaders.

If experience rather than God’s Word is the impetus behind this phenomenon (even though God’s Word is preached through an evangelistic message), then the people ultimately are being led in the wrong direction.

Most people are not going to Pensacola to hear the evangelistic message, because most who attend already claim faith in Christ. The vast majority do not go forward for salvation, but for the impartation. That, and the fact that God’s Word is preached in many fellowships that have not witnessed such fervor, indicates that many are going not for the Word of God, but for the experiences.

As a result of those experiences unity is coming about through the cooperation of denominations—including the Pentecostal denominations—that have historically stood firm for the inviolable Word of God for all doctrine and practice.

This is not to condemn all members or even pastors of these denominations. Many are fighting hard to maintain the purity of Scripture as the only basis for doctrine and practice. Even though others outside of Pentecostalism disagree with these pastors’ particular understanding of certain Scriptures relating to the gifts of the Spirit, these pastors are careful not to allow in their churches unbridled displays of emotion passing themselves off as “a move of the Spirit.” I believe their days within these denominations are limited.

An earmark of false revival is disregard for doctrine and a seeking of unity based on that “revival.” Experiences take precedence over truth, and all are welcomed into the movement as long as they can identify with those experiences.

In his 1995 Father’s Day message, Steve Hill stated that people from traditionally non-Pentecostal backgrounds—even Roman Catholics—are enjoying this revival.⁶⁶

Now, were true revival taking place at Pensacola, people would be led by the Holy Spirit to repent of their false religious beliefs and practices. This isn’t to say they would immediately understand the difference between all their former beliefs and their new-found faith in Christ. But there would be a distinction made and separation from error encouraged by the leadership of that revival.

While there are some reports of unbelievers coming to Christ out of non-Christian religions and cults, there is no evidence that the people who enter into the Pensacola experience separate from “Christian” religious error such as Roman Catholicism.

This should come as no surprise considering the mystical nature of most religious error, including Roman Catholic tradition. The history of visions, apparitions and mystical experiences of Roman Catholicism fit well with the Pensacola Revival, as do the claims of miracles, signs and wonders attributed to the Virgin and other Roman Catholic saints.

Problem #10 - Pilgrimages

There is much the same religious fervor behind the pilgrimages to Pensacola as there is behind the pilgrimages to the Roman Catholic Virgin’s shrines throughout the world. What has taken the charismatic and Pentecostal worlds by storm is akin to the sightings of the “Virgin” among her devotees. Today the “Virgin” may be seen in one city; tomorrow she is found in another city. Her image appears on a tortilla, or on a restroom stall, or on the back of a highway sign. It is incumbent upon her followers to make a pilgrimage to the place she happens to be at a given time in order to receive the spiritual refreshing she may impart to them. And the testimonies of changed lives, physical healings, a feeling of closeness to God, and sundry other “miracles” arising from pilgrimages to the Virgin’s shrines, are identical to those coming out of Toronto and Pensacola. Experiences with “God” are the most deceptive kind. The only way to know if they are of God is if they are consistent with His Word. To judge otherwise is to leave oneself open to subjective, irresponsible theories based on feelings.

Today’s Pentecostals and charismatics make their pilgrimages to seek the Holy Spirit wherever He may be found at any given time. Yesterday the Holy Spirit was in Toronto; today He is in Pensacola. Unless one gets to where He is, one will miss out on the great move of God.

Yesterday the Holy Spirit was imparted through Rodney Howard-Browne; then He was imparted through John Arnett in Toronto; from there He moved to Sandy Millar at Holy Trinity in Brompton, then to Steve Hill and John Kilpatrick.

The same people who chased after the Holy Spirit in Toronto are chasing after Him in Pensacola. They have made the Holy Spirit a fetish, glorifying Him instead of Jesus.

The Pensacola leadership have said that one need not go to them to receive God’s power. Nor do the leaders have to carry that power elsewhere. Yet what is said is often overridden by what is practiced, and by the feelings of those who

follow. It is also overridden by more forceful statements to the contrary.

