



# The Quarterly JOURNAL

## The Newsletter Publication of Personal Freedom Outreach

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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

# THE MURKY RIVER OF BROWNSVILLE

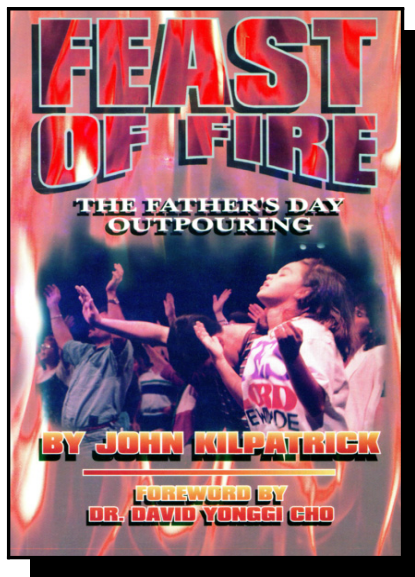
## The Strange Doctrine and Practice of the Pensacola Revival

by G. Richard Fisher  
and M. Kurt Goedelman

Within Pentecostal circles in the early 1900s and beyond, "Azusa Street" became a catch phrase describing what some regarded as a powerhouse move of God. Now, nearly a century later, recent events at an Assembly of God church in Florida's panhandle are receiving similar fanfare. William F. Leach, superintendent for the Michigan district of the Assemblies, says:

"On April 9, 1906, it happened at the Azusa Street Mission ushering in the modern day Pentecostal Movement. On Father's Day of 1995, a sovereign move of God's Spirit began in Pensacola, Florida at Brownsville Assembly of God."<sup>1</sup>

This "revival" is being heralded as "A River is Flowing" and a place to "meet the God of the Universe face to face."<sup>2</sup> Praise for it has even been proclaimed from the very top of the



denomination that represents the largest body of Pentecostals. The Reverend Thomas E. Trask, General

Superintendent wrote in an exclusive release to Assemblies of God ministers:

"I have been asked by many, 'Brother Trask, have you been to Brownsville Assembly in Pensacola, Florida, and what do you think?' Well, I am happy to say I've been there and had the joy of ministering to that fine congregation on a Sunday morning. First of all, one must recognize that this is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

There are two dominant human agents of the revival. The first includes the pastor of the Brownsville congregation, the Reverend John Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick, who is ordained with the Assemblies of God, said he received the call to preach at age 14 in his hometown in Georgia. He graduated from Southeastern College of the Assemblies in Lakeland, Fla. and Berean School of the Bible in Springfield, Mo. He previously served pastorates in Georgia and Indiana and has been pastor of the Brownsville Assembly in Florida for 15 years.

Kilpatrick, like others mesmerized with "revival" within the Charismatic

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# Editorials

## A SNOW JOB IN ORLANDO: BENNY HINN'S HOUSEHOLD SALVATION

Faith healer Benny Hinn seems to never run out of ways to induce and excite his followers and keep them dangling. When recently confronted about bringing pressure on a local county sheriff for police favors (see accompanying News Update item on page 3), Hinn responded to television news reporter Jane Watrel's question regarding his possible move to California: "I don't know the future. I can only see so far." Yet, he wants his flock of enthusiasts to think he knows the future. Words of knowledge and prophecies are the stock and trade of Hinn's repertoire (see *The Quarterly Journal* Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 5-9).

In fact, in late December and into early January, Hinn was announcing on his daily broadcast, *This Is Your Day*, that on Jan. 31 he was going to pray for household salvations.

Hinn was so bold to say that 1997 is the year of household salvations and people were to mail a picture of their loved ones in anticipation of Jan. 31 when he would pray for and presumably God would then deliver all these household salvations. It was a crafted illusion to actually make people think it would happen. Jan. 31 came and passed and who was the wiser?

To back up his claim, Hinn quoted the Apostle Paul's

words to the Philippian jailer recorded in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and *your household*."

Is Hinn intentionally misleading his followers for effect? Even if household salvation were true, and it is not, what makes Hinn believe he can just call it into being? If household salvation were true, every household would be saved any time anyone in the household got saved. We would not need Hinn. Of course, his followers blindly believe and follow.

The Apostle Paul was not telling the Philippian jailer if he got saved his family would automatically get saved. Verse 32 says clearly: "Then they spoke the Word to all who were in the house." It was necessary for all the family members to hear the Gospel and to respond. All in the house heard the message. People need to hear individually, even if they are in a group, and respond individually.

Reading on in Acts 16 we find that the household responded to the Gospel turned to Christ and were willing to be baptized to demonstrate their belief. Verses 33-34 are so clear: "He and all his family were baptized [after they all had heard and responded] ... He rejoiced having believed in God *with all his household*."

The Church continues to lose ground in biblical understanding when someone like Hinn, who does not have an inkling of a systemic theology or a grasp of  
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# News Updates

## LOYALTY TO HINN COST DEPUTIES THEIR JOBS

Two commanders and a volunteer reserve deputy have been fired and three other officers suspended following an investigation by the Orange County, Fla., Sheriff's Department into allegations that members of the department abused their power while working as security guards for televangelist Benny Hinn and his World Outreach Center.

The six-month internal investigation, which produced a 200-page report, also cleared four other deputies of any wrongdoing.

Beginning in June 1996, Pastor Rick Johnston and members of his Volusia County congregation demonstrated in front of Hinn's World Outreach Center in Orange County and near his former home in Seminole County. The investigation found that the protesters had been harassed and illegally arrested by deputies. The report also disclosed that Hinn, by virtue of his association with the deputies, had attained privileges beyond department policies including the running of errands during his crusades.

The two members of Sheriff Kevin Beary's "inner circle" fired were Commander I Rusty Smallwood and Commander II Roger Clark. They were fired for falsifying off-duty records while working at the World Outreach Center, lying to investigators and abusing their positions as commanders. Smallwood also was charged with destroying records he kept on the protesters. The officers would travel with Hinn to his out-of-town healing crusades while still on the county payroll. Smallwood also admitted that he would make an additional \$4,000-\$5,000 a night selling tapes of his music at Hinn's crusades.

Reserve deputy Christopher Hinn, the televangelist's younger brother, was fired for abuse of power. Hinn illegally stopped a car carrying people who had been protesting in front of his brother's church and misrepresenting himself as a law enforcement officer. The protesters captured Hinn on videotape claiming to be "an undercover cop" and "a sheriff."

The report said both Benny Hinn and the deputies tried to extend their influence across county lines by intimidating Seminole County Sheriff Don Eslinger. According to the report, Smallwood said Hinn said, "Sheriff Eslinger needed to assist him or he and other ministers would denounce him on television."

In an interview with television news reporter Jane Watrel, Hinn said, "I myself was not — and I want to

repeat — was not aware of the arrest till afterwards." Concerning the allegations of threats against Sheriff Eslinger, Hinn said: "I had heard that before, that something like this had been said to the sheriff and I got very upset. No, no, no, no, no! I did not say that, nor would I ever say that to a sheriff. My goodness gracious, look, I am a pastor with a reputation here in this city. I'm not that stupid to be saying anything like that." Eslinger confirmed that Hinn personally had not made any threats to him.

Clark and Smallwood are appealing their firings. The suspensions of the three other officers will all go before a citizen's review board.

—MKG

## PSYCHIC JEANE DIXON DIES

Jeane Dixon, one of the 20th century's most prominent astrologers and psychics, died Jan. 25 of a heart attack. She was 79.

In the 1950s, she gained the national spotlight with a series of convincing political revelations. However, a prediction first published in the May 13, 1956, issue of *Parade* magazine is the one she is best remembered for. She said that the 1960 presidential election would be won by a Democrat who would "be assassinated or die in office." Despite the recognition she won as a result of President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, few remembered some of the other details pertaining to the incident which she gave in the weekly magazine. For example, she had further stipulated that the occurrence would "not necessarily [be] in his first term." She also later admitted that, "During the 1960 election, I saw Richard Nixon as the winner."

Other prophetic efforts by Dixon were even less certain. She predicted that World War III would begin in 1958, a cure for cancer would be found in 1967, and the Russians would be the first to put a man on the moon.

The 1971 book, *The Call to Glory*, calls her one who "speaks as a prophet of God, fulfilling the mission He granted her." The book's acknowledgements recognize Rev. Stephen Hartdegen, a Roman Catholic priest, as Dixon's "personal religious consultant" for the book. According to a Catholic newspaper, Dixon faithfully attended Mass each morning.

Dixon also gained public awareness through the biographical volume, *A Gift of Prophecy: the Phenomenal Jeane Dixon*, written by syndicated columnist Ruth

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# "Get Ready"

for T.D. JAKES

## The Velcro Bishop with Another Gospel

If nothing else, Thomas D. Jakes appears to be very successful. Called a "Bishop" by *Charisma* magazine, this prolific writer, recently purchased sizable land holdings from the crippled ministry of jailed evangelist W.V. Grant. *The Dallas Morning News* reported the sale of three of Grant's properties to Jakes, with an estimated tax value of over \$4 million.<sup>1</sup>

*The Bookstore Journal* lists three of Jakes' books, from a variety of publishers, on its best seller chart for several months running. Its December 1996 issue said Jakes has a gift for writing, indicating that the bishop "does almost all his own writing" and that he "attributes his engaging prose to divine inspiration."<sup>2</sup>

The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and the Black Entertainment Network (BET) both air various programs by Jakes up to three times weekly. In addition, the highly popular Promise Keepers organization enlisted Jakes as a member of its "Men's Conferences Speaker Team" in 1995 at its Seattle and St. Petersburg conferences and has invited him as a speaker for its 1997 lineup.<sup>3</sup>

In its November 1996 issue, *Charisma* also labels Jakes as "one of the nation's most popular preachers"<sup>4</sup> and quotes New Orleans pastor Paul Morton, who labels Jakes a "black Billy Graham."<sup>5</sup> Jakes' publications and the

by G. Richard Fisher

conferences where he is a keynote speaker are regularly advertised in *Charisma*.

But the real question is not his popularity, but his commitment to the truth of Scripture. Is Jakes doctrinally sound? Does he teach the Gospel in its purity? Is this "popular preacher" staying within historical orthodoxy or is he (and those he influences) moving away from the mainstream?

Jakes catches attention as he struts, prances and preens across the stage. While he may be a bombastic and entertaining speaker, is he a good instructor?

Jakes is part of the Church of God in Christ and promotes his books and videotapes through Jakes Ministries, now based in Dallas. His orientation is decidedly Pentecostal and clearly Word-Faith. The vast majority of his messages are definitely motivational and all about empowerment. They are weighted with psychological jargon.

Yet, there are troubling things about Jakes. For instance, did he misspeak to *Charisma* in the above-mentioned November issue or was he simply misquoted when he spoke of people who have "failed to appreciate their divinity."<sup>6</sup> Divinity means that you are divine and it is a word that only

fits with God. The word is derived from Latin (*divinitatem*) and means "godhead" or "the quality of being divine."<sup>7</sup>

More importantly, man is never addressed anywhere in Scripture as having divinity or being divine. Is Jakes, by virtue of his statement, associating himself with the god-man errors of the Word-Faith Movement? If not, and at the very least, he owes the credulous readership of *Charisma* a clarification. To even suggest that man is divine takes empowerment too far.

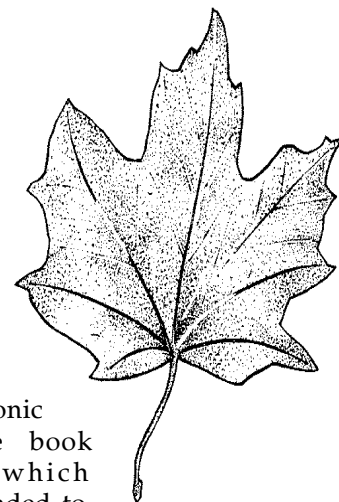
### BIRDS OF A FEATHER...

Jakes gives deference to the ministries of Marilyn Hickey and Joyce Meyer.<sup>8</sup> Both these "celebrated ministers" are heretical and promote Word-Faith doctrine without apology. How many erroneous camps can you occupy and still be considered a good example? In 2 John 9-11, we are commanded not to endorse heretical teachers in any way.

Jakes has also shared the platform at a September 1996 conference with Roberts Liardon.<sup>9</sup> Any discerning Christian should want to stay as far away as possible from Liardon who claims he was transported to heaven and there met Jesus face to face and that he and Jesus had a water fight in

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# CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES: The Evolution of a Splinter Group of The Way International



by John P. Juedes

## HOW CES DIFFERS FROM TWI

*Speaking The Truth in Love (STTIL)* has three parts: an overview of church history (beginning from the first century), an overview of church government, ceremony and doctrine in the Christian Church and in CES, and a description of the mission of CES.

