

The Brownsville Revival (by Pastor Larry Thomas)

~Other Speakers A-F: Discernment Research Articles:

Part 1: TORONTO REVISITED

Revival broke out at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola' Florida, about 16 months ago and continues to this day. Or so we're told. This "sovereign move" of God is spreading like wild fire through the United States, fulfilling a heretofore unannounced prophecy given to Superchurch builder and mystical teacher David Yonggi Cho.

Scores, if not hundreds, of Assemblies of God churches are being affected by this new move. Pastors from AG churches and many other denominational backgrounds around the country are traveling to Pensacola to receive the blessing, and instruction, in order to bring this "revival" to their own churches.

This phenomenon has been positively reported in Charisma magazine (the best tool I have for tracking the great falling away) and the Pentecostal Evangel, official publication of the Assemblies of God, and several religious television programs, including Praise the Lord on the Trinity Broadcasting Network and the 700 Club. The endorsements by Charisma, TBN, and even the 700 Club are not surprising, given their history of supporting anything and everything in recent religious history. The Evangel's endorsement is not a surprise, considering its reporting and supporting of many new things in the past three years (i.e., Promise Keepers, other ecumenical movements and psychoheresy). I am, however, surprised that so few leaders in the AG who saw countless churches devastated by the "laughing revival" that was imported from Toronto are not at least a little leery about this Pensacola imitation. I'm also surprised that many pastors, AG and otherwise, who recognized the dangers of the Toronto experience, are buying this Americanized, and slightly sanitized, version.

There were, I will admit, many AG pastors who were uneasy with the Toronto thing. But they became more open to it when their superintendent Thomas Trask told them at last year's General Council that "we have always been a people of holy laughter." He also told the gathering that the AG had always accepted "dancing in the Spirit" and being "slain in the Spirit." By the way, none of these experiences has a biblical precedent, but we don't have time to deal with those issues right now. Any further reluctance to accept the new move as from God has been negated now that this phenomenon has an AG church as its home base. It is being widely supported by leadership at the national and state levels as well as by rank-and-file membership.

By the time this issue is in the mail, I will have had a chance to visit the Pensacola church. If I find things different than has been reported to me, then I will correct any misconceptions in the next issue. My observations, at this point, are based on visits to churches that have been influenced by the Brownsville move; I have talked with many pastors who have opposed this latest craze; I have also talked with church members who have had their pastors introduce the Brownsville agenda in their local church. I have read "Feast of Fire", Pastor John Kilpatrick's book about the Brownsville revival, and I have viewed video tapes of the services.

We have read and heard "good" reports coming from Brownsville. They sound similar to those we have heard from Promise Keepers advocates and Toronto adherents. (In fact, sometimes the reports are identical --- word for word. Coincidence?) As we pointed out in our August edition, fruit must be tested not merely admired. Jesus said good fruit can't come from a corrupt tree. We believe, and intend to show, that the "Brownsville revival" has its roots in the Toronto phenomenon and its originator, Rodney Howard-Browne, the self-described "Holy Ghost bartender." In fact, it wouldn't be unreasonable to call the Florida movement the Rodney Howard-Browne Revival.

The manifestations are incredibly similar. The justification for these unbiblical and abnormal phenomena are similarly flawed. The "don't question us" attitude permeates the current move like it did in Toronto and elsewhere. The literature published by the former Vineyard church in Toronto and the AG church in Florida are quite similar. The pilgrimages by "thirsty" pastors to these "rivers" of God's Spirit seem more than just coincidence. Despite efforts by the Brownsville leadership—and even some AG national leadership—to distance themselves from Howard-Browne and Toronto, there is a trail of substantial evidence that clearly shows the connection.

One man recently reported to me at a conference in St. Louis that his pastor and two others had visited Brownsville Assembly and that they reported seeing nothing out of line: no laughing, no falling down, etc. why they didn't, we don't know. But we know that such things are taking place because of other visitors who have talked with us, and the fact that Pastor Kilpatrick defends these manifestations in his book. We will show specifics soon. But I must ask: How can those who resisted the Toronto experience now fall for the same thing that has merely moved south? Is it because it's now an American phenomenon or an AG phenomenon? Have these pastors grown tired of standing for the truth? Are they succumbing to pressures from their peers and

their pews to see something happen? Will they eventually adopt Howard-Browne's perspective: "I'd rather have the devil manifesting than be in a church where nothing is happening."