The idea that the Holy Spirit is to be found in Pensacola at this particular time has been promoted by the leadership of Brownsville A/G. John Kilpatrick, in the presence of Thomas Trask, stated that he prays “for the Holy Spirit to draw people to Pensacola.”⁶⁷

Trask himself stated, “I’d like to have every Assembly of God pastor spend six weeks here.”⁶⁸

More directly, Steve Hill has warned against people who think they do not have to go to Pensacola for the anointing:

Did you know, friend, there are people that talk about the revival and sway people away from the revival that are going to stand on judgment day—they’re going to stand on judgment day for their blindness. The blind leading the blind! There are people that want to get saved at the Brownsville Revival. They wanted to get saved tonight! But before they got out of their door, some blind guide got ahold of them and said, “You don’t need to go over there; God can touch you right here.”⁶⁹

Well, if they want to get saved, or receive a touch from God, they don’t need to go to Pensacola. To even imply that people must go to Pensacola in order to be saved or to receive the Holy Spirit in a specific fashion is a serious error.

As an ex-Catholic, I find it disconcerting that, while Roman Catholic prelates do not easily endorse claims of miracles and sightings of the Virgin, the Assemblies of God prelates are quick to accept Pensacola as proof of God at work.

Problem #11 - Misstatements

We all want to believe testimonies of God’s blessings. But too often dampers are put on those testimonies when facts are overstated or misstated. An example is the editor for Lamb Light saying that Kilpatrick fell to the floor as Hill prayed for him at the Father’s Day service, and laid there for four hours.

Not true. Hill had his back to Kilpatrick, laying hands on others at the time Kilpatrick went down. Video evidence suggests that Kilpatrick, while backing up, tripped on the lower step of the platform and fell backwards. The lurch of his body did not fit the pattern of normal “slain in the Spirit” falling.

Nor did 1,000 people respond to Hill’s altar call. Eight people went forward for the salvation altar call, and no more than 300 went forward when he asked them to come if they wanted to receive a touch from God.

Yes, there were results at that initial meeting, but they weren’t nearly as pronounced as stated, or as those evidenced in subsequent services.

An area of great overstatement is the claim that the Pensacola Revival is impacting society, and that the crime rate in that area has decreased since the Revival began in 1995. I spoke with police chief Norman Chapman of the Pensacola Police Department. He told me that he didn’t have any data, but it’s possible that the crime rate had gone down because the department had been concentrating on efforts against vice crimes in that area for the past year. He also suggested that the publicity surrounding the church would naturally cut down on drug dealing and prostitution simply because the purveyors of those commodities do not like to be where there is too much attention focused. Still, he couldn’t say for a certainty whether or not crime has increased overall, particularly since the church lies just outside his jurisdiction in the county.

I then called the Escambia County Sheriff’s office and was able to speak with Mr. Michael Morris, the administrative assistant to Sheriff Jim Lowman:

Al Dager: I understand there have been claims that the crime rate in Pensacola has gone down in the last couple of years. Do you have any comments on that?

Michael Morris: Well, it did decrease from about ’92 to ’95, but then it increased last year in ’96.

A.D.: By what percent?

M.M.: The crime rate is based on population. That increased 1.4 percent. Not the population, but the crime rate increased 1.4 percent. You see, the crime rate is based on the population, where the total number of crimes is not. The total number of crimes increased 2.9 percent.

A.D.: Are there any particular crimes that have increased more than others, or decreased more than others?

M.M.: Violent crimes went down between ’95 and ’96 4.3 percent. Property crimes went up 4.7 percent.

A.D.: Is there any reason that might be explained?

M.M.: There are different variables that come into play.

A.D.: In other words, next year one can be up and the other down?

M.M.: That’s correct.

A.D.: You didn’t see any dramatic pattern as far as difference goes between that and previous years, though?

M.M.: Well, in previous years, as I said, from about ’92 to ’95, it did de-

crease every year. But between ’95 and ’96 we have an increase.

A.D.: Very interesting. That’s a whole different story.

M.M.: It contradicts everything they say.

So the fact is that crime in the area was decreasing prior to the Revival, and began to increase after the Revival began! At the same time, the national media have reported that overall crime in the United States has been on the decrease for the past five years! What does this say about the Pensacola Revival? To use their reasoning, it is the cause of crime, not the cause of a reduction in crime.