CES states that local fellowships (most groups associated with CES are home groups like twigs) should be self-governing and self-propagating. This is quite different from TWI, which controls the leadership and even "membership" of its twigs, unilaterally ejecting people from twigs whom it considers to be not completely loyal to the Way hierarchy. Ex-Wayers find CES refreshing in that it is not autocratic like TWI.

TWI was not authoritarian when it began to grow by drawing followers from the Jesus movement in the late 1960s. But it soon regimented the *Power for Abundant Living* class by requiring that only the filmed version by V.P. Wierwille be used, and it introduced the structure of "the Way Tree" to exert control over its followers. Accordingly, CES may be seen as a Way "reformation" movement with respect to authority.

## HOW CES IS LIKE TWI

Outside the topic of authority, CES is like TWI in many important ways.

It is ironic that the book *STTIL* which was intended to show the uniqueness of CES actually reveals how very much CES is like TWI.

*First, even the name CES shows how similar CES' thrust is to the purposes of TWI.* Note the similarities:

CES: Christian Educational Services.

TWI: Biblical Research and Teaching Ministry.

While each part of their titles are synonymous and interchangeable, they are distinctly different from most names for denominations ("Presbyterian Churches of America") and parachurch groups ("Focus on the Family").

*Second, the core teachings, or doctrine, of CES and TWI are the same.*

In fact, *STTIL* does not list any CES teaching with which TWI would disagree. Like TWI, CES emphasizes the book of Ephesians, uses much of the same terminology (like "one God"), and lauds the unusual teaching of the late E.W. Bullinger.

Like TWI, CES teaches "one God" (an anti-Trinitarian view of God), holds that Jesus Christ is lord but has no Divine nature, distinguishes between "the Holy Spirit" (another name for God the Father, as Dick is

Shortly after the death of founder Victor Paul Wierwille in 1985, The Way International (TWI) splintered into several factions. Eventually, about 25,000 of its peak membership of 35,000 left. Entire twigs (small home fellowship groups), areas and even limbs (statewide divisions of TWI) left in cohesive groups. Many of these established their own organizations to maintain the networks they had begun as part of TWI, although few of them have had lasting vitality.

One of these groups, Christian Educational Services (CES) has maintained a good deal of influence with ex-Way members. CES deals with people who are suspicious, angry and disdain organized religion because they were disillusioned by TWI and its president, whom they felt was "the man of God." To make headway with them, CES must emphasize that it is entirely different from TWI, even while it retains the "Truth" of the Word of God its audience learned in TWI.

CES produced a 58-page paperback titled *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Purposes of Christian Educational Services*, written by Mark Graeser, John Lynn and John Schoenheit, to describe how different it is from TWI and how unique it is compared to all Christian groups in the world today.

How different is CES from TWI? How important is CES to Christianity in the world?

another name for Richard) and “holy spirit” (a believer’s own spirit which God creates in him when he is born again), rejects water baptism, and opposes church ceremony including Holy Communion. It holds that the soul ceases to exist at death (similar to the Jehovah’s Witnesses).

There are differences in teaching, but most of them are comparatively minor. For instance, TWI does not reject Communion as completely as CES, has a more intense view of ordination and defines interpretation of tongues differently. However, the central teachings are alike.

***Third, they have a common view of church history.***

Both CES and TWI believe that the Church went into widespread apostasy and heresy by the time the Apostle John died at the end of the first century. By that time, most all Christians had rejected true doctrine (which CES and TWI now teach) and substituted false and pagan teachings, like those believed by Christians today.

In their view, the Reformation corrected mostly minor teachings, leaving heresy on essential teachings such as one God and holy spirit. They give lip service to the value of the reformers’ work while maintaining that they were ignorant and blind on the most important doctrine. Today’s Church obeys “tradition,” not the Word of God, and is just as apostate now as it has ever been in the last 1,900 years.

CES’ chapter on church history could have been, and probably was, lifted right from chapter one of V.P. Wierwille’s *Jesus Christ is Not God*, even though CES is not forthright enough to list it in *STTIL*’s endnotes or bibliography.

***Fourth, CES and TWI share the same idea of their group’s place in history.***

Since everyone who has ever claimed to be Christian is, in fact, in the dark (the truth is “totally obscured” by tradition), those in CES and TWI are the only people in the last 1,900 years to have the truth. Like

most cults, they think that God has been so weak that only a few thousand people in the last 1,900 years (most of whom are alive today) understand the truth.

CES’ claim, “Perhaps for the first time since the life of the Apostle Paul, the truth of the Word of God is available to enough people that it will pierce the veil of darkness that has enshrouded it” (*STTIL*, pg. 45) is just like V.P. Wierwille’s assertion that he would “teach the Word of God as it has not been known since the first century” (*The Way: Living in Love*, Elena S. Whiteside).

***Fifth, they claim not to be a church or denomination, yet act just like one.***

Both groups assert that denominations are (unlike them) restrictive and authoritarian. Actually, both groups are more directive than most church bodies (denominations). Most church bodies are associations of congregations. When the churches meet in convention, together they elect leaders to short-term offices, approve budgets, make statements on doctrine, plan goals and programs, and direct studies that are to be done. Local churches control their own schedules, staff, finances, discipline and leadership. Church bodies recommend things, but local churches choose whether or not to implement them.

In contrast, CES and TWI are directed by a small number of officers (three trustees in TWI who are placed in office for life) on a board which controls all aspects of the organization. They collect offerings from local fellowships, but unilaterally decide how to use them. In this way, CES and TWI function in a hierarchical way (like the Pope and college of Bishops) rather than in a democratic way like most denominational associations.

CES and TWI have the same goals as denominations, including networking local fellowships, forming local groups, training leaders, and education. (CES and TWI serve as their own publishers, just as many denominations have their own publishing house.)

TWI and, to a lesser extent, CES also function as a church in the sense that the leaders have their own fellowships, and the leaders distribute regular teaching tapes. It is likely that their followers virtually consider their national leaders to be like their pastors rather than just as denominational executives. If CES finds more local fellowships looking to it for leadership, it is likely to become even more like a denomination and national church — and even more like TWI.

CES also performs like a parachurch organization (which includes service agencies like Christian colleges, Bible translators, and missionary groups) in that it has an educational goal, is run by a board, and has a looser yet authoritarian connection with local fellowships than most denominations. But its goals and functions are just like any denomination.

***Sixth, CES is steeped in TWI tradition and style (and doesn’t notice it).***

The items listed above show the close similarities between TWI and CES. Other similar traditions they have include: their stated purpose, specific Bible interpretations (for instance, teaching that Christ was crucified with four, not two, criminals), emphasis on figures of speech, structure, dependence on regional conferences, audio tapes and classes, rejection of tradition, and so forth.

As a whole, CES relates more to TWI/ex-TWI people than it does to the Christian Church, and the Christian Church recognizes that CES has more in common with TWI than with the Church. If there weren’t a TWI, there wouldn’t be a CES. CES was founded by a very homogeneous group which had already “bought” a detailed set of teachings and practices from TWI. A “who’s who” of CES in 1996 reads almost the same as a “who’s who” of TWI in 1985 (except TWI’s list was longer).

Yet, *STTIL* never mentions CES’ roots and the eight to ten TWI books that describe its basic teachings and practice. To this day, books published by TWI more consistently express CES’s core teachings than any pub-

lisher (not counting CES itself). Even the fact that CES hides its sources is similar to TWI, since founder V.P. Wierwille always posed as one who studied the Word itself rather than man's writings, while he in fact plagiarized other men's writings wholesale.


CES attracts ex-Way members not because it is *unlike* TWI, but because it is so much *like* TWI. In fact, every Christian group is much more different from TWI than is CES. But ex-Way members feel comfortable in CES because it is so much like TWI in teaching, style, structure, personnel, terminology and thought. TWI emphasizes the "renewing of the mind." This unique Way mindset which TWI

cultivates in its adherents also resides in CES to a great extent.

CES proudly notes that Christian apologists like Norman Geisler and Keith Tolbert believe that CES is open to dialogue. But *is* CES open to dialogue, or is this just a pose? *STTIL* says that "believers have been subjected to religious junk food, oppressive hierarchical systems, nonsensical doctrines and a mediocre spiritual existence" (pg. 17).

CES newsletters to their supporters use satire and sarcasm (John Lynn is especially partial to this) to blast the "doctrines of devils" and "the bondage of religious tradition" throughout Christianity, but caution that they

"would not necessarily lay on them what we said in our letter" (April 1994). Can a person who is open to dialogue make such broad condemnations at the same time? CES has much of the same caustic, berating and pretentious nature of TWI, but hides it better.

CES believes itself to be far different from TWI. While Christians can appreciate some differences, we need to be discerning enough to see how the central character and teachings of CES is still very much like TWI. Therefore, we must steer ex-Way members away from CES, and take advantage of opportunities to share the truth of God's Word with both groups. 

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## T.D. JAKES

(continued from page 4)

the River of Life! Liardon further claims he was shown a building filled with unclaimed body parts (hair, eyes, skin, legs, etc.). This heavenly warehouse of unclaimed body parts is overstocked, according to Liardon, simply because here on earth believers have failed to appropriate them by faith.<sup>10</sup> Liardon's charade is either lunacy or sheer deception and should be given public rebuke, not public relations.

Jakes patronizes and clearly finds himself among the celebrities of the Charismatic camps. A full-color advertisement on the inside cover of the January *Charisma* announced that Jakes would appear at the August "Victory Word Explosion" in Tulsa, Oklahoma with Benny Hinn, Richard Roberts, Rod Parsley, Joyce Meyer and Jerry Savelle. With this roster, it might better be called "Heresy Explosion."

And why invite Jim Bakker to speak, as Jakes did in April 1996, before Bakker has even had a chance to demonstrate some long-term repentance since leaving prison. Placing Bakker back into the limelight and ministry too quickly may create the same dynamics that brought him

down before. First Timothy 5:22 suggests that Jakes should have done just the opposite.

### RIDING IN FIRST CLASS

When questioned for his opulent lifestyle, including an expensive home and a Mercedes-Benz automobile, Jakes merely refers to himself as an investor and an author. The Apostle Peter, however, said, "silver and gold have I none" (Acts 3:6).

It is obvious that the religion business is very lucrative for some. *The Dallas Observer* magazine reports:

"His conferences draw tens of thousands. His television show, broadcast on both the Trinity Broadcasting Network and Black Entertainment Television, reaches hundreds of thousands. He has spawned his own industry, T.D. Jakes Ministries, which sells his books — 10 in all, with five best-sellers — and videotapes, the income from which allowed him to spend nearly \$1 million last year on a residence in his hometown of Charleston, West Virginia."<sup>11</sup>

*The Dallas Observer* goes on to report:

"He says he is not embarrassed by this, even though his extravagant lifestyle has caused contro-

versy in his hometown that will likely follow him to Dallas. His suits are tailored. He drives a brand new Mercedes. Both he and his wife Serita are routinely decked out in stunning jewelry. His West Virginia residence — two homes side by side — includes an indoor swimming pool and a bowling alley. These homes particularly caused the ire of the local folks. One paper wrote at length about the purchase and made much of their unusual features. A columnist dubbed Jakes 'a huckster.'<sup>12</sup>

Yet, what is most disturbing about Jakes' prosperity is not the wealth itself, but his false teaching about Jesus to justify his fortune. *The Dallas Observer* shares further:

"Besides, Jakes says — during an interview and in his sermons — Jesus was a rich man. He had to have been, in order to have supported his disciples and their families during his ministry."<sup>13</sup>

To add to his false and mythical Christ, Jakes brazenly says:

"The myth of the poor Jesus needs to be destroyed, because it's holding people back."<sup>14</sup>

Jakes obviously perverts the true biblical picture of Jesus in an effort to

advocate his own lifestyle. *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*, reports:

"Jakes, who drives a Mercedes, has moved with his wife and their five children to a luxurious seven-bedroom home with swimming pool in the White Rock Lake area of Dallas. He said the home cost more than \$1 million. 'I do think we need some Christians who are in first class as well as coach,' Jakes said."<sup>15</sup>

Sadly, in the case of so many prosperity teachers, they are the ones flying in "first class" by way of the donations of their impoverished flock while the latter fly in "coach" — or miss the flight altogether because they lack the money to even buy a ticket.

All this when the Scripture is so very clear: "For you *know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became *poor*, that you through His *poverty* might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Our spiritual riches came only because he stripped and divested Himself of all earthly goods (Ephesians 1:3).

Archaeological excavations of Nazareth in the 1950s demonstrates the little village to have been occupied in Jesus' day by poor agricultural people.<sup>16</sup> As we've seen Scripture clearly shows the poverty of Jesus.

### A WOUNDED VIEW OF SIN

In Jakes' writings, he introduces so much in psychological terms that it is hard to cut through the thicket. It becomes hard to distinguish Freud from fact. He refers to immoral, lustful and sinful thinking as merely "little boy thoughts."<sup>17</sup> The Bible takes a stronger view and approach to mental sins and calls us to confession and renewal of mind. A lustful thought is as sinful as a lustful act in God's view (Matthew 5:28-30).