Leaders of the Pensacola revival have tried to separate themselves from the Toronto experience, but there are some clear links. For example, Kilpatrick states in his book:

"Just weeks before things began at Brownsville Assembly, my wife, Brenda, also had been touched of God after she visited a ministry in Canada. A great renewal of power and joy had fallen on God's people in Canada and I had sent Brenda to go and drink it in. I have to admit I was a little jealous of God's refreshing ... because I was feeling emotionally drained, thirsty for some of the same living water."

The Canadian ministry can only be the former Vineyard Fellowship at the Toronto airport. Nothing else has happened in recent months in Canada that could be referred to here. The evangelist, Steve Hill, also has a connection with Toronto. Again, Kilpatrick gives us some information without directly connecting Hill to Toronto:

"On his way back from Russia, Steve stopped to rest in England. While there a Spirit-filled Anglican vicar, whose church was experiencing a powerful move of God, prayed over him. Steve felt touched and empowered by the Holy Spirit in a new way. His time in England brought great personal renewal for him and he was now ready to watch God move through him. He was excited."

The Anglican minister referred to [Sandy Millar of Holy Trinity Brompton Anglican church] has helped spread the Toronto experience throughout England. A long-time friend of Hill (who disagrees with the Pensacola experience) said that Hill has visited Toronto more than once. Add to this questionable ministry history a Benny Hinn connection and you have all the ingredients for a revival characterised by mysticism and manipulation, histrionics and hype, delusion and deception.

Only those who will refuse to see would deny that there is a connection between Pensacola and Brownsville. The manifestations and teachings are quite similar as well, although the Pensacola versions has, as we said earlier, been sanitized somewhat. But how long can an experience-oriented revival like Pensacola avoid the excesses that troubled the experience-oriented Toronto movement?

To date we have had no reports of an overemphasis on laughter, although it is common and is being defended by the Pensacola leadership as a genuine manifestation of the Spirit and proof of God's blessing. Kilpatrick, in his book, equates the merry heart of Proverbs 17:22 with laughter as did the Vineyard proponents and Howard-Browne. Kilpatrick goes a little further when he says that "greater healing and wholeness comes through holy laughter." I take exception first of all to his describing what I've seen of the laughing phenomena as "holy." Secondly, can he be serious when he suggests that the "healing and wholeness" of this laughter is greater than the wholeness we receive at salvation? Is laughter more powerful than the blood?

We have no reports from Pensacola of the animal noises that became common at Toronto, but we did observe on the video tapes a considerable amount of involuntary screaming. This was common in Toronto, just prior to the outbreak of barnyard noises. Kilpatrick also defends the experience known as "slain in the Spirit." We have dealt with this at length in our books *No Laughing Matter* and *The Watchman*, but let me say quickly here that we find no biblical basis for such an experience, and absolutely no reason for believers to seek such a manifestation. Kilpatrick claims that these times of "resting in the Lord" (also called "carpet time") provide an opportunity for God to do a wide variety of things in the person's life: renewed understanding of holiness, inner healing (an unbiblical teaching), direction for life, visions. Is it necessary for God to put the person horizontal in order to minister to them? I think not.

Another manifestation is called groaning and travailing. This is key to the ministry of intercession which is widely encouraged at Pensacola. But it has taken on more than biblical connotations. The groanings and travail are likened to birth pangs and those so afflicted are said to be giving birth to manifestations and ministries. Here is how one woman described this manifestation:

"As they were slain in the spirit, they would go into a fetal position and tremble and shake. Some of the women would go into a sitting down birthing position to give birth to whatever. This was accompanied with grunts, moans and shrill screeching. Next, the ushers physically picked up the intercessors from the floor (who were still in travail in a fetal position) and carry them through the congregation to the balcony as effigies of intercession. [This was done] so that conviction and repentance would come down to the people as they passed by."