Of course, that isn’t true, but this is a very sad commentary. The police and sheriff departments are well-aware of the claims made by the Pensacola Revival proponents. This is an embarrassment to the Lord’s Church.

Another area of great overstatement is the claim of documented cases of physical healings. Steve Hill has said that he doesn’t like to overstate things. Yet he has proclaimed often that Pensacola has documented evidence of physical healings. When I attempted to get that documentation from those responsible for compiling testimonies, I was told that there are no documented cases. While a few cases have been reported, the only ones I’ve been able to track were not at Brownsville A/G. And none that I have been able to trace have been documented.

One might question why better results in healing came from churches other than Brownsville A/G, and then by people who either were not even prayed for, or were prayed for by someone other than the Brownsville leadership. Is the Lord making a statement here?

The claim of Steve Hill that he preaches a strong evangelistic message in high schools gave the impression that this is an ongoing thing—that he has an open door into the public schools:

That’s why I share the Gospel all the time and share my testimony, brother, because I relive what it was like to be on drugs. That’s why I go into high schools all the time. They tell me to go in and speak about what God has done in my life. And I go into secular schools and relive what it was like to be consumed with drugs and then be set free.⁷⁰

This certainly sounds as if Hill, at least at one time, was invited into public schools to preach the Gospel. Yet when asked, he admitted that it happened on only a few occasions more than three years ago, and then only because one

principal told him to “go for it.” Otherwise, he confines his testimony to saying he had “a religious experience.”

A disciple of the Lord does not compromise on that issue. It does no good to talk about one’s deliverance from drugs if one cannot or will not insist on giving the Lord Jesus Christ the glory. I hate to use the term “compromise,” but that is exactly what such a policy is.

Certainly an overstatement that consistently applies to the Pensacola Revival is a comparison to the Great Awakening under the preaching of John Wesley. The manifestations attributed to Wesley’s meetings are justified at Toronto and Pensacola because they are said to be the same. Yet while the Toronto and Pensacola leaders claim that these are manifestations of the Holy Spirit, Wesley described them as demonic manifestations.

For example, Steve Beard, editor of Good News, an evangelical magazine for United Methodists headquartered in Wilmore, Kentucky, writing in defense of the manifestations at Toronto and Brownsville, cites Wesley regarding uncontrollable laughter:

Wesley was familiar with the sporadic manifestations of uncontrollable laughter. On May 9, 1740, Wesley writes: “I was a little surprised by some who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist, though it was pain and grief to them.”⁷¹

Wesley attributed to demons many of the bizarre manifestations that accompanied his preaching, and declared that, after the people were prayed for, the manifestations ceased. Granted, Wesley at times was unsure of the origins of some manifestations, and so treaded lightly. But there are no accounts where bizarre manifestations occurred that he ever attributed them to the Holy Spirit. Yet Beard uses Wesley’s accounts in defense of the manifestations at Toronto and Brownsville, which the leaders there attribute to the work of the Holy Spirit. This is also overlooked by the Pensacola leadership.

Another factor overlooked, is that the manifestations in Wesley’s meetings generally came about while he was preaching the Word; there is nothing to suggest that he practiced anything like impartation or Vineyard-type healing techniques.

If the leaders are going to claim Wesley’s anointing and use the manifestations as evidence of that anointing, they must be consistent in recognizing the demonic manifestations for what they are, and not attribute them to the Holy Spirit.

What confusion has reigned as a result of this terrible lack of discernment.

I point out these things to demonstrate how easily the facts can be blown out of proportion, not even necessarily intentionally, resulting in questions of how much can be believed. Every attempt at total honesty in addressing the Lord’s work (or anything perceived as the Lord’s work) is paramount. Anything less is a fraud against the Body of Christ.

I would urge the Pensacola leadership to concentrate on preaching the Word of God. If there is to be a true revival it must come with the preaching of the Word alone. If God manifests Himself through conviction of the heart and people literally fall to the floor under that conviction, well and good. It isn’t necessary to practice an “impartation” learned from a church whose theology is questionable. If demons manifest themselves because of the preaching of the Word, then cast them out; don’t tolerate them for lack of discernment and fear of treading on the Spirit of God.