In fact, very little is called sin in the above referenced book but there is much about wounding and being wounded, dysfunction and "the child within."<sup>18</sup> This is peppered throughout this book.

The above is stock and trade with

the New Age-self help guru John Bradshaw. One of Bradshaw's workshops is called "healing your inner child." It is obvious that, whether knowingly or unknowingly, Jakes has digested large portions of Bradshaw's esoteric psychobabble, including the terminology.<sup>19</sup>

No doubt, a study of the extent of Jakes' borrowing from Bradshaw could be the topic of an entire paper. It appears that Jakes has absorbed many of the psychological trends of the age.

chological theory:

"Modern psychology is not an innocent helping-discipline that we can carelessly borrow from the kingdom of the left-hand and merge with our pastoral theology. There are theories and techniques in psychology, such as self-esteem, the encounter dynamic, and psychological mysticism, that can grossly distort Christian truth and inflict grave spiritual damage upon Christian people. ... *We must carefully discern the theories and*

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*"The myth of the poor Jesus needs to be destroyed, because it's holding people back."*

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The *Charisma* article also mentions Jakes having courses in psychology before dropping out of college.<sup>20</sup> Jakes, like Velcro, has had much of this influence stick with him. Velcro can have good things and things not so good (like lint and dirt) stuck to it. Such is the case with Jakes. He is tainted by some very questionable associations and endorsements and some very questionable borrowings, beliefs and teachings.

Jakes refers to an adulterous man as a "frightened little boy" and a wife beater as a "terrified little boy."<sup>21</sup> The Scriptures never speak of such heinous things in such a cavalier way. If a doctor misdiagnosed a disease and called it by a different name there would be very little possibility that the cure or medication would address the issue at all. A wrong diagnosis would lead to wrong treatment and malpractice. Again Jakes has succumbed to questionable and changing psychological theory.

Lutheran pastor and radio host Don Matzat warns against the wholesale acceptance of very questionable psy-

*practices of modern psychology before we visit them upon the people of God.*"<sup>22</sup>

In his excellent and perceptive book, *The Biblical View Of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image*, Dr. Jay Adams points out that:

"The self-love movement that was begun by humanistic psychologists has already had a significant impact on the church. ... You cannot simply 'add' the insights of this new teaching to your set of existing Christian beliefs; if you add them, you must modify or subtract many of the beliefs you already hold. ... You are choosing between two divergent views of man, his problem, and how to solve it."<sup>23</sup>

Jesus, in John 17:17, did not say, "Sanctify them by building up their self image," but rather "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

### ANOTHER JESUS

It has been shown above that as far as money and riches are concerned,

Jakes' view of Jesus is not hard to determine. His "rich Jesus" is merely a figment of his imagination, or perhaps he is merely regurgitating the false teachings of Fred Price, Paul Crouch and John Avanzini.<sup>24</sup>

Jakes seems just as confused when it comes to the human nature of Jesus. He states that because the teachers in Jesus' day listened to Him as a child it boosted His self-esteem.<sup>25</sup> Here again we have Jakes' psychological jargon but now, even worse, it is being dumped on Jesus. At the very least it is erroneous and irreverent to speak of Jesus in those terms. To suggest that Jesus needed a boost in self-esteem and that it took some Jewish teachers to do it is to really miss the point of who Jesus really is.

Jesus may have opted to allow His sinless manhood to progress in a normal course (Luke 2:51-52) but His Deity and perfection put Him outside mundane false human categories. Again we see the pop psychology dominating with Jakes and a different Jesus being constructed out of the paper mache of human ideas. What Jakes suggests now puts Jesus into the category of a flawed rich man needing an ego boost!

Because the incarnation is such a great mystery, we must always be careful to say about Jesus only what the Scriptures actually say. If not, we can fall into extreme and heretical views on either side. As others have suggested there must be a "reverent agnosticism" about some aspects of the Godhead incarnate.

In the fifth century, the Eutychians so deified Christ's humanity that He was no longer truly human. On another extreme, the Nestorians at the same time so separated the two natures of Jesus as to suggest two distinct personalities.<sup>26</sup>

Jakes appears to tilt toward the Nestorian error. The Orthodox view was promulgated at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 and stated:

"In the one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity,

and these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, to use the antiquated dictum, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures."<sup>27</sup>

The Church has always held that Christ's human nature was complete as Chalcedon taught. Therefore to suggest a boost was needed in Christ's self-esteem is a definite move away from orthodoxy.

In chapters 13 and 15 of *Loose That Man*, Jakes spends 30 pages developing applications from the Lazarus story as how to live like a "loosed man." That may be all well and good, but not once does Jakes state the Apostle John's objective of clearly showing Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life — Jesus as the one who conquers death for us and offers us resurrection hope for the future.

As well, this tremendous miracle confirmed Jesus as the Messiah and caused some to believe (John 11:45). John's expressed purpose for recording any of the miracles of Christ was to confirm Jesus as Messiah and engender commitment to Him: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). Jakes seems to miss the primary interpretation to spin out many secondary, subjective applications to boost our esteem.

### LOOKING FOR MANHOOD IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Jakes mentions that he purchased (for all the men in his organization) subscriptions to the secular *GQ Magazine* to help them learn about manhood.<sup>28</sup>

Any Christian need only briefly scan the contents of a recent issue of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* — *GQ Magazine* — to be shocked and even appalled at its contents, some of which is nearly pornographic. Consider, for example, the November 1996 issue where there is an advertisement for the "Better Sex Videos." The

photograph accompanying this ad left little to the imagination. This same issue's table of contents listed articles on "Nightlife at the Viper Room," a crime story about a cross-dressing heiress, the cigar clubs of Beverly Hills, and things even worse.

This writer cannot imagine a minister endorsing a publication with such questionable contents as this for any reason. On the cover of the February 1997 issue, controversial basketball star Dennis Rodman and supermodel Rebecca Romijn were featured in skimpy bathing suits. I am still trying to figure what any of this has to do with Christianity. How far we've come. Jakes expresses love for his children but is this the kind of material they would find around the house?

Instructions in biblical texts and biblical manhood would be far safer and far more sane, as well as more profitable and lasting. God's Word has incredible things to say about manhood and godliness. The male leadership of the Church is given in specific, practical guidelines in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. The Bible presents ideal manhood. It may not be as trendy as *GQ*, but it is far more life changing and God honoring.

### A STROLL DOWN MYSTIC LANE

In Jakes' book, *Why? Because You Are Anointed*, he teaches a personal guidance system that is not only strange but misleading and fraught with problems of self-deception and outright manipulation of others.

Instead of telling people to follow the clear dictates and details of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17), he leads people to follow confusing detours of inner impressions and guess work by others. Listen to his advice:

"God imparts to you a revelation of His plans for your life. That is how the vision begins. Then in some cases, God confirms that word he spoke personally to you through a prophecy given to you by another man or woman of God."<sup>29</sup>

Jakes does not seem to have even an elementary idea of the basic doctrines and distinctions between revelation, inspiration and illumination. Yet he purports to give direction and guidance to thousands.

In the same book he says that the guidance will be proven later by the Scripture.<sup>30</sup> That certainly puts the cart before the horse. Suppose by that time you have created an unmitigated disaster. We must always start with the Scripture and not use God's Word as an addendum.<sup>31</sup>

At this point some may say that all the above is unimportant and to express concern about these things is simply nit picking. Certainly the good Jakes does out weighs minor differences.

A lavish materialistic lifestyle, a vastly different Jesus, the psychologizing of Christianity, crude magazines, an unsafe guidance system may be good and acceptable to some, but not to those that take the Bible seriously and see Scripture as the sole court of appeal when it comes to religious claims and teachings.

However it get worse, especially Jakes' teaching on the Gospel and salvation.

### DYING TO GET SAVED

In his 1996 work, *The Harvest*, Jakes sends confusing signals as to whether or not he believes in salvation by grace through faith. He says he is "called to preach the message of the cross" and that we must "preach the Gospel as sincerely and effectively as possible,"<sup>32</sup> which sounds good. And then he also warns of false gospels,<sup>33</sup> which sounds even better. But as he elaborates he sounds totally confused and contradictory and leads one to wonder if he really understands the simplicity of the Gospel.

We find a heavily conditional, or works, salvation being developed and described by Jakes. His comments could also be called salvation by struggle:

"Unless the believer is willing to lose his life for Christ's sake, he

cannot ever attain everlasting life. If the Master must suffer to the point of death, so likewise must the servant."<sup>34</sup>

Taken at face value, it appears that only martyrs or near-martyrs qualify for heaven. Try to interpose this concept into the 16th chapter of Acts. You would have to say to the jailer in response to his question, "What must I do to be saved?": "You have to make sure you have a martyr's mind set or its no good."

There is not a shred of biblical evidence for Jakes' condition. Given his lifestyle, Jakes fails the test himself. He surely is no martyr and has very little to worry about on the material plane.

To confuse things even further Jakes declares that we must: "Die! Die and keep on dying daily until all of you is dead and only Christ lives. Death is the key to life and life more abundantly."<sup>35</sup> This certainly begs the question: What has Bishop Jakes died to? Surely not materialism. He needs to show us, not preach at us.

It is obvious that Jakes is uncertain as to salvation being a *free gift* from God as Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5 and Romans 6:23 teach. He warns about false gospels and is even so bold to say that ministers propagating false beliefs are probably greed-oriented.<sup>36</sup> He then goes on to propose the strangest Gospel to come down the pike in a while.

Jakes' view can be called a two-tiered salvation or a two-step salvation or perhaps a progressive graduated salvation. His imaginary salvation is based on a distortion of John 1:12-13. It goes as follow:

"Scripture teaches that receiving Christ as your personal Savior does not necessarily make you a son of God, but if you choose to do so, the power (authority) and right to do so is present. ... Just being saved does not make you a son of God, ...only those who are willing to be led by the Spirit actually realize and manifest the sonship of God."<sup>37</sup>

So in Jakes' view being a son is not something you are, it is only something you can opt to manifest. His teaching is more at home with that of the late cult leader Herbert W. Armstrong, than with orthodoxy.<sup>38</sup>

Jakes does not realize how nonsensical he sounds when he says one can be saved and not be a son of God. Does he not realize that the terms are interchangeable and that one really means the other? Being "saved" and "being a son of God" are one in the same. The moment we exercise faith in Jesus and accept Him, we are sons. "For you *are* all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ," Galatians 3:26 declares.

Jakes confounds and distorts the salvation process by making a distinction between accepting Jesus as Savior and being a son of God. He says that these are different states arrived at in different ways. The Bible does not recognize Jakes' false dichotomy.

The truth of Scripture regarding the riches of our salvation is summarized by Thomas R. Edgar:

"Every person who believes in Jesus Christ has their sins forgiven and is immediately justified. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer immediately upon salvation. Every believer has access to God in prayer and has other believers available for fellowship, edification, and counsel. Every Christian has all of this immediately upon justification."<sup>39</sup>

If we were to believe Jakes, we would have to believe that receiving Christ and being saved are one thing (doing very little if anything for you, except for being a first step) and being a son of God is something entirely different that you can choose or not choose to become. So you can be "saved" but not really saved. When you decide to be led by the Spirit you then manifest sonship.

Romans 8:1 indicates, however, that walking in the Spirit is something you can and will do because you are already a son of God. Walking in the Spirit is a privilege and the manifestation of sons. Jakes totally misunder-

stands and confuses salvation and sanctification.

Jakes' other obvious mistake is that he teaches that the authority, right or power in John 1:12 is the authority and right of the believer to do something for himself. He misses entirely the clear thrust of John's passage which is talking about God's authority.

We can say we are saved, we can say we are sons of God if we've received Christ as John 1:12 indicates based on *God's right, God's power, God's authority to declare that of us*. It is clear from this passage that *God gives the right* to every believer to be named as His sons and children.

The word "become" in the verse is not to be seen as tentative in any way but as declarative as to what we become by receiving Jesus as Savior. God's prerogative, in John 1:12, does not become man's prerogative no matter what Jakes says. Griffith Thomas, known throughout the Anglo-Saxon world as one of the great English scholars of modern times, conveys the thrust of verse 12: "Having received Christ as 'Word' and 'Light,' we become sons of God."<sup>40</sup>

First John 5:12 assures us, "He that has the Son has life." Romans 10:17 reminds us, "Whoever calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved." Being saved, being sons, being a child of God, being born again, having received Christ, having faith in Christ, and being in Christ are really nuances of the same experience and standing. Receiving Christ puts us eternally "in Christ" as children and joint heirs. This privilege in Romans 8 is a position that has no condemnation, no amputation and no separation. Christ in us is the hope of glory as Colossians 1:27 announces.