Similar manifestations were reported several years ago in areas of the country where the laughing phenomena had occurred. It's not new. It's recycled. Being "drunk in the Spirit" is common. It is also being advocated and defended with the same faulty exegesis that Howard Browne and the Toronto crowd used. Kilpatrick, following the Vineyard apologetic on this manifestation, cites Acts 2:13 and Ephesians 5:18 as proof that believers should be 'drunk in the Spirit.' Like his predecessors, he errs. On the day of Pentecost, those accused of being "filled with new wine" were not acting like drunken sailors as those at Pensacola appear. Paul, in the other passage, was not remotely suggesting an experience called be "drunk in the spirit" nor giving the church a doctrine of spiritual drunkenness.

On one video, several men and women - many identified as pastors and their wives - were in a stupor of sorts: babbling incoherently, suffering memory lapses in mid-sentence, slouching and falling down. Kilpatrick says this is normal behaviour "when you experience the Holy Spirit so strongly that normal activity is difficult." He adds this personal testimony: "For me, the many times during this revival that I have been 'drunk' in the Spirit, I have been unable to move."

His periods of paralysis are identical to the Toronto-style and Howard-Browne manifestations of being "glued to the floor." If the Spirit of God can so forcibly override a person's will and normal self-control, how is it that He is unable to force believers to do good and sinners to be saved?

PASTORING A REVIVAL

Kilpatrick talks at length in his book about pastoring this revival. Even after reading his explanation a couple of times, I'm still confused. How do you "pastor," lead or control a "sovereign move of God?" How do you teach other pastors and leaders to create and then pastor a sovereign move of God? I'm sure my questions sound ludicrous, yet they are the natural response to the ludicrous thought that a sovereign move of God can be controlled, manipulated and even marketed.

Yes, I said marketed. Although there may be no money changing hands, the techniques employed in Pensacola are being widely distributed. Video tapes are being sold to individuals and churches so they will know "the move of God" when it occurs in their midst (or to teach them how to ape the Pensacola manifestations). My wife and I came across some instruction sheets during a recent visit to a Kansas City area church that was preparing for the Pensacola Revival to come to their church.

The "guidelines" for prayer ministry teams, catchers and comfort attenders (none of these "ministries" are listed in Ephesians 4:11) noted that they were presented "as outlined by Brownsville Assembly in Pensacola."

The lengthy guidelines for prayer team ministry include these tips for facilitate the move of God:

"Pray only 30-45 seconds for each person. Watch your catcher for a signal if you are praying too long." [Is this somehow putting a time limit on God? Can we pray too long for each other?]

"Touch lightly with fingertips on the forehead. ...Do not hold their hands or put your hands on any part of the body." [Why is the forehead touch necessary?]

"If the individual does not get 'slain in the Spirit,' do not be concerned. Just tell them to 'bask in the Lord' or 'just rest in the Lord' or 'continue to worship.'" (Doesn't this imply that basking in God's presence, worshipping and resting in the Lord are inferior experiences.)

For "catchers":

"When you walk behind a person, gently touch the shoulders to let them know you are there in preparation to catch them. [Are they less receptive to being hit by the power of God without prior knowledge that they will be "caught?"]

Remove your hands afterwards. If the person falls, hold your hands on their back just above the waist—^{not} under the arms. Do not touch the person while they are receiving prayer."

"Look for open areas before you begin to pray. This will avoid falling on others. If an individual is in the aisle and they are 'slain in the Spirit,' they should be laid uphill."

Comfort attenders:

"If an individual falls, quickly place a cloth over their body." [Would God be insensitive to possible embarrassment?]

"Watch for ladies that are pregnant who may need protection." [isn't God protection enough?]

A good friend of mine grew up in a Pentecostal denomination where being "slain in the Spirit" was quite common. (By the way, my friend is a veteran pastor and teacher who does not believe the phenomenon is biblical). He said in "the good ole' days, we had two tests to see if the falling out was of God. If a person fell and hurt himself we knew it wasn't God. If a woman fell and landed in an immodest position, we knew it wasn't of God." Now those two tests have been eliminated by "catchers" and "comfort attenders."

Despite these nagging questions and others, Pentecostal leaders have been swept away by the newest craze. A friend who was formerly ordained with the Church of God said that the Pensacola leaders are to meet soon with the national leadership in Cleveland, Tennessee, to help spread the revival.

Students at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, we hear, can get academic credit for attending the Brownsville revival. Rev. Thomas Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, has given his blessing to the revival. In a letter to credential holders, Trask wrote:

"First of all, one must recognize that this is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. With that knowledge one must be careful not to become critical when God chooses to work in ways we are unaccustomed; and yet, we are admonished in the Word not to be gullible but to try the spirits."