But if they cannot discern between the Holy Spirit and demonic spirits they should not be leading this thing.

CONCLUSION

The testimonies of changed lives, healed marriages, salvation, overcoming sin, are typical of the examples given by the Pensacola leadership.

It would be foolish to suggest that they all are products of psychosomatic responses, demonic counterfeits and/or emotional delusion. However, it appears as if the Pensacola Revival—whether or not purposefully—operates somewhat on the belief that God will rid people of their sinful desires or will increase their faith through the touch of impartation rather than through any act of willful obedience on their part, other than responding to the altar call in the first place.

This is contrary to Scripture, which exhorts us to resist the temptations that so easily beset us. In time, we may (or may not) be delivered from the temptations and trials, but in either case we remain responsible to obey and to trust God in all things.

But what about the instant deliverance from temptation? Is this not God’s work?

Yes, it may be. But such instant loss of temptation may also be based on an emotional response to the religious fervor surrounding us and, in time, the temptations may come back with even greater force. Just being in a religious atmosphere can cause long-term desire to avoid

overt sin. When the temptation returns to one who thinks he has been miraculously delivered by God, it may lead to discouragement. The person may begin to doubt that God is at work after all, unless he has learned the importance of perseverance in obedience regardless of feelings.

Whether or not God has worked miracles in each of these instances—or even in some of them—is open to speculation. Many lives do seem to be changed for the better. However, the work God does in individual lives is not necessarily an indication that the process through which that work is accomplished originated with Him.

As Paul stated in Philippians 1:15-18:

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

I would not suggest that the Pensacola leadership is preaching Christ out of envy or strife. By all indications they seem to have a genuine love for God and for the people. However, some of the methods used in their ministry are evidence of human flesh at work rather than the Spirit of God, learned from others who are not worthy of their trust.

This does not nullify the truth of God’s Word that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” specifically “about Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

But what if a movement produces good fruit? What if it results in changed lives and even salvation? Surely it must be of God. Does this not apply to the manifestations at Toronto and Pensacola?

A movement may have a perfect message and produce what appears to be good spiritual fruit without being of God. If this seems to contradict Jesus’ words that a bad tree does not produce good fruit, proper understanding of what He spoke should set us straight.

Let us look at His words in their proper context:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:15-20)

Jesus was warning of false prophets. The bad fruit is bad doctrine, not sin or even evil religious works. This is borne out by the verses that immediately follow:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. (Matthew 7:21-25)

These Scriptures tell us that good fruit is not good works; it is not signs and wonders. Good fruit is truth and obedience to God's Word: "these sayings of mine" (sound doctrine).

All of the Scriptures are the sayings of Jesus. Thus, according to Jesus, good fruit is not calling Him "Lord," or performing miracles, signs and wonders. It is obedience to His Word, which does not allow for unbiblical or extrabiblical teachings and practices.

So good fruit must be distinguished from good works. Good works are also performed by God's enemies and by many who think they are serving Him, when, in truth, they are merely acting out of feelings. Deceivers can produce good works as well as signs and wonders. The coming man of sin will perform all sorts of lying signs and wonders. The only way even believers will be able to recognize the deception is by testing the teachings and practices by the Word of God.

When we speak of the importance of "sound doctrine," we are not defining the term as a set of tenets based on a theological system, whether true or not. Sound doctrine is defined as scriptural truth. To separate Jesus or the work of the Holy Spirit from the Scriptures by placing emphasis on unbiblical or even extrabiblical manifestations, is to make

those manifestations equal to Scripture. It is a claim of "new revelation."

The Pensacola leaders will say that they don't believe in new revelation. Yet these experiences, as manifestations of the impartation tenet, do comprise a new revelation. It is understandable how they fell into this trap. Hill himself was looking for an experience when he went to Holy Trinity in Brompton and to Toronto. He was predisposed to believe that such manifestations are evidence of God's Holy Spirit at work. I have no doubt that he genuinely believes that what he has started is a great revival. Kilpatrick no doubt believes the same based on a genuine expectation from his Pentecostal background that such things are really reenactments of the Book of Acts experiences. He, too, was feeling "dry" when his wife came back from Toronto with new-found zeal.