*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, lays out the simple biblical truth that seems to elude Jakes:

"In the three Johannine epistles the figure of the child is brought to its fulfillment with the repetition of the apostolic love for the Church in terms of family endear-

ment (1 John 3:10, et. al.). The legal proposition of children, inheritance, adoption, illegitimacy and naming are all used as *figures of the application of the Atonement* in the epistles (Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5; Phil 4:3; Heb 12:8; 1 Pet 1:4; et. al.)"<sup>41</sup>

Thus there are two "BVs" to choose from. The first, Bishop Velcro with his earthly mansions, his wealthy Rolex Jesus, his psychological trappings, the pep rallies, the questionable reading material and the truncated Gospel. Or the second BV, the old trustworthy BV — Bible verses — that tell us of mansions in glory, the man of sorrows, the provision of free grace with immediate and eternal sonship for desperate needy sinners who will in faith repent and receive Christ.

We must choose — the stakes are enormous — and eternal. Put away the Jakes materials and revisit the Bible. It will tell you the truth minus the velcro.

#### Endnotes:

1. Tim Wyatt, "Televangelist reportedly plead guilty," *The Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1996.
2. *The Bookstore Journal*, December 1996, pg. 59.
3. Phone conversation between Jim Levy, conference speaker spokesman for Promise Keepers, and M. Kurt Goedelman, Jan. 29, 1997.
4. Ken Walker, "Thunder From Heaven," *Charisma* magazine, November 1996, pg. 37.
5. *Ibid.*, pg. 42.
6. *Ibid.*, pg. 43.
7. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley and Harry S. Stout, Editors, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990, pg. 359.
8. Walker, op. cit., pg. 39.
9. "East Coast Church Conference — Run with the Vision" advertisement, *Charisma* magazine, July 96, pg. 70.
10. See further, John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, pp. 28-31 and *The Glory Of Heaven*, Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1996, pg. 44-45.
11. Kaylois Henry, "Bishop Jakes Is Ready. Are You?," *The Dallas Observer* magazine, June 20-26, 1996, pg. 19.
12. *Ibid.*, pg. 22.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 31.

15. Jim Jones, "Rising-star evangelist ministers to interracial congregation," *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*, Aug. 11, 1996.
16. Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of The New Testament*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 27-33.
17. T.D. Jakes, *Loose That Man and Let Him Go*. Tulsa: Albury Press, 1995, pg. 5.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-16.
19. See further, Tal Brooke, "A Brief Look At John Bradshaw," *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 4-11.
20. Walker, op. cit., pg. 41.
21. Jakes, *Loose That Man*, op. cit., pp. 123-124.
22. Don Matzat, "The Intrusion of Psychology into Christian Theology," *Issues, Etc. Journal*, Sept. 1996, Vol. 1, No. 9, pp. 16-17, emphasis in original. This excellent article should be read in its entirety.
23. Dr. Jay E. Adams, *The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1986, pp. 39-40.
24. See further, Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1993, pp. 187-190.
25. Jakes, *Loose That Man*, op. cit., pg. 3.
26. See further, Henry Thiessen *Introductory Lectures In Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952, pp. 285.
27. *Ibid.*, pg. 286.
28. Jakes, *Loose That Man*, op. cit., pg. 42.
29. T.D. Jakes, *Why? Because You Are Anointed*. Bakersfield, Calif.: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1994, pg. 43.
30. *Ibid.*
31. For a sane, biblical, and far safer approach to guidance and God's will see pages 23-37 of Jay E. Adams' *More Than Redemption*.
32. T.D. Jakes, *The Harvest*. Bakersfield, Calif.: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996, pg. 10.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 36.
34. *Ibid.*, pg. 28.
35. *Ibid.*, pg. 29.
36. *Ibid.*, pg. 37.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
38. See further the PFO tract, "The Plain Truth of Herbert W. Armstrong," under the heading "Salvation."
39. Thomas R. Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Kregal Resources, 1996, pg. 11.
40. Griffith Thomas, *The Apostle John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, pg. 154.
41. Merrill Tenney, Editor, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975, Vol. 2, pg. 500, emphasis added.

and Pentecostal circles, maintains that prior to current phenomenon taking place at his church he was burned out, worn out and tired out. Saint Louis Vineyard pastor Randy Clark asserted the same emotions prior to his pilgrimage to Tulsa to a Rodney Howard-Browne service. Clark's revitalization at the hands of Howard-Browne was then the catalyst for the alleged move of the Spirit at the then Airport Vineyard in Toronto.

The second key player in Pensacola is the Reverend Stephen Hill who is ordained as a Missionary Evangelist with the Assemblies of God. He has held crusades and is responsible for church planting in South America, Spain, Russia and other places on the foreign field. He came to Brownsville three years ago and is currently preaching the revival meetings there.

Kilpatrick and Hill both indicated that this "revival" is as important, if not more important, than the book of Acts. It is bigger than and better than all previous revivals, these being just a foundation for this "end times move of God." Kilpatrick further emphasizes the scope and magnitude of the "revival," which began at his church and now has begun to spread to other congregations:

"I've got a sneaking feeling like one or two things is about to happen and both of them are great. I said I've got a sneaking feeling like one or two things is about to happen and both of them is great. Either, either God is going to perpetuate this revival and it's going to keep going deeper and deeper and higher and higher and longer and longer. Or either the clouds are about to split and Jesus is about to come. [Congregation responds with applause and cheers.] Hallelujah!"<sup>4</sup>

Kilpatrick also admits an inability to fully understand what is taking place at the revival:

"I can just tell you that the Lord is moving. He's moving powerfully. I can't explain it. I can't explain all

the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. I can't explain everything that's happening to me. ... Somebody says, 'Oh, Brother Kilpatrick, what's going on down there at Brownsville is wonderful!' I tell you friend, I don't know what it is. But I kind of sense in my spirit, the Lord has just laid on us and warmed us up. I don't even know if this is rev— whew! I don't even know if this is revival. I believe that God maybe just put, just put His self on us and just warmed us up a little bit. Maybe revival is right around the corner. Who knows what God has got for us?"<sup>5</sup>

Even with Kilpatrick's inadequacy to define what is taking place in Pensacola, nearly every report classifies the events as a revival. It has been claimed that this "revival" purportedly is the fulfillment of "a heretofore unannounced prophecy given to Superchurch builder and mystical teacher David [Paul] Yonggi Cho."<sup>6</sup> Cho says he gave a prophecy during a 1991 Seattle conference. His description of the event is mystical at best and more resembles the transmission of information channeled from a Ouija board:

"I became deeply concerned about the spiritual decline in America. I began to pray even more earnestly for revival in these United States. As I prayed, I felt the Lord prompt me to get a map of America, and to point my finger on the map. I found myself pointing to the city of Pensacola in the Florida panhandle."<sup>7</sup>

The phenomenon is now in its second year and appears to have eclipsed the revival at Pastor John Arnott's fellowship (formerly known as the Airport Vineyard)<sup>8</sup> in Toronto, Ontario as the leading draw of Holy Spirit sojourners. Currently, it is claimed that more than 1.5 million people have attended services since the "Brownsville Revival" first began on June 18, 1995. And the number of professions of faith claimed is staggering. For one day alone, more than 700 decisions were reported to have taken place.<sup>9</sup> However, the actual number of total decisions for Christ is difficult to

get a handle on. Conflicting figures, all within a 10-week period, abound.

For example, Trask claimed in early October that "30,000 people ... have been marvelously saved"<sup>10</sup>; a Grand Rapids newspaper advertisement promoting a January 1997 conference with the "Brownsville Revival Team" claimed "more than 40,000 people have come to Christ," while the brochure for this conference placed the number at "over 45,000 professions of faith"<sup>11</sup>; the official magazine of the Assemblies of God reported in November 1996 that "more than 55,000 have found Jesus Christ"<sup>12</sup>; Kilpatrick indicated the total to be "90,000"<sup>13</sup>; and Paul Kopenkoskey, communications director for First Assembly of God Church in Grand Rapids announced over "100,000 have become Christians" as a result of the services at Brownsville.<sup>14</sup>

The church's marquee publicizes the impact the revival is having: "Over 90,000 Souls Saved" it read in mid-January. It reminds one of the sign in front of their local McDonalds restaurant which comparably advertises: "Over 90 Billion Served."

And then at the same time the church's sign and Web site on the Internet were publicizing 90,000 souls saved, a promotion in *Charisma* magazine for a spring minister's conference declared "over 93,000 souls saved."<sup>15</sup> No doubt the *Charisma* advertisement was prepared months in advance of publication and so the "saved" figures were on a projected basis. Perhaps, the conversions did not keep up with the productivity anticipated.

Yet, what makes the numbers even more difficult to grasp is the Brownsville minister's statement that, to keep the figures conservative, the church is only reporting one-half of the actual professions. Adding more confusion to the conflicting numbers is the fact that not all the professions of faith are new decisions or even commitments to Christ. Faith healer Benny Hinn recently told a Trinity Broadcasting Network audience about a visit his wife and two of his daughters made to the Brownsville church:

"I've got to tell you something.

My wife took my two older girls to this revival in Pensacola that's going on there. Thousands have been saved. ... Well, that's her second trip there ... and she took my kids with her now. I said, 'Boy, it must really be something going on in there.' So both my children go down the aisle. This was just this last week. So I was talking— talking to both of them today, I said, 'Honey,' both you know, Jessica and Tasha, I said, 'I thought you already are saved?' So my Jesse said, 'Daddy, just to be sure.' And Tasha said, 'Just to be sure.'"<sup>16</sup>

Whether directly or indirectly dismissing these "just to be sure" professions, the Brownsville church states that those making commitments "All are either backslidden or new salvations."<sup>17</sup> They also acknowledge that "approximately 1,500" of the total number who have made a profession of faith or rededication are now attending their fellowship with most of them being baptized and approximately 500 participating in a discipleship program. They further admit that they are unable to know whether the vast majority of the conversions recorded are regularly attending church, have been baptized or are enrolled in a discipleship program.<sup>18</sup>

Yet despite the substantial volume of professions of faith (whether you accept the lowest or highest figure) and the claims of "revival," "a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit," and the "end-time revival," this movement is marked by bizarre teaching and practice found in non-Christian religions. It has all the earmarks of suggestion and altered states of consciousness. The bodily agitations and incredible physical manifestations exhibited at the meetings cannot be justified by Scripture. And the sermons reveal leaders who are not able to carefully exegete the Word of God and who play fast and loose with the text.

## NO CLONING AROUND

An atmosphere of distinctiveness is sought for the occurrences in Pensacola. What they are experiencing, according to church leaders, is unique

and should not be cloned. According to a recent edition of an Assemblies of God periodical:

"The Brownsville revival is not a pattern to be copied, but an example to be followed. Merely imitating what is seen in Pensacola would be to mistakenly ignore both the seeking which led to this revival and the spiritual costs to sustain it. Kilpatrick and Hill have cautioned people not to merely imitate or try to duplicate the revival. ... Kilpatrick ... stated bluntly, 'If you fake it, revival is over for you.'"<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, the Pensacola leaders try to distance themselves from any other contemporary spiritual occurrences regarded as a move of the Holy Spirit. Assemblies of God minister and writer Randy Hurst noted, "For many who visit, the revival at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, is a new experience."<sup>20</sup> Yet the cross-pollination is evident and even traceable. Kilpatrick writes in his autobiographical account of the events at Brownsville:

"Just weeks before [the revival in Pensacola began], 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."<sup>21</sup>

Yet despite the mandate not to copy or be copied, Hill asserts that "The Lord is raising up a model church for the remainder of this century and for the years to come."<sup>22</sup> A "model," according to the dictionary, is "a person or thing considered as a standard of excellence to be imitated."

For \$90 church leaders are able to realize even more intense training in reproducing the Pensacola "outpouring." They can attend one of the "minister's conferences" held at Brownsville and led by its ministerial staff.<sup>23</sup>

And then the question that further begs to be answered is, if God's dealings in Pensacola are unique and the "Brownsville revival is not a pattern to be copied," why do they market a whole series of revival resources beyond even the sermon videos and music tapes? Items which include organizational guidebooks such as *Ushers Manual*, *Altar Manual*, *Prayer Team Manual* and *Policy Manual*. Those who desire to mimic Brownsville even more may obtain a collection of photographs of the banners they parade around during the revival services.

The cost of these textbooks ranges from \$8 up to \$35.<sup>24</sup> They provide instructional guidelines and one such manual for the "prayer team ministry" states:

"3. Pray only for 30-45 seconds for each person. Watch your catcher for a signal if you are praying too long. 4. Pray the following prayers: 'More Lord, Sweet Jesus, More healing, More peace, More of your Love, You are the Bride of Christ, Give him/her a refreshing from the Lord', etc. Keep phrases soft and simple. Do not raise your voice. ... 6. Do not call 'Fire' or 'Holy Ghost' on any one. Do not speak in tongues."<sup>25</sup>

The procedures for "catchers" (persons responsible for standing behind and catching those "slain in the Spirit") include:

"1. When you walk behind a person, gently touch the shoulders to let them know you are there in preparation to catch them. 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. ... 3. Look for open areas before you begin to pray. This will avoid falling on others. Please do not block the aisles. If an individual is in the aisle and they are 'slain in the Spirit,' they should be laid uphill."<sup>26</sup>

One is only left to wonder why a

person must be "laid uphill" in such a specific manner. These comments and others like them certainly lead one to believe that the "revival" is more orchestrated, than a divine move of God. Yet, Kilpatrick asserts that he is merely "pastoring" the revival. Apologist Larry Thomas challenges his claim:

"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."<sup>27</sup>

Pastoring the revival, evidently, must also include the ability to cancel selected services months in advance. A published revival schedule, released during the first of the year, indicated dates in March, May, September and November which no revival services would take place. There is no reason or indication provided as to how "a sovereign move of God" can be called off months in advance.