[Why is so much human effort involved and required if this is a sovereign move of the Spirit? To test the spirits is to be critical, according to the definitions of the words for discernment in Greek. If we are Bible-believing, and Bible living Christians, God's movings will not be strange to us and they will follow patterns already established in His Word.]

"Second, I want to commend Pastor Kilpatrick, his staff, and evangelist Steve Hill for having the desire to pastor this revival, not control it. Here is where wisdom is needed, and they are doing a fine job. The proof is in the fact that it is now into its 15th month. John Kilpatrick has authored a book entitled, Feast of Fire, giving the story of this revival."

[I'm still not clear on how to "pastor" a revival. Is longevity really proof of the spiritual validity of this phenomena? Toronto's been going on for three years or longer. Does that make it more spiritual? Does writing a book about a spiritual activity add to the credibility of that activity?]

"Third, there have been over 30,000 people who have been marvellously saved and are testimonies of the grace of God. True revival always results in people coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and experiencing a radical change of lifestyle. Revival is not just for blessing the saints. The saints will be revived when God is at work"

[I have already questioned these statistics. The AG's own statistics from the Decade of Harvest demonstrate that less than three percent who make a decision for Christ become incorporated into the church. Experiencing Christ is more than a radical change of lifestyle: it's life itself. A lot of people confuse conversion with lifestyle changes. A lot of self-help philosophies offer a variety of lifestyle changes. Just giving up bad habits or starting to attend church regularly are not in themselves proof of a transformed life.]

"Fourth, this move of God was birthed through more than two and a half years of intensive prayer; and, brothers and sisters, it will be prayer that will continue to carry this move of the Spirit."

"Fifth, this revival is not confined to Pensacola, Florida. We are hearing numerous reports of what God is doing. This is a time of visitation. Let us not miss what God wants to do through this church. Be assured He is no respecter of persons or places. He will hear and answer prayer, as we pray and seek His face."

[We know this excitement is not confined to Florida: But it never seems to break out in other parts of the country without someone going to Pensacola to 1) get the blessing; or 2) learn the techniques. Trask's phrase "a time of visitation" has become one of the buzz words of this spreading phenomenon. One pastor used the phrase to intimidate his congregation: "If you miss this move, you'll suffer like the Jews did when they missed their hour of visitation." To oppose this thing is tantamount to "missing the visitation.]

"Sixth, we must walk humbly before God. The Scripture admonishes, "a proud heart and a proud person He will despise." As we continue to look to Him and are dependent upon Him, I can assure you we will hear from heaven. So, I want to encourage those of you who are in the midst of revival, walk softly and carefully. Those of you who are still praying for revival, don't give up. Continue to ask, continue to seek, and continue to knock; for there will come a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit if we remain faithful."

[Trask's warning seems to be toward those that are unconvinced by the hoopla in Florida. Yet, it is the Pensacola participants and their clones who give the impression that non-participants are spiritually challenged, to use a politically correct term.]

We have pointed out our concerns about this latest fad, but I must add a few additional words of caution before closing. This movement in Pensacola is much more dangerous than its Toronto predecessor for a several reasons.

First, it has more legitimacy because it is occurring in a more traditional and acceptable Pentecostal atmosphere—an Assemblies of God church. Although its roots are the same (Toronto, Vineyard, Kansas City Prophets, etc.), it gives the appearance of being more mainline Pentecostal.

Second, it has received the endorsement of many highly respected leaders in the church world. Toronto had some big name endorsers, but they were part of the fringe of the charismatic movement and not traditional Pentecostals. Pensacola leaders are desperately trying to get additional endorsements, especially from those men considered to be in the "holiness camp."

Third, it is another step toward uniting all experience-oriented movements and thus leading to the all-encompassing religious system of the last days. Doctrine is denigrated; experience is exalted. Doctrine divides, but experience unites.

Fourth, there is an misleading emphasis on important spiritual matters like holiness, prayer and separation that are very appealing. The problem is that talk about these things is just a ploy to attract more mainstream followers. This is very seductive.

Fifth, the leaders disparage believers who insist on biblical precedents for spiritual manifestations. Church members are intimidated, even ex-communicated, for questioning this new move. There is no room for dialogue with these men.