Yes, even Pentecostals can feel dry at times; the difference between how they expect to receive refreshing from God and how other believers expect to receive that refreshing is quite pronounced. Pentecostal fervor may easily be moved to mindless emotional expressions; this doesn't mean that those who succumb to these things lack saving faith in Christ. This doesn't mean they are evil people. Their love for the Lord is as genuine as that of any staunch fundamentalist. They may just be operating in an experiential mode with all good intentions to serve God. And if a Pentecostal does receive something through his animated expressions, who are we to judge him? He is God's servant, and it is before God that he will stand or fall.

In other words, when it comes to spiritual results, the vessel is unimportant and imperfect at best; a truly biblical message, even if accompanied by demonic manifestations and fleshly activity, is still what convicts and converts the heart.

SUMMARY

The many facets of the Pensacola Revival make it necessary to present, in as concise a manner possible, the issues involved.

To the leadership of the Pensacola Revival I would appeal to their sense of respect for Scripture as the only authority for all doctrine and practice, which has been their tradition. Too much emphasis is being placed on the experiences and the positive testimonies, to the point where the negative effects are largely ignored.

On June 25, along with relevant special reports, I sent a 33-page letter to

Steve Hill expressing concern over the problems delineated above. I also sent copies of everything to John Kilpatrick and Mike Brown. This was done in the spirit of love and concern for them personally, and for those whom they reach. The letter concluded as follows:

If the Brownsville leadership will correct themselves on these following points, I believe they will truly witness a genuine touch of the Holy Spirit upon their ministry that will exceed what they have witnessed thus far:

- Preach the Word of God. Do not focus so much attention on the Revival itself;
- Do not practice impartation. If someone falls under the anointing through the preaching of the Word, accept it and rejoice, but do not think that God has instituted some new ritual for imparting these manifestations;
- Be honest about everything. Do not turn a blind eye toward the destructive aspects of what you have been doing. The insistence upon unity based on acceptance of the Revival is contrary to Scripture. Unity must be based on love and sound doctrine;
- Do not overstate your successes and misstate the facts relative to the impact of the Revival. The crime rate has not been affected by the Revival, nor has the Pensacola community;
- Do not speak "evangelistically." Keep an honest account of everything, but do not focus on the results. Focus on preaching the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to use the Word to convict hearts;
- Cut out the theatrics. The Holy Spirit does not need our flesh to accomplish His work;
- Stop ridiculing and pronouncing curses upon those who disagree with you. Not everything they say is wrong. Listen and be teachable. Test all things by the Word of God.
- Make peace with those whom you have alienated. By your insistence that these experiences are of more importance than loving them, you are driving away true brethren in Christ. Remember I Corinthians 13:1-2. Pastor Kilpatrick's overture of reconciliation with Hank Hanegraaff is a good start;
- Stop your deliverance services. These are an affront to God and display not only ignorance of God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, but of the spirit realm. Get out of the charismatic/psychospiritual mindset that you've learned from those outside of your historical Pentecostal tradition. Educate yourselves on these things and learn of their occult roots, so you can maintain proper safeguards;

- Stop justifying bizarre behavior on the basis that it occurred under Wesley, Finney, et al. You attribute this behavior to the Holy Spirit; they attributed it to the devil. You cannot have it both ways;
- Stop allowing the women to lead you in the paths of idolatry and occultism. They may have all good intentions, but they are easily deceived. It is for you men to take a strong hand in resisting the subjective, emotion-based fervor that your wives have led you into. Be men of God; be strong in the Lord and in His Word.

Please, Steve, read the enclosed writings that I have spent long hours in producing. The association you have had with some elements such as the Vineyard, the Toronto Blessing, deliverance, etc. have been detrimental to the spiritual purity of your ministry. I only desire to see that purity refined for your benefit and for the benefit of the brethren in Christ to whom you minister.

Remember the Lord's warning:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

How could the very elect come close to being deceived, Steve? The only answer is that the great deception in the last days would come in the name of Jesus with power. The only reason the very elect will not be deceived is that they will possess the discernment and the humility to recognize the subtle distinctions between the true work of God and the counterfeit. The difference will not be recognizable to the nominal Christian or to those who seek experience over truth.