Pastoring must further include distributing passes for access to the revival services. The church announced at the beginning of the year that:

"Tickets will be issued at 10 AM Wednesday through Saturday. One ticket will be issued per person and that person must be present to obtain the ticket. Tickets will be issued until all are gone. Tickets may be picked up at the front entrance of the main sanctuary. Guests will line up at 5 PM on Wednesday through Friday and at 4 PM on Saturday on the walkway in front of the main sanctuary according to the number on their ticket. Doors will open at 6 PM weekdays and 5 PM on Saturday. All ticket holders will go in first, then others as

space allows."<sup>28</sup>

Regardless of the need for admission tickets, canceled services, marketing techniques and warnings against cloning, ministers from the United States and abroad are migrating to the Florida panhandle in an attempt to see God move and bring the "feast of fire" back to their congregations.

### COME AND GET IT

One such pastor was M. Wayne Benson from the First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, Mich. In spring 1996, Benson traveled to Pensacola and was convinced of the supernatural anointing upon the Brownsville team because, in part, Kilpatrick acknowledged him from the platform and indicated his need for a physical healing. Following the worship service, Benson was given a 45-minute audience with Kilpatrick and Hill, where he claims he "felt like the three of [them] were swirling around the room like the vortex of a whirlpool. ... I felt as though my body was being pulled apart. The Holy Spirit said, 'Wayne, I'm just crucifying your flesh.' Benson returned [to his church] with a promise that 'the river would flow in Grand Rapids' as it had in Pensacola."<sup>29</sup>

Benson then sent to Pensacola a pastoral team from his church. They, too, "came away convinced that Grand Rapids could use such revival services."<sup>30</sup> First Assembly has begun to hold weekly Friday evening meetings which "has taken on the outer appearance of other revivals: elders anointing people with oil, groups of three and four praying earnestly, bodies strewn across the altar like a battlefield in a war for souls."<sup>31</sup>

Benson has even gone so far as to pattern his "move of God" to the "A River is Flowing" theme of Pensacola by announcing that in Grand Rapids "the river is here" and to "come to the river" and "receive the river."

To those who ask why more than a million people have made their way to a Brownsville service since Father's Day 1995, Kilpatrick responds: "Pilgrimage." Yet from history the undertaking of a pilgrimage has been a

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox pursuit derived from the Middle Ages. Followers of Mohammed make pilgrimages to Mecca and some Catholics likewise make pilgrimages to the sites of the supposed appearances of the Virgin Mary.

A pilgrimage is a journey to a place considered holy to obtain favor from God. *The New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines "pilgrimage" as "a journey made by a pilgrim, esp. to a shrine or holy place."<sup>32</sup>

The Reformers rejected the idea of pilgrimage because Jesus addressed the idea of localizing God and His blessing while He was here on Earth. Both the Jews and Samaritans were heavily into making pilgrimages, the Jews to the Temple in Jerusalem and the Samaritans to Mount Gerizim in Samaria. Jesus forever demolished the idea of localizing God and finding God in a place and showed that God is found in a person. That person, Jesus, can be called upon wherever we are. Romans 9 and 10 clearly teach that salvation and the blessings of God are available to whomever, wherever, and based only on heart faith and commitment.

Jesus further addressed the error of pilgrimage this way: "The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ... The hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:21; 23).

The four times pilgrimage is used in the Old Testament the Hebrew word *magur* means simply a journey or life's journey. When Christians are twice called pilgrims in the New Testament, the Greek word simply means to be away from home and to be strangers in a strange land. The Gospel song, "This World is Not My Home," catches the meaning well. These two words from Scripture do not come even remotely near to Kilpatrick's suggestion.

Church historian Philip Schaff offers this about pilgrimage:

"Pilgrimages are founded in the natural desire to see with one's

own eyes sacred or celebrated places, for the gratification of curiosity, the increase of devotion, and the proving of gratitude. ... the example of the superstitiously pious empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great ... was followed by innumerable pilgrims who thought that by such journeys they made the salvation of their souls more sure."<sup>33</sup>

Even if a person did not believe the above ideas about pilgrimage, why would they involve themselves in a practice that carried these connotations? Schaff continues:

"Several of the most enlightened church fathers, who approved pilgrimages in themselves, felt it necessary to oppose a superstitious estimate of them, and to remind the people that religion might be practiced in any place. Gregory of Nyssa shows that pilgrimages are *nowhere enjoined in the Scriptures*, ... 'Change of place,' says he, 'brings God no nearer. Where thou art, God will come to thee, if the dwelling of thy soul is prepared for him.' ... Protestantism has divested the visiting of remarkable places, consecrated by great men or great events, of all meritoriousness and superstitious accessories, and has reduced it to a matter of commendable gratitude and devout curiosity."<sup>34</sup>

We could be instructed and learn and be edified if we visited places that had to do with Church History. However, this is not necessary for growth in the Christian life since we have the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In no way would we speak of these visits as pilgrimages either in the medieval sense or in the Brownsville sense of transference of some kind of anointing.

The God of Scripture is not an elitist, who blesses only those who make the pilgrimage. Christians do not and should not put stock in shrines and so-called holy places. The place God wants holy is the believer's life and body since it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. But what about those who can't afford the trip? What about

the infirm who could never make a pilgrimage? The Brownsville team appears to have answers for them as well.

### HAVE REVIVAL, WILL TRAVEL

Revival enthusiasts apparently have two options. For the price of a compact disc (CD), or a less expensive cassette tape, a sovereign work of God may be yours. Integrity Music has produced, *Revival at Brownsville*, a collection of music used at the services in Pensacola. Creative director at Integrity, Don Moen, emphasized the importance and merit of the album:

"Something is imparted when you listen to this tape. I don't want it to sound spooky or mysterious, but there's something powerful about embracing the music of the revival. ... And if revival hasn't come to your church, I would say listen to this tape and get ready. It's coming."<sup>35</sup>

The second alternative is to invite the Pensacola Team to your town. However unbiblical the notion is that revival can be exported or transferred into a different setting or locale, seems to matter little. This is the methodology recently employed by the leadership of the Assemblies of God's Michigan District.

The Dec. 29, 1996 edition of *The Grand Rapids Press* featured a full-page advertisement inviting the area people to attend the Jan. 7 "River of Life revival service." The large headline read: "The Brownsville Team is coming soon to minister to you" and went on to say that the district leadership "extends to you an invitation to attend a special service." The service would be hosted at the First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, the church pastored by Wayne Benson.

The Tuesday night service quickly surpassed the capacity of the 5,000-seat worship center and several large overflow areas with video feeds. It was reported that motor vehicles lined up for 3 miles outside the church where a standing-room only crowd viewed the service. The assembly, which was open to the public,

had been preceded by two days of marathon meetings for pastors and church leaders. The draw clearly was the key figures of the Brownsville "revival" who were there to transfer the "anointing" to the expectant. Many of the hundreds of pastors and their wives in attendance had already made a trek to Brownsville Assembly and were there to experience more of the "anointing."

"Revival exporting" has become big business with its books, audio and videotapes of sermons, and music tapes and CDs and the transfer of spiritual awakening they promise. Yet the Church has been able to survive for nearly 2,000 years without the benefit of modern technology that help move this revival to different locales. It did by people who sincerely pored over the Bible in their homes.

### TECHNIQUES WITH RESULTS

Though much is said about the sovereignty of God at the Brownsville meetings (which can last five hours or more), it is not unreasonable to wonder why God needs nearly two hours of supercharged, super-loud music that more resembles an intense aerobics workout than a worship service as a prelude to a 90-minute message just to get to an "anointing service" that results in people strewn all over the auditorium twitching, shaking, convulsing, laughing, bowing, twisting, moaning, jerking, spinning, dancing, and so forth. The wildness of it all is in stark contrast to the decorum *commanded* by the Apostle Paul.

The blatant disregard for the Word of God in the regulations set forth in 1 Corinthians 14 plainly demonstrates that they are *not* in the pattern of the historical revivals, as they claim. Those revivals exalted and observed the Word. In fact, the current movements quench the Spirit by ignoring the very vehicle through which the Spirit speaks. Michael Horton astutely observes that:

"If some forms of extreme fundamentalism reflect a gnostic legalism, certain forms of Pentecostal or charismatic spirituality may be guilty of gnostic antinomianism (i.e., without rules or order). By

rejecting structure, form, authority, creeds, words, and by emphasizing the work of the Spirit in the individual's heart more centrally than the work of Christ in history, many 'free-spirit' evangelicals run the risk of abandoning classical Christianity."<sup>36</sup>

The God of the Bible broke into the life of Gideon on a threshing floor without a lengthy song service (Judges 6). He met David in the fields (Psalm 23). He humbled Isaiah in the Temple (Isaiah 6). He spoke through the angels to shepherds tending their flocks (Luke 2). He intercepted Saul in a moment of time on a dusty road (Acts 9). He mightily appeared to Stephen in his death throes (Acts 7). The Pensacola meetings seem more like orchestrated chaos and follow the same pattern service after service with the same songs and the same physical results, so often with the same people.

Advocates will often say, "But look at the results." So-called "results," however, can be shallow and misleading. If results are the only thing to be sought then the end clearly justifies the means.

Consider the statistics from research studies done by the National Institute for Healthcare Research and presented in the video, *The Faith Factor*. The Institute reports that psychopathology (mental problems) among Pentecostals is double that of Conservative Christians.<sup>37</sup> Thus one can see that there can be mixed results and very negative results over time in emotion-engendered religion.

Moreover, the report shows that followers of both the Divine Light Mission (Guru Maharaj Ji) and the Unification Church (Sun Myung Moon) have decreased psychological symptoms when people join these groups. And Mormons who were "strong in their faith had about half the rate of cancer as those Mormons who were less active in their faith."<sup>38</sup> These, too, are results. Yet their results do not make them true or founded on the bedrock of Scripture.

Whether a group is believing, adhering to and practicing the Bible is the much more important and basic question since all cults and move-

ments have their "success" stories. Everything must be measured by the Word of God, not by impressions, feelings or even so called results. God will ultimately have the last word based on His Word alone (John 8:31, 12:48).

## AGAINST-THE-WALL MINISTRY

The Brownsville team has an answer for everything. However, it may not be a biblical answer or a satisfactory answer.

Take, for instance, the time Hill offered the information that people, including himself, have been hurt in the meetings as a result of all the falling and dropping and convulsing. He commented:

"I've come home with wounds and bruises all over my body, friend. This is revival!"<sup>39</sup>

People are hurt, as Hill notes, because revivals are violent:

"I'm a student of revivals. The Cain Ridge Revival at the turn of the cent— 1800s was a violent revival and people were mowed down by the hundreds. Wham! They hit the ground. Some of them were out for three days."<sup>40</sup>

Hill appears very unapologetic that there are "injuries." Since God is doing it, the revival leaders should not be held culpable. Thus, the way to sidestep responsibility is simply to blame God. He cites Saul's encounter with the Lord in Acts 9:3-4 as biblical support for the manifestations.

The spurious use of Scripture to argue the strange and sometimes dangerous manifestations is even more evident with Kilpatrick's observation that:

"Hey, you all remember in the Acts of the Apostles, there was a man that fell out in the Spirit, broke his neck and killed him. Paul raised him from the dead. 'nough said."<sup>41</sup>

The incident Kilpatrick alludes to was Paul's raising Eutychus from the dead in Acts 20. Luke's narration of the episode is far different than Kil-

patrick's description. The man *did not* fall out *in the Spirit*, but rather fell into a sound sleep. Neither does Luke record that the man's neck was broken. Kilpatrick's exegesis demonstrates a careless and irresponsible use of the Word of God.

Hill further asserts that at Brownsville, in addition to the typical slayings in the Spirit, people have been lifted off the floor and thrown into walls. Others have been dropped or slammed into pews. As well, they fall on top of one another before ushers and catchers are able to jockey for position to grab hold of the falling victim. Hill observed:

"I have hundreds of times laid hands on the unsaved and I have watched them being thrown across the ground. I mean, I have watched them fly through the air, fall to the ground to where they couldn't get up for an hour or two hours. The next thing you know is: 'What must I do to be saved? What must I do?' Friend, I'm not talking hundreds anymore. Thousands this has happened to. Thousands have been convinced by the power. ... We have had people, agnostics, God-haters, businessmen come into our meetings and they've been thrown through the air up against a wall and hit the ground when we shook their hand."<sup>42</sup>

Needless to say, people are hurt. But since these are acts of God doing it, it is not the team's problem. They take no responsibility. A shrewd lawyer may think otherwise.