Sixth, certain deceptions and misrepresentations are obvious. Why must the leadership cloak the Toronto connections? Are they ashamed to admit that Pensacola has its roots in Toronto? I would hope so. But such an admission would be a major set back. If this is a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit, why must there be so much hope in the services and the promotion of the revival?

Part Two: Toronto Link Grows Stronger

If you mention the Pensacola Revival you better be ready to duck or pucker because people will either want to hit you or kiss you. There is no middle ground when it comes to this reported move of God in the Florida panhandle. Nothing has caused as much consternation and confusion in the church world since....uh....the Toronto Blessing.

But this is not Toronto, we're told. But more on that later.

While some say this is the greatest thing since Azusa Street or maybe even since Pentecost itself, others are saying this is more deadly to Christianity than communism was in its hey-day. One thing is obvious: everyone must decide whether they're "for it or agin it." Even the leadership of the Brownsville Assembly of God church in Pensacola says the division is necessary.

At a November meeting of the Peninsula Florida District of the Assemblies of God, Pensacola Pastor John Kilpatrick told the gathering of ministers that God asked him if He could "bring a sword into the church." Kilpatrick told the group that God wanted to separate those who were against the flow of the Spirit from those who wanted it. Those that God removed, Kilpatrick said, were "too religious." He concluded these remarks by

noting that those who are standing against this revival are the religious.

JUDGING THE JUDGES

While the leaders of the revival call their opposition judgmental, they are just as judgmental. The difference is the standard by which judgments are made. Proponents of Pensacola determine who is religious and who is spiritual by whether or not they accept the manifestations accompanying the revival." Critics of the current move, for the most part, are judging the manifestations by the Word of God and finding no biblical support whatsoever.

Art Katz, in an article titled "Some Cautionary Thoughts on the Present Revival" expresses very well some of our concerns:

"Perhaps one of the most ominous features of the hour is the note of warning sounded about those who have some reserve as being 'obstructions,' 'enemies,' or 'threats' to this outpouring of God. The invitation seems to be to abandon all restraint ('The bar is open') -- leap in, or get out of the way of others if you cannot! ... I cannot help but wonder if it is man's interests that are being so vehemently defended and that we are at the inception of what could ultimately be finalised by the warning that 'they will kill you and claim that they are doing God a service'" (John 16:2).(1)

Katz went on to quote T. Austin Sparks, who compared the Corinthian church's propensity for sensational evidences to its modern counterpart:

"We are in that kind of age today. It is becoming more and more a psychic age. It is an age of the soul just spilling over, asserting itself, taking control of everything Christian as well as outside of it—a soulish age. ... Be careful that you are not hankering for this realm again. Are you after the evidence? My, how I have seen dear Christian people just prostrating themselves, with groaning and crying, almost screaming for evidence—these 'sign' things... Christians and dear men of God, who have been greatly used, are creating an emotional, psychic situation that is involving simple Christians in things which are, sooner or later, going to be a great disillusionment and an offense. It will bring 'offendedness' with the Lord, and that is just what the devil is after." (2)

SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY HAPPENING

That something big is happening goes without saying. The real question is what is behind the spiritual excitement. Proponents obviously claim this is a sovereign move of God's Holy Spirit. Some critics claim the spirit operating in the church is demonic, while others are blaming the bizarre behaviour on suggestible followers who are easily manipulated by the leaders.

The Bible tells us to test the spirits to see if they be of God. But when the cautious suggest such a plan, they are called narrow-minded, pride-filled Spirit quenchers. This attack is designed, we believe, to keep the "faithful" following their leaders, and to keep them from hearing reasonable questions and biblical responses.

Before we discuss our testing of the spirits, let me share something with you. I had mentioned in our last issue of The Inkhorn that I hoped to attend a service or two at the Brownsville church during a recent trip to Florida. My schedule and the service schedule at the church did not match up, so I was unable to attend any services. I know some will quickly pounce on that and say, "You can't judge or write about something you've not experienced." We heard the same criticism when we spoke out against Toronto.

First, let me say that we have done considerable research through the writings of the revival leaders and have seen numerous video tapes of the manifestations. We have interviewed dozens of people who have been to Brownsville or to one of its clones. From our knowledge of what is happening, what is being promoted and what God's Word says about such things (and doesn't say), I believe we have sufficient evidence to draw our conclusions.