Finally, Steve:

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (II Timothy 4:2-5)

If you will do this, the Lord will truly bless you and those whose lives you touch.

I would be willing to discuss all this with you, Pastor Kilpatrick, Mike Brown, and anyone else you consider of importance to address these issues. Perhaps a conference call could be arranged. I'd like to tape our session and would be willing to have you tape it or

will send a copy of the tape I make. The reason for this is to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding. I am willing to put myself on the line as well.

Please read the enclosed material and call me as soon as possible.

In Jesus' love,

Al Dager
Editor & Publisher
cc:John Kilpatrick
Mike Brown

After not hearing from Steve Hill or John Kilpatrick for over a month, we went to press. Mike Brown did call me right after receiving his copy. He took umbrage at the suggestion that he had misapplied Scripture in his comparing the impartation with biblical accounts of laying on of hands. He suggested, rather, that I had misapplied Scripture by citing I Timothy 5:22 against their indiscriminate laying on of hands. He stated that I Timothy 5:22 has to do with ordination to ministry, not with healing and impartation of other spiritual gifts. He also said that they are careful to tell the people that laying hands on them won't mean anything if they aren't right with God.

This latter statement is true. However, even if people are right with God, it doesn't mean they should have hands laid on them at just any time they or the pastors want it done. As far as ordination is concerned, I explained to him that ordination is of man. Anointing is of God. And any anointing, whether for an "office" in the church or for blessing, must be done with the leading of the Holy Spirit. I felt that my writing explained this truth sufficiently.

Brown often reminded me that he is a theologian and writes for Zondervan and Word. This, of course, does not impress me. Zondervan and Word have produced some pretty unbiblical stuff. As far as theologians go, there are good ones and bad ones. Besides, I don't see the office of "theologian" mentioned anywhere in Scripture.

Brown was adamant that I could not judge these things if I hadn't gone to Brownsville. I suggested that the hours of video and audio tapes that I had listened to gave an accurate picture of what is transpiring. Besides, I also cite in this writing the positive aspects of what is taking place. I could afford neither the time nor the expenses to go to Pensacola.

Brown generously offered to pay for my air fare and hotel room, telling me how skeptics would be converted after having witnessed things in person.

I promised him I would pray about that and ask others for advice. In the end I declined for three reasons: 1) I did not wish to open the door for compromise by being beholden to anyone about whom I was writing; if I had gone to Pensacola it would have been at my own expense and on my terms; 2) the problem issues would not be changed or resolved by my witnessing anything positive. I already know of and have related the positive aspects of the movement; 3) If God's Word and the exposure of obvious error are not received, what would be the point in my going? God's Word is still the final arbiter of truth and it won't change whether or not I went to Pensacola.

Also, it was the unanimous consensus of my advisors that I not go on Brown's terms or any terms.

I told Brown that I would be willing to publish any reply the leadership cared to make. He told me that he isn't concerned about it; he doesn't know who I am and for all he knows I won't reach more than two people. Besides, Steve Hill and John Kilpatrick would just ask his opinion of what I've written; he would tell them I don't know what I'm talking about, and that will be the end of it.

I confess that, more out of frustration than anger, I lost my composure for a moment and told him that that's fine—he isn't interested in what I have to say; he's made up his mind and so there was no further need to talk—"goodbye."

He responded by implying that I had shown my true colors. Normally I don't go off like that, but I was tired of what I perceived to be a condescending and superior attitude and I told him so. I then apologized for being offended and for offending him. He likewise apologized, and it ended on a cordial note.

And that's where we'll leave this writing. If things change sufficiently, we will inform our readers. In the meantime, please keep us in prayer. As I said in my forward, this has been a killer to deal with. We are so thankful for those who have not forgotten to support us even during this long period of "silence." I almost feel guilty for not producing more in the past few months, because those who support us should be given more. But that is my flesh speaking. A long time ago the Lord impressed me not to set definite deadlines. And without a staff, the best we can do is the best we can do. The Lord's timing is more important than ours. Otherwise we, too, would be offering strange fire. We never want to forget that God is in control. ❖

NOTES

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