Being supernaturally thrown against a wall is not only contrary to Scripture, but to the very nature of Jesus. In Ephesians 5:25-29 there is a comparison of a husband's relationship with his wife growing out of an awareness of Christ's concern for His bride, the Church. Paul commands us to nourish and cherish our wives *as Christ does the church*. It could not be clearer. Christians would not throw their wife or child against a wall. They would not slam their spouse into a pew because that is not Christ's *modus operandi*.

Jesus is our tender Shepherd and He causes goodness and mercy to follow us all our days. How could the Comforter be called a comforter if His method of operation was by banging us into pews and walls?

Hill also claims that on one occasion, because the anointing of God was so evident, he was lifted repeatedly off the floor during one of the revival meetings:

“Now I have never had this happen to me [before]. When I touched one of them [a member of the audience slain in the Spirit], a joint of electricity shot through me and threw me up in the air four feet. I was slammed to the ground and picked up, slammed to the ground. The ushers were watching this. As a matter of fact, one of the ushers that takes care of me at night, thought I was going to die. He had never seen anything so violent. I was picked up, thrown down, picked up, thrown down, picked up, thrown down. After about ten times on the ground, I said, ‘Okay, Jesus. I know you’re doing something here.’”<sup>43</sup>

If God is causing these manifestations, surely, Ephesians 5 and many other portions of Scripture would have to, not just be reinterpreted, but rewritten.

The other frightening thing is that in spiritualistic and occult practice, bodily agitations and people being thrown and hurt are not uncommon. Satan and the realm of the occult operate in this way. Hill reports that,

“...there’s nothing a catcher can do if a lady a hundred feet away is hit by the power of God, is thrown up against the wall and wakes up with a knot on her head.”<sup>44</sup>

Just a few years ago, the Assemblies of God leadership would have identified such activity as poltergeistic and would have been pleading the blood over the demons in an exorcistic fashion. How times have changed.

The violent phenomenon reported by Hill and Kilpatrick, by their own admission, can be a mixture of some

flesh and some demonic. Kilpatrick has admitted that he can’t explain a lot of things that are happening. Perhaps, for the sake of the new “babies” he should find out.

### COURTING DISASTER

Even more alarming and dangerous is the frame of mind those attending the services leave Pensacola with. Consider this testimonial which appeared on the church’s Web site:

“Another testimony was from a Pastor from Louisiana. He had attended the Pastor Conference last November. During the Conference, he had asked God to heal him of diabetes. He had been on insulin for a number of years and really sought God for healing. Before he left the conference, this pastor felt God was directing him to get rid of all his insulin and syringes. He obeyed God and did so. As he left the conference for Louisiana, he did not feel that God had healed him. During the drive home, the Lord told him to fast. For eight days he did not put a single morsel of food to his mouth. Needless to say this Pastor came back to Brownsville to testify that God had completely healed him of diabetes. To God be the glory!”<sup>45</sup>

One need only recall the story of Wesley Parker, an eleven-year-old diabetic who died prematurely because his Charismatic parents claimed a healing and withheld life-saving insulin from him.<sup>46</sup> Even if the Brownsville team themselves did not proclaim the pastor from Louisiana “healed,” they may well stand culpable for any tragic results that follow from those who are inspired to do as this pastor did because of their promotion of the incident. Withholding insulin and other medications without the proper counsel of a physician is risky business and courting disaster.

### PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKES

A considerable amount of time and energy is devoted by the Brownsville staff and their supporters to damage control and pre-emptive warnings. The team repeatedly cautions against those who do not “move with the

Spirit” and labels anyone critical of this “work of God” as having a “Jezebel spirit.” Hill has even marketed a video tape of a full-length sermon dealing with those he regards as the spiritually blind, titled *White Cane Religion*.

Repetitive charges go forth which disparage doctrine. It is asserted that it is much more beneficial to align with one with whom your spirit agrees with than your doctrine. The greatest miracle, they emphasize, is deliverance from a critical spirit.

The Brownsville’s worship and music leader, Lindell Cooley, prophesied during the January Grand Rapids meetings:

“There is a brother here who’s struggling with the things we are saying. The Lord is saying, ‘I’m bypassing your mind and going straight to your heart.’ ... The heart is what matters to the Lord.”<sup>47</sup>

Kilpatrick uses his own life as an illustration of deliverance from a critical spirit:

“And I think we got to realize in these days that God is doing something more so perhaps than in any other time in our lives. God’s doing something. When I first saw some of the things that the Lord was doing — I saw them on television — and I almost came out with a critical remark. *And just as it was about to come out of my mouth, I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, ‘You better be careful.’ And I grabbed my mouth.*”<sup>48</sup>

Apparently, Kilpatrick seeks to silence the cynics by touting himself to be a standard of discernment. He recently informed his fellow Assemblies of God pastors:

“But I can tell you one thing: I am so critical and suspicious. My wife has often said that I would make a great FBI agent. I don’t let anything go on in my church that I feel like is out of order. I don’t let anything go on that I feel like is a fleshly distracting thing. I’ve quieted people down before. I’ve stopped revival meetings before of people I’ve felt like were doing

things that I felt like grieved the Holy Spirit. And I've got up and publicly stopped it."<sup>49</sup>

Hill also tells that he too had a "critical spirit":

"I read in *Time* magazine how God was moving. I had been to London several times, and I thought, 'I've got to see this, I've got to see God moving in the Anglican Church because I can't imagine it.' The article said they were laughing, they were falling, and I had a very critical spirit."<sup>50</sup>

Kilpatrick and Hill, therefore, both originally claimed a skepticism that they will not afford those attending their meetings or buying their tapes to have.

Moreover, the powerful anointing and variety of spiritual gifts these men presume to have, appear to come without discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10). At a series of services, led by Kilpatrick and Hill, attended by the authors of this article, Hill laid hands on and prayed over one of the authors during the "ministry time." He claimed he could see "rivers flowing" from him and "healing." Somehow, he overlooked the wary and suspicious spirit of the one he prayed over. These maneuvers and words of knowledge over anybody and everybody only serve to impugn their claim of discernment and the ability to transfer this anointing.

In addition to the skeptics, there are other personalities that must be dealt with. Hill notes that revivals like Brownsville draw all kinds of "loonies." He warns to be careful of "the loonies that will come to your church." He has expelled the "loonies" from his services and claimed that one man kept saying, "The Father told me to do this." Hill responded, "The Father told me to do this: 'Get him out of here, man. Get him out of here!'" and promptly had him thrown out.<sup>51</sup>

The sad thing is that with all the power supposedly being manifested through them, can't God deliver the "loonies?" Why are the "loonies" bigger than the move of God? And then who is to decide as to who is a

"loony?"

## CHECK US OUT

Despite the warnings against those with critical spirits, the Brownsville team strives to at least present a veneer that their doctrine and practice are biblical. Hill recently stated:

"We have a theologian, by the way, on our staff. Michael Brown, who is a theologian. He debates rabbis all over the world. Those of you who have a problem about anything write Michael Brown, Brownsville Assembly. He'll blow you away, friend. He'll give you Scripture for everything that's going on. But I don't have to have a Scripture every time a man's hand twitches. I'm sorry, if you've got to have a Scripture if a man's hand twitches."<sup>52</sup>

In spite of Hill's challenge, members of the Brownsville staff are not always able to provide an answer for what they say from the pulpit. A clear example was Kilpatrick's teaching on the tabernacle:

"But isn't it interesting that the outside [of the tabernacle] has a gate, and as you go into the Holy Place it has a door, and then as you go into the most Holy Place it has a veil. And the interesting thing about it is, according to tradition, you know what the Jews called the gate? They called the gate, 'the Way.' Do you know what the Jews called the door going into the Holy Place? They called it, 'the Truth.' And you know what they called the veil that went into the most Holy Place? [Congregation responds: 'The Life'.] You got it. And Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'"<sup>53</sup>

Kilpatrick's flawed exegesis is akin to the erroneous proclamations of faith healer Benny Hinn.<sup>54</sup> And Hinn may very well be the source of Kilpatrick's statement as it cannot be authenticated by way of Scripture or extra-biblical sources such as the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic Literature, Josephus, Philo and so forth.

PFO wrote to Kilpatrick asking if he could please provide the source for this teaching and suggested that if his schedule was overloaded he could direct our request to Rev. Michael Brown since he is their resident theologian and is skilled in rabbinic philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

A memo from a church secretary was mailed to PFO indicating that the inquiry was "given to Dr. Michael Brown for his response."<sup>56</sup> However, our initial request and a subsequent letter have both gone unanswered. Instead of being "blown away," it appears that critical inquiries are "blown off."

## BIRTHING ROOM PROBLEMS

It should be stated unhesitatingly and honestly that during several of the meetings observed by the authors of this article, either in person or on videotape, Hill did frequently give a clear evangelistic message where the Christian Gospel is expressed and an invitation to accept Christ is offered. And many respond. Lost souls can and are being saved and born into the Kingdom of God. However the dilemma is, as we see it, what are they saved to?

If you knew that your local hospital had a maternity ward that was unclean or unsafe would you be happy just because they were delivering babies? Or would you not realize that there is a responsibility to address the maternity ward problems lest these infants be endangered?

New converts are misinformed and misled with strange doctrine from the maternity ward of the Brownsville church. As well, its pediatrics ward is fraught with problems and infections enough to cause serious concerns. The Assemblies of God are being swept away into a new pandemonium that will be counter productive in the long run. We cannot ignore God's rule book for faith and practice and hope to succeed.

In Matthew 28:20 Jesus addressed our great responsibility and said, "Teaching them to observe *all* things that I have commanded you." In some cases what was taught and is being taught through Kilpatrick and Hill are

unscriptural errors. Pastors and church leaders have a responsibility to their converts and to new babes in Christ to be true to the Scriptures and not mislead. In spite of presumed fruit, the negative reaping will be seen over time.

One song that is repeatedly used during Brownsville's revival services and its clones is "This is the Year of the Favor of the Lord." Hill identifies it as "a prophetic song — it's about what God is going to do, what He is doing."<sup>57</sup> Grand Rapids Pastor Wayne Benson said specifically that we are in the "favorable year of our God" and quoted from Luke 4:19. However, both Benson and Hill also made the claim in 1996. This is misleading and off the mark scripturally. Jesus spoke that passage of Himself and all He came to do. It all has been fulfilled in Him. Luke 4:21 says emphatically: "And He began to say to them, *today* this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears."

Was this an attempt to get our eyes off Christ either by design or default? How can we take what Christ fulfills and claim we are fulfilling it? This is a small sampling of the Scripture-twisting that goes on. We are to be looking to Jesus not for physical phenomenon.

Kilpatrick, in one very questionable and melodramatic close to a sermon called down "the sword of the Spirit" to hover over the congregation and cut away sin:

"Lord — congregation please bear with me — this is personal and it sounds strange but hear me. I ask the Lord to bear His sword and brandish it around your midsection, your lower extremities, where your sexual organs are. That the Holy Ghost cut off all the pollution that the devil has attached to you through bygone days of illicit promiscuous sexual activity. That the Lord begin to cut all of that pollution and all of that attack of the enemy. Where the devil has incarcerated you and imprisoned and intimidated you. And even when you had to violate your own conscience and your own testimony and your own ministry to satisfy that lust and that urge. I ask that the Lord

brandish that sword and cut that lustful spirit off of you in the name of Jesus. Whew!"<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps most those listening to Kilpatrick's comments believed the invisible sword was really there. It seems to matter little that within the confines of Scripture, the "sword of the Spirit" is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17b).

Then there's the question, "Does sin linger on body parts?" Perhaps Kilpatrick has been reading dubious spiritual warfare authority Mark Bubeck. Bubeck recently came up with prayers to get demons off bones, muscles, glands, hair, skin, and even sexual organs.<sup>59</sup>

Is it that easy to just have an invisible sword shave that area or whatever it is supposed to do? Surely this is just innovative nonsense without a shred of biblical evidence. Sin does not reside on our epidermis or cling to our skin. If it were that easy we could wash it off with a bar of soap and a bottle of shampoo.

The root of sin is the internal recesses of the heart. Jeremiah 17:9 cuts to the quick telling us: "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked." Jesus said clearly that, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts ... adulteries" (Matthew 15:9). A relationship with Christ in the New Covenant addresses the issue of the heart and the sin that clings internally to us (Hebrews 8:10-13).

Certainly we sin with our body parts, eyes, hands, feet and so forth, but in doing so we only follow our hearts. Our bodies only do the bidding of our hearts. There is no instruction anywhere in Scripture to get sin or demons off body parts either by prayer or a sword. This is a subtle shift away from the real armor of Ephesians 6 and the clear teaching that Scripture is our only sword.