To attend a service at Brownsville just to rebuff our critics would be costly and, I believe, unnecessary. It might also be putting God to a foolish test. Many solid Bible preachers have reported that they were skeptical of Brownsville, but attended at the urging of others and came back transformed. (Not for the better, I might add.) It seems obvious that these men, and women, have been seduced by the spirit of Brownsville.

But enough about that.

TORONTO CONNECTION BECOMES CLEARER

Anyone who claims that Pensacola is not merely Toronto recycled is not being totally honest. Revival historian Andrew Strom of New Zealand makes that clear:

"... the links between Toronto and Pensacola are so strong that I am surprised that they are not more widely known." (3)

Evangelist Steve Hill has acknowledged that he had spent considerable time with a leader of the Toronto movement at the Holy Trinity Brompton church in London. Pastor John Kilpatrick defended in his book the same manifestations that were prevalent at Toronto. (These things were covered in our October article.)

Charisma magazine has endorsed the Brownsville revival and made no bones about linking it with Toronto. Under the headline "Toronto Blessing Spreads Worldwide," the magazine made this observation:

"Springfield, Missouri—home to the Assemblies of God headquarters—was considered resistant to the Toronto Blessing. That began to change in June when Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick held special services at Central Assembly of God next to AG headquarters." (4)

Pro-Pensacola writer, Beth McDuffie, made the connection quickly. She wrote,

"As people went forward, they began to fall down shaking and crying, etc., just like 'Toronto' meetings everywhere." (5)

As we noted in the Issues and Insights column of our October issue, the new head of the AG Men's Ministries sees Toronto, Brownsville, Hill and Rodney-Howard Brown as all part of the same move. Only a few die-hards are trying to create a gulf between Toronto and Pensacola that just does not exist.

WHOLE LOTA SHAKIN' GOIN' ON

That old Jerry Lee Lewis song title seems to fit the Pensacola phenomena better than its declared anthem, "The Mercy Seat." While uncontrollable laughter was the primary manifestation at Toronto (at least at the beginning), uncontrollable shaking is the most prevalent in Pensacola. There is laughter and other Toronto-style manifestations, but the most popular is shaking. Sometimes it is more like jerking; other times it is deep bowing. The most widely seen video of this manifestation is being distributed by AG headquarters. We'll let pro-Pensacola, Charisma staff writer Lee Grady describe it for us. This is Grady's description of Alison Ward's testimony.

"As she spoke, Alison shook in a manner so awkward that a casual observer might think she suffered from cerebral palsy. Then, while trembling violently, she issued a plea so heartfelt that those in the room say they heard God speaking through her. Choking back tears she said intently: 'God is in a hurry. There's not much more time. He aches and He grieves for your spirit.' At that moment Alison fell to the floor. A deafening chorus of moaning and wailing filled the room as people were moved by an almost eerie sense of God's love for lost souls ... Alison's eight-minute testimony, which was captured on video tape, represents the defining moment of this revival." (6)

I have seen this particular video. My heart went out to the young woman—first, because I thought she suffered from a physical affliction; then because I realized the terrible delusion to which she had succumbed, and finally because she was being shamelessly used by her spiritual leaders. The lack of self-control (a fruit of the Spirit) makes it obvious that the manifestations of poor Alison are not Spirit endowed.

Strom observes:

"I'm sorry, but I just cannot go along with the idea that God wants to distort the limbs and the bodies of his children so that they look like sufferers of Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Parkinson's Disease, I cannot go along with a 'revival' that makes God's children 'jerk' for hours at a time, just like the mental patients seen in our psychiatric wards every day. And I cannot go along with a shrieking, hyena-like laughter being described as 'holy.' I have to be frank and say, it all sound too much like the devil to me." (7)

JERKING DISRUPTS CLASSES

Several students in Brooksville, Florida, who had at-tended the Pensacola revival with their youth pastor were reprimanded by high school officials after they continued to manifest the jerking and deep bowing in their classes. The manifestation was picked up at the 'revival' and the teens claimed they could not control it. This kind of behaviour brings reproach rather than honor to the name of Jesus. But the teens are merely mimicking

the uncontrollable actions of their adult leaders.