Then in another dramatic and theatrical move, Kilpatrick had everyone write out their single most heart's desire on a small piece of paper. They were instructed to write out what they most wanted from God — it had to be something only God could do. Then the hundreds of petitions were

collected and he promised them they would be put on a cot and he would lay on them.<sup>60</sup>

A gurney was brought to the platform and the requests were spread out. Kilpatrick laid face down and began to intercede for the petitions. He explained that on two other occasions when he did this, the requests were being answered before people got home and were able to put their key in the door. It appeared to be self-aggrandizement, not true intercession.

## INTERCESSION GONE WRONG

Yet, even more disturbing than Kilpatrick's theatrical gurney scene is what has been introduced by the Brownsville team as an "Intercession Service."<sup>61</sup> It is a journey into emotion and imagination gone riot. Kilpatrick's wife, Brenda, informs the congregation that "manifestations are intercession." From there it builds. In receiving the "gift of intercession," Mrs. Kilpatrick instructs that "bowing and birthing" go along with it. Scripture, however, says intercession is something all Christians *do*, not receive.

A videotape of the service shows that as Hill takes the pulpit people begin to pass out and go into frantic convulsions. The convulsing, spastic, vibrating bodies are carried to the platform at Hill's instruction. As they are lined across the stage in this orgy of voyeurism, Hill tells the congregation, "These folks are interceding for you."

A biblical concept is now being redefined in a totally sensual way and is identified with convulsions.

Hill then calls people forward, but to what? There was no presentation of the Gospel message at all. He then shouts, "Come on, come on. Get right with God." Only a few dozen come.

Hill gets more frantic as people wail and scream. Hill keeps screaming, "Come on, come on. Right now, you need Jesus." Then another few dozen walk forward. Certainly not the hundreds and hundreds reported at every meeting.

The incident becomes even more bizarre as Hill claims that there are 50 people in the balcony ready to come down. The ushers are then instructed to carry the "intercessors" to the balcony. Hill shouts, "If you are not right with God when the intercessors pass, you better run to the Lord." Assemblies of God doctrine used to teach that conviction came by the Word and the Spirit, not from a spastic body.

The convulsing bodies are, with much difficulty, carried up and through the balcony as Hill keeps screaming, "You better get down here." Bodies are lugged by four or five ushers, but the balcony crowd seems unmoved. Whatever these "intercessors" were supposed to do to the people it is not obvious.

What does the Bible say about intercession? There are only seven passages on intercession in the New Testament and they are not even remotely close to the frenzied nonsense on this video.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-2 intercession is seen as the prayers of the people of God for peace and godliness. In 1 Timothy 4:5 it is simply prayer over meals. Intercession as it applies to God's people is intelligible prayer.

In the five other passages we see this: Romans 8:26-27 it is the Holy Spirit praying for us; Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25 it is Christ praying for us; then in Romans 11:2-4 it is Elijah praying intelligent prayers.

The Greek word for intercession is *enteuxis* and literally means conversation, petition, or prayer and was used of approaching a King.<sup>62</sup> Would any king (especially our King) take pleasure in seizures?

How can a doctrine and practice be built on convulsions and on spastic fits? Is it as Mrs. Kilpatrick says, bowing and birthing or is it total loss of body control and sanctified epilepsy? None of these fits the picture of biblical intercession. It appears that the Brownsville team just makes up things as it goes along.

### BLUE HAZE PERSUASION

Hill seeks to give further credence

to the Brownsville manifestations by claiming that all sorts of unearthly spectacles have been routine in Assembly of God circles. He notes that "blue hazes" have been commonly seen in Pentecostal history.<sup>63</sup> However, could it be because ministers supposedly reporting such sensations were operating on too little sleep because of marathon meetings? Hill, by his own report, functions on three hours of sleep a night. Blue hazes are not in the Bible. They weren't there at Pentecost, nor on the road to Damascus with Saul of Tarsus. Blue hazes can result from sleep loss, and perceptual difficulties as a result. Blue hazes speak more of altered states of consciousness or the paranormal, than biblical encounters.

What Hill identifies as a blue haze is labeled in paranormal research as "entopic phenomenon." It is where mental images can be interpreted as external objects. It is associated with Scheerer's phenomenon, which is triggered by psychological, chemical and sensory changes.

Eye fluttering, seen in emotionally charged meetings stimulate entopic phenomenon. Perhaps, entopic phenomenon has been stumbled on by and unbeknownst to the Assemblies of God. The sensation is predictable and seen in all ethnic groups, genders, religions and historical periods. It is also interesting that it is always given a religious or spiritual cast by those experiencing it.<sup>64</sup> Still, it has no supernatural qualities and is merely an emotionally induced state that causes changes in the blood flow affecting the retina of the eyes. The color blue and the blueness of the "vision" is the tell tale sign.

One lady even reported that she could "smell Jesus." Was she for real or just an unwitting victim of olfactory hallucinations? So called "odors of sanctity" have been long demonstrated in Catholicism, spiritualist seances, non-Christian religions and connected with various illnesses.<sup>65</sup>

The purported supernatural manifestations do not stop there. Kilpatrick explains various aspects of the revival that involve the mystical:

"So immediately there were three things that caught my attention right off the get go. And that was the children. How that God was touching them. They were seeing visions, they were seeing angels. They were in the floor with their eyes rolled back in their head in another world. I mean you take a 3-year-old, a 4-year-old, a 5-year-old kid laying in the floor that's not moving for two hours, that's not sleeping. That's God. Amen? That's God."<sup>66</sup>

Since most of what is seen coming out of Brownsville cannot be found in Scripture or is justified on a flimsy shred with out-of-context verses, we can only conclude at the very least it is fleshly and psychological and at the worst will be used of Satan to further confuse and divide the Body of Christ.

### LOOSE WITH THE TRUTH

In addition to the astounding numbers of conversions being claimed by the Brownsville church, its reputation is being enlarged in other ways as reported effects on the community. A report from the church hints that a drop in the crime rate can be attributed to the revival. Citing an article in the Jan. 3, 1997, edition of the *Pensacola News Journal*, which states that juvenile crime rose one percent in the state of Florida between the fiscal years of 1994/1995 and 1995/1996, a Brownsville publication announced:

"However, for Escambia County and its neighboring county, Santa Rosa, the juvenile crime rate has dropped 13 and 3 percent respectively. The [newspaper] article didn't have any good reasons for the decline in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties other than to say the message 'crime doesn't pay' must be getting through to the kids and parents. I have a different perspective. Want to guess?"<sup>67</sup>

The Pensacola Police Department does not agree with the Brownsville "perspective." Speaking on behalf of Chief of Police Norman N. Chapman Jr., Assistant Chief Jerry W. Potts told PFO:

"...about the revival being responsible for the decline in crime, ... I can't say. I'm faxing you some statistics on the city's crime comparisons. There was an 11-month period in 1995-96 when we did not have a homicide, but I cannot go so far as to say that was directly attributable to the revival."<sup>68</sup>

The "Six Year Crime Comparison" (1991-1996) provided by the Pensacola police shows, at best, a mixed bag. While selected offenses such as homicides, burglaries and motor vehicle theft did decline in 1996 when compared with 1995, consider the following: forcible sex offenses were up, robberies were up, assault and battery was up, drug possession was up, total traffic fatalities doubled and total call for police service increased by over 1,700.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, the decrease in homicides when comparing two years was only one offense, from six in 1995 to five in 1996. A more significant decline was recorded just before the revival occurred, when the figure decreased from twelve in 1993 to seven in 1994.<sup>70</sup> Statistics can be bent, twisted and applied in any number of ways. Bill Gothard uses the same technique — and is even more prosperous in his numbers:

"Whole cities are now sponsoring [Gothard's] Basic Seminar after one city experienced a 50 percent drop in juvenile crime only four months after their Basic Seminar."<sup>71</sup>

The Brownsville pastoral staff doesn't just stop with the using of positive crime statistics. Even more exalted, more direct, legends are being repeatedly circulated. Hill claimed:

"The other night, they came up to me, they said, 'The cops just came and dropped some people off here. Think about this, pastors: Rather than take these three kids to jail — they were going to take them to jail — they went [shakes his head, *No*] they don't need jail, they need this revival. [Congregation responds with enthusiasm.]

They brought them over here and dumped them off. [Additional response from congregation.] And they were here. They came, two of them received Christ, and they were here under divine appointment."<sup>72</sup>

Pensacola city police take issue with this report as well. Chapman told PFO:

"I am not aware of any of our officers taking some juveniles to the revival instead of to jail. There are law enforcement agencies in the area (such as Escambia Sheriff's, Gulf Breeze Police, Santa Rosa Sheriff's Milton Police departments) and if something like that did occur, it might have been an officer from one of those agencies. Without a date and time, it's virtually impossible to track something like that down."<sup>73</sup>

PFO further explored the chance that the law enforcement agencies suggested by Chapman were responsible for the episode. Representatives of the Milton and Gulf Breeze police departments and Escambia and Santa Rosa sheriff's departments all denied that members of their agencies did anything like what Hill suggested.<sup>74</sup> All agreed the actions described by the Brownsville team are foreign to their departmental procedures.

Myths, distorted facts and exaggerations may play well to the crowds and appear to stimulate the faith of gullible followers, but in the long run the true effects of deceit always surface. To unbelievers who are privy to the facts, these falsehoods cast reproach onto the Gospel. The power of the Gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit are more than enough to bring sinners to Christ. The testimony of Scripture is adequate for Christians. God doesn't need or want our dishonesty to help save sinners or encourage believers. The Apostle Peter expressed: "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16).

## CONCLUSIONS

In fairness it can be said that the

modern Church can learn some positive things from the Brownsville experience. Certainly it can and should be more sincere and more intense in its worship. Our worship can become ritualistic and commonplace. We also do not need to be tied to the clock so closely and insist on a one-hour meeting each Sunday. (Though we are not suggesting five-hour marathon meetings, a few extra minutes should be as nothing since Jesus was willing to hang on a cross for hours for us.)

We can also take to heart the zeal and passion for the lost and dying. A spirit of love and concern for our unconverted family, neighbors and friends should empower us to more effective evangelism.

We can also learn that we cannot — must not — abandon the Scriptures as a regulative principle for doctrine and practice. Once we do, no matter how well intentioned, we are left on a sea of emotions and speculation with no guide posts and may well open the door to the occult and much confusion and error.

Yet despite the good that can be gleaned, the negatives still abound. Hill offered this good advice: "Make sure the one you are following knows where he's going." But then he put out the expectation that soon the world might see the shadows of the anointed healing the sick, as well as see the dead raised. The idea, too, that this "revival" would sweep the land and usher in the Second Coming of Christ is equally offensive. We need to be sure the one we follow really knows where he is going.

Assemblies' General Superintendent Trask may have well realized that yet another monster has escaped within his denomination. In January he issued a "Pastoral Letter" in which he cautioned:

"One does not need to whip something up or help the Holy Spirit in producing manifestations by pushing people over and then calling it slain in the Spirit. One does not need to copy what God has done some place else. ... One must stay biblically sound. The Word of God has placed responsi-

bility upon you as a leader to lead. One must not turn leadership over to novices. You must find the balance between guiding the order of service, and controlling the order."<sup>75</sup>

Trask further instructed:

"If you are having people leave the church because of excesses, you need to seek help."<sup>76</sup>

Sadly, it appears that it has taken defections before a wake-up call was sounded against the excesses. Yet, PFO commends Trask's efforts and calls on him and the other leadership of the Assemblies of God to go even further and take swiftly the bold step of disciplining this movement and getting its house in order and back to its biblical roots.

Is this a "revival" to end all "revivals" — the mother of all revivals? Its doctrine and practice says simply that it is the Church tapping into a new emotionalism and new heights of mysticism, the paranormal and entopic phenomenon. Can the monster be caged again? Time will tell.

#### Endnotes:

1. "1997 Conference on the Ministry" brochure, First Assembly of God, Grand Rapids, Mich., Jan. 6-7.
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3. "Assemblies of God MINISTER, Exclusive Release to Assemblies of God Ministers" from the General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask. Release dated Oct. 1, 1996.
4. Rev. John Kilpatrick sermon, "Seven Steps to the Anointing," Pensacola: Brownsville Assembly of God, Sept. 15, 1996.
5. Rev. John Kilpatrick sermon, "1997 Conference on the Ministry," Grand Rapids, Mich., Monday, Jan. 6, evening session.
6. Rev. Larry Thomas, "Brownsville Revival: Toronto Revisited," *The Inkhorn*, Vol. 7, No. 5, October 1996, pg. 1.
7. John Kilpatrick, *Feast*, op. cit., Foreword, pg. vii.
8. For more information on the Vineyard, see "The Animalization of Christianity - Chaos in the Vineyard," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 5-9.
9. John Kilpatrick sermon, Jan. 6, op. cit. The date of the 700+ conversions is Friday, Jan. 3, 1997.
10. Trask, "Exclusive Release," op. cit.
11. *The Grand Rapids Press*, full-page advertisement, Dec. 29, 1996, pg. A22. Conference brochure, op. cit.
12. Randy Hurst, "Pensacola," *Pentecostal Evangel*, No. 4035 (Nov. 10, 1996), pg. 11.
13. John Kilpatrick, "1997 Conference," op. cit.,

- Jan. 6.
14. Dale Dieleman, "Florida pastors share experiences at revival service," *The Grand Rapids Press*, Jan. 4, 1997, pg. B2.
15. Brownsville Assembly of God Church marquee, Jan. 17, 1997; "Brownsville Revival" homepage, (<http://www.brownsville-revival.org>), "Revival Facts" updated: 1/17/97; *Charisma* magazine, February 1997, "The Pensacola Harvest Revival - This Present Glory" advertisement, pg. 31.
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17. Fax response from "Rose" (Compton) of the Brownsville Assembly of God, Pensacola, Fla., dated 12/13/96, to an inquiry made by Robert Hunter, special research assistant for the Christian Research Institute.
18. Ibid.
19. Randy Hurst, op. cit., pg. 14.
20. Ibid., pg. 11.
21. John Kilpatrick, *Feast*, op. cit., pg. 74.
22. "A Conversation with John Kilpatrick and Stephen Hill," *Pentecostal Evangel*, op. cit., pg. 17.
23. *Charisma* magazine, "Harvest Revival" ad, op. cit.
24. Brownsville Assembly of God, Revival Product Catalog.
25. *Prayer Team Manual*, Pensacola: Brownsville Assembly of God, no date, pp. 9-10.
26. Ibid., pg. 10.
27. Larry Thomas, op. cit., pg. 38, emphasis added.
28. "Brownsville Revival" homepage, (<http://www.brownsville-revival.org>), "News from the Church - Synopsis of the Week" dated 1/17/97, pg. 3.
29. Joel Kilpatrick, "Revival reports," *Pentecostal Evangel*, op. cit., pg. 12.
30. Dale Dieleman, op. cit.
31. Joel Kilpatrick, op. cit., pp. 12-13.
32. *The New World Dictionary of the American Language*, Cleveland: Simon and Schuster, 1984, pg. 1079.
33. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994, Vol. 3, pp. 466-467.
34. Ibid., pp. 467-469, emphasis added.
35. Joel Kilpatrick, "Don Moen discusses music at Brownsville Assembly," *Pentecostal Evangel*, op. cit., pg. 7.
36. Michael Horton, *In the Face of God*. Dallas: Word Publishers, 1996, pg. 45.
37. Dr. Dale A. Matthews, *The Faith Factor*. Rockville, Md.: National Institute for Healthcare Research, video tape.
38. Ibid.
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40. Ibid.
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42. Steve Hill, *ibid.*
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. "News from the Church," op. cit., 1/17/97, pg. 2.
46. See further, Larry and Alice Parker and Don Tanner, *We Let Our Son Die*. Irvine, Calif.: Harvest House Publishers, 1980.
47. Lindell Cooley, "1997 Conference," op. cit., Jan. 7.

48. John Kilpatrick, "1997 Conference," op. cit., Jan. 6, emphasis added.
49. Ibid.
50. "The Good News Interview with Evangelist Steve Hill" downloaded from the Internet ([hill.htm](http://hill.htm) at [www.goshen.net](http://www.goshen.net)).
51. Steve Hill, "1997 Conference," op. cit., Jan. 7.
52. Ibid.
53. John Kilpatrick, "Seven Steps," op. cit.
54. See further, G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, pp. 107, 123-124, for a critical analysis of this teaching.
55. Letter (sent via facsimile) to Rev. John Kilpatrick from M. Kurt Goedelman, Jan. 14, 1997.
56. Fax cover sheet mailed to PFO from Nell Matthews, secretary, postmarked Feb. 3, 1997.
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59. Mark Bubeck, *Spiritual Warfare Basics*. Sioux City, Iowa: International Center for Biblical Counseling, no date, pg. 23. For more information on the teachings of Bubeck, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 1, 14-18.
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64. Leonard George, *Alternative Realities*. New York: Facts on File (An Infobase Holdings Co.), 1995, pp. 83-84.
65. Ibid., pp. 202-203.
66. John Kilpatrick, "1997 Conference," op. cit., Jan. 7.
67. "News from the Church," op. cit., 1/17/97, pg. 2.
68. Letter from Norman N. Chapman Jr., City of Pensacola Chief of Police, to M. Kurt Goedelman, Jan. 30, 1997.
69. "Six Year Crime Comparison" (1991-1996), Pensacola Police Department, Source: William Bragwell, police records.
70. Ibid.
71. Institute in Basic Life Principles, "An exciting, urgent report to: Pastors and Christian Leaders" from Bill Gothard, dated January 1997.
72. Steve Hill, "Resisting," op. cit. This story is also repeated on the "News from the Church," 1/17/97, op. cit., pg. 2.
73. Chapman letter, op. cit.
74. Phone conversations with spokespersons from the Milton and Gulf Breeze police departments and Escambia and Santa Rosa sheriff's departments and M. Kurt Goedelman on Jan. 30 and 31, 1997.
75. "Pastoral Letter - The General Council of the Assemblies of God" from the General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask, dated Jan. 3, 1997, pg. 1.
76. Ibid., pg. 2.

proper hermeneutics, can lead and influence thousands of mesmerized followers. No doubt, some of them actually believed that on Jan. 31 their whole household would become Christian. And then as Hinn perpetuates the illusion by reporting testimonies of complete families coming to Christ, disappointment will be left behind for the vast majority of his devotees whose families did not convert to Christianity. Somehow, like the healing facade he creates, these untold thousands will each individually feel like they are the only one who did not realize Hinn's promise of salvation. Could it be some sin in their life? A lack of faith on their part? Or perhaps, Satan was able to "steal" their family's opportunity for salvation?

Yes, God could sovereignly deliver household salvation if He so wished. However, with Hinn's track record of gimmicks and ploys, PFO is not convinced that God has given Hinn that prerogative.

If the healing evangelist could just claim by faith that all one's relatives would get saved, why did Paul write to the Corinthian Christians, who had unsaved spouses: "How do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know O husband, whether you will save your wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:16). Does Hinn know more than the Apostle Paul?

If Hinn, or anyone for that matter, can claim the salvation of all their household why would Jesus have told us: "A man's enemies will be the members of his own household" (Matthew 10:36, also Luke 12:51-53)?

We can and should witness to our household, not only by our words but by our actions. We should also pray that God would send others to share the Gospel with them. We are in a spiritual battle for the minds and hearts of the lost. Sending a photograph of our family, along with an offering to Hinn, so he can pray a ritualistic prayer over them for salvation, just won't do it. Quite simply, we cannot claim by faith the salvation of relatives and that is obvious from the Scriptures.

Hinn should devote some time and energy to himself and his own family in an effort to get some things in order. His attempted influence into a sheriff's department along with his younger brother Christopher being fired as a reserve deputy with the Orange County sheriff's department in December 1996 for misrepresenting his status, improper actions, rules violations, and other infractions is a good place to start. Hinn's additional comments to Watrel, in response to his brother's wrongdoings, that "Chris has a good heart," is an attempt to exonerate some serious malfeasance. Tell that to the people of Orlando, especially those whose civil rights were violated by the younger Hinn because he didn't like them expressing their conviction that his preacher brother's prosperity-gospel message is greed.

—GRF

Montgomery. The book was published in 1965 and sold more than 3 million copies. Dixon and her predictions, during the past several decades, have been a staple for the supermarket tabloid industry.

—MKG

## C.A.N. MIGHT SURVIVE TAKEOVER

In 1991, the mother of an 18-year-old from Bellevue, Wash., hired a "cult deprogrammer" and two assistants in an effort to rescue her son from Life Tabernacle Church, a Pentecostal group. The incident led to a "high-stakes" lawsuit which eventually resulted in the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) being forced into bankruptcy. The youth, Jason Scott, contended that the person responsible for referring his mother to the deprogrammer did so acting as a CAN volunteer.

Criminal charges brought against the deprogrammer by a county prosecutor in late 1993 did not meet with success. The deprogrammer was acquitted of the charges. The case took on a new life in civil court when attorney Kendrick L. Moxon agreed to litigate on Scott's behalf. Moxon has repeatedly represented members of the Church of Scientology. His efforts were successful and Scott was awarded more than \$4 million in damages. CAN was responsible for \$1.8 million of the judgment. In 1996, the group filed for bankruptcy.

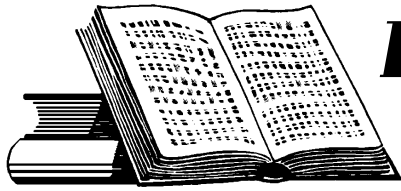
Last December, CAN's assets began being liquidated and were sold to the highest bidder. Lawyer Steven L. Hayes, a Scientologist, bought the defunct network's name, logo, post office box and telephone number. Hayes said he is working with a group whose efforts will be to reestablish the network so it "disseminates the truth about all religions."

The attorney representing CAN, David Bardin, commented: "It kind of boggles the mind. People will still pick up the CAN name in a library book and call saying 'My daughter has joined the Church of Scientology.' And your friendly CAN receptionist is someone who works for Scientology."

Then in late December, Scott reportedly changed his mind about allowing Scientologists to dismantle CAN. He fired Moxon and hired a new attorney, Graham Berry. Berry, in the past, had assisted CAN. Berry told the *Washington Post* that, "Jason Scott has no interest in being part of Scientology's campaign against the Cult Awareness Network."

A Religious News Service report said Berry would "seek a cash settlement with Scientology that would allow CAN to keep its files and re-establish itself as a clearinghouse for information about controversial religious movements that many regard as destructive cults."

—MKG



# Books in Review

## SATISFIED BY THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Affirming the Fullness of  
God's Provision for Spiritual Living  
by Thomas R. Edgar  
Kregal Resources, 283 pages, \$12.99

### THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

What It Means to Believe in Jesus  
by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 201 pages, \$8.99

Many books on comparative religion and apologetics spend most of their content telling what's wrong with a particular teaching or movement. And while this is helpful and even necessary to defend the faith, it's good to have a book that is to the very *heart of Christianity*, such as Ron Rhodes' latest offering.

*The Heart of Christianity* is an excellent volume to give to that person on their way out of a cult, or who has already made their exodus but is having a difficult time with the baggage of aberrant or heretical theology. It is non-combative and non-threatening. It is simple and easy to read, yet is not diluted in content. His use of illustrations and quotations make the publication even more captivating. It is also a work that will arouse and edify devoted believers who think they have all the "basics" down pat.

Rhodes tackles a wide variety of the tenets of the Christian faith. A few of the subjects covered include: the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, sin and salvation, spiritual warfare and the Church. Each chapter begins with a one- or two-sentence summary, concludes with a Bible verse to memorize which punctuates the chapter's content and in between there are numerous other Scripture references and citations. A handful of charts also accent the volume.

Rhodes writes in the Introduction that his "deepest desire and prayer" is for the reader to "have a better understanding of the major doctrines of Christianity" and for one's "personal relationship with Jesus would soar to new heights of intimacy." The book should easily achieve his ambitions.

—MKG

Anyone wishing a complete and detailed response to the writings and teachings of Jack Deere, Wayne Grudem and others who hold that those not manifesting the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are not Spirit-filled can find it in this book. Edgar, a professor of New Testament at Capitol Bible Seminary in Maryland, does not write for the fainthearted or lazy. This book is mind-stretching and detailed and will have to be read slowly. It is one of the most well-presented current defenses of the cessationist position and cannot be ignored even if not accepted. It is methodical and scholarly.

Edgar affirms that Christians can be both fulfilled and satisfied by the Holy Spirit apart from miraculous gifts. Those not following the signs and wonders mania have not settled for less.

Taken up are the issues of whether there are "lesser" gifts of prophecy and healing in the Church today and whether cessationists simply lack faith because they reject these inferior manifestations.

Germane to the issue as well is whether so-called "gifts" today really resemble those that are in the Bible. This is a pertinent and urgent question that is rarely asked.

Some chapter titles are: "Experience or Scripture?", "Scripture: For Validity or Mere Credibility?", "Biblical Information Regarding Spiritual Gifts", "The Gift of Miracles and the Gift of Healing" and "The Gifts in History."

Edgar wrestles boldly with issues that affect the contemporary Church and does it in a scholarly, yet loving, way.

Is the promised Holy Spirit sufficient to satisfy every need for godly living? This book does an admirable job in answering that question and many others. It deals with root issues and not just the peripheral in confronting the charismania sweeping the American Church.

—GRF

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Remember to pray daily for the salvation of Jehovah's Witnesses