At the district conference referred to earlier, Kilpatrick admitted to the assembled pastors that he has been so "drunk in the spirit" that he actually struck his youth pastor's car with his own. He said that while driving he had hit many garbage cans sitting at the curb on several occasions because he was so "drunk." He added that his wife (a visitor to Toronto, by the way) has been so drunk she couldn't cook. Sometimes, his drunken stupors are so severe that he has to be taken from the service in a wheel chair, Kilpatrick said.

In our book, 'No Laughing Matter', we discussed Toronto-style churches that had "designated drivers" for their too-drunk-to-drive parishioners. We also noted that many students from these churches missed classes because of "Holy Ghost hangovers" or disrupted classes with their laughter and other erratic behaviors. I see a strong link here. Don't you?

BIZARRE BEHAVIOR JUSTIFIED

These unbiblical manifestations are justified by the Pensacola leaders and their followers, either by wrenching Scripture out of context, reading between the lines of Scripture or, best of all, saying that if the Bible doesn't clearly prohibit an activity, then it is okay with God. (Again, these are the same tactics used by the Toronto leadership.)

One classic example of this is found in the winter edition of Enrichment magazine, an AG publication for ministers. Kilpatrick is being interviewed by the author about the Brownsville "outpouring." Under the subhead of "Surprises of the Spirit" Kilpatrick says:

"God is taking us from glory to glory, and this glory won't seem like the last glory. for most of what we experience I can take you to Scripture.

"On the Day of Pentecost the believers were staggering as if drunk. Peter stood up and said this was foretold by the prophet Joel. Much of what they were doing had come out of Joel's prophecy, but the one major exception— they were speaking in other tongues. Joel never mentioned it, but they were doing it even though Peter could not give chapter and verse for it. It was a surprise." (8)

Well, I'm certainly surprised. Kilpatrick, without any fear, made unwarranted additions to Joel's prophecy. He made the book of Acts say something that it clearly does not say. His is speculative theology at best and blatant misrepresentation at worst. No one to my knowledge ever interpreted that passage in Acts to mean that those who came down from the upper room were staggering around like drunken sailors on shore leave. The first time I ever heard that was from the "apologists" of Toronto.

First, let me say the context makes it clear that the mockers accused them of being drunk because they could not understand the unknown tongues in which they spoke. The unfamiliar languages, no doubt, sounded like the slurred gibberish associated with those who have had a little too much to drink But it is a far and dangerous stretch of the facts to say those empowered by the Holy Ghost were staggering around.

Pentecostal believers traditionally have held that speaking in tongues is the first sign of believers being filled with the Holy Ghost. With that in mind, most Pentecostal scholars hold that the speaking in tongues at Pentecost was the confirmation that the Spirit had been poured out. True, Joel did not specifically say the believers would speak in tongues, but neither did he even hint that they would act like drunks at a party. Kilpatrick threw out the clear inference and interjected his own self-serving interpretation

THE SET UP

Kilpatrick's error was intentional, I believe. His whole purpose was to send out the message that the church doesn't need chapter and verse for manifestations of the Spirit. That speaks volumes. It is obvious that most of the manifestations at Pensacola cannot be given a biblical precedent. So, Kilpatrick says that it's not essential to have one.

This reminds me of Rodney Howard-Browne's remark that you "can't put this move of God to a theological test." The message of Pensacola is nothing more than regurgitated Toronto philosophy: "Don't think. Don't question. Just jump in. Just experience. Just believe your leadership." That whole attitude is cultic and dangerous.

I agree with A. W. Tozer who said,

The Brownsville Revival (by Pastor Larry Thomas)

"I am a Bible Christian and if an archangel with a wingspread as broad as a constellation shining like the sun were to come and offer me some new truth, I'd ask him for a reference. If he could not show me where it is found in the Bible, I would bow him out and say, 'I'm awfully sorry, you don't bring any references with you.'" (9)

This is not the attitude at Pensacola. There, the preaching of the Word is minimised, trivialized and criticized. Any spiritual movement that is not based on the truth of the Word and the honest preaching of that Word must be rejected.

The Pensacola revival has created in the Pentecostal church a paradigm shift in its understand of the authority of Scripture, the work of Christ, the character of the Holy Spirit and His work in the church and the plan of God. This shift is a major one. It is laying the ground work for the next "move of God" that will make the Pensacola fiasco pale into insignificance.