

**AN EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION
OF THE BROWNSVILLE REVIVAL
by Jeffrey M. Spencer**

INTRODUCTION

The “Brownsville Revival” began at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida on Father’s Day, June 18, 1995 under the direction of pastor John Kilpatrick and visiting evangelist Steve Hill. From the very start, this movement has been overflowing with bizarre manifestations and uncontrollable behavior such as laughing, shaking, barking, roaring, and temporary paralysis. While supporters believe this is a true move of God, critics are hesitant to make such a claim.

Many apologists have set out to expose this revival as false, centering their critique on the unusual phenomena exhibited in the services. I contend, however, that these manifestations are not the primary problem. The primary problem with the Brownsville Revival is false doctrine. Just as the presence of a disease produces certain symptoms in the body, this false doctrine produces these revival manifestations--barking, roaring, shaking, etc. Thus, in order to approach the heart of the issue, this false doctrine must be exposed. This article deals directly with Brownsville’s false teachings which depart from the Historic Christian Faith in points of vital importance. For instance, Brownsville preaches a false Jesus. They pass on a false spirit. They preach a false Gospel. The Apostle Paul addressed a similar problem within the Corinthian church warning, “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted; you may well put up with it” (2 Cor. 11:4). And many believers and seekers alike have “put up with it.” Not only have they erroneously embraced Brownsville as a true revival, they have also received the false Jesus, passed on the false spirit, and believed the false gospel of the Brownsville teachers.

The False Jesus of Brownsville

The evidence seems to indicate that the doctrine of Jesus taught by the revival teachers is, at the very least, problematic. Below is a presentation of what three men involved in the current revival movement teach about Jesus. To be sure, each man is not *equally* involved, but each is closely linked to the Brownsville Assembly of God. The three teachers are David Yonggi-Cho, Rodney Howard-Browne, and Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick.

David Yonggi-Cho. A Word-Faith pastor from Korea, David Yonggi-Cho is intimately affiliated with the Brownsville Revival.¹ Cho supposedly prophesied the revival in 1991. In fact, the leadership of Brownsville Assembly of God have placed the story of Cho’s prophecy on the

¹ For an example of the Christological heresies of the Word Faith Movement, see Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), chapters 12-16.

Brownsville web-site and mentioned the prophecy in a book by Kilpatrick.² By accepting the testimony and prophecy of Cho, Brownsville is, in effect, endorsing what he teaches. In his book, *The Fourth Dimension*, Cho claims about Jesus, “There is a reason to use the power of the spoken word: through it you create and release the presence of Jesus Christ. . . . Jesus is bound to what you speak forth. . . . You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth. . . . He is bound by your lips and your words.”³ In short, Cho’s view of Jesus, which was spoken directly to him by a spirit, is derived from a pantheistic world view which teaches that God is all and all is God. Therefore, man, being one with the All, is divine and can create or change his own reality. If one wants something, then just think or speak forth the reality-changing words. This same teaching is found in witchcraft, occultism, and the New Age.⁴ It is also prevalent in the Word-Faith Movement, where it is referred to as “Name-it, Claim-it” health and prosperity teaching. In essence, this teaching has elevated man to the status of God and demoted Jesus to a mere errand boy summoned up to accomplish our whims and fancies. This view of Jesus is heretical, and those who accept it accept a false Jesus.

Rodney Howard-Browne. Rodney Howard-Browne, another Word-Faith proponent, is the man responsible for the “Laughing Revival” of the Toronto Airport Vineyard. Subsequently, the revival was taken from Toronto to Brownsville by the leadership of the Brownsville Assembly of God.⁵ Rodney Howard-Browne teaches that Jesus was not God while here on earth. In his book, *The Touch of God*, Howard-Browne says, “Nothing Jesus did was because He was the Son of God. The Bible says He laid aside His royal robes of deity and when He walked the earth He did so as a prophet under the Abrahamic Covenant.”⁶ This statement, claiming that Jesus laid aside His deity while on earth, is a denial of the deity of Christ, which is heresy. Thus, Howard-Browne, a man directly responsible for the current Brownsville revival movement, also teaches a false Jesus.

John Kilpatrick. Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick, in his book, *When the Heavens Are Brass*, denies the deity of Christ in a manner similar to Howard-Browne. Speaking of Jesus’ miracles, Kilpatrick contends that believers should “walk as Jesus walked--and remember, He did

² Kilpatrick, *When the Heavens are Brass*, xiv. The Brownsville Web-site is <<http://www.brownsville-revival.org>>. Cho’s prophecy is found at <<http://www.brownsville-revival.org/choprop.html>>.

³ Paul Yongii Cho, *The Fourth Dimension* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1979), 81-83. Dr. Cho was named Paul when he wrote this book. However, he claims that God told him to change his name to David. He also claims that the doctrines in this book, which are undeniably occultic, were taught to him by a spirit.

⁴ For an excellent discussion of the infiltration of this occultism into the church see Dave Hunt, *The Seduction of Christianity* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1985).

⁵ The fact that the Brownsville Revival is a direct descendent of the Toronto Blessing, or the Laughing Revival is indisputable. The staff at Brownsville readily admits the connection. Brownsville has sent leadership from their church to Toronto many times. In a video-taped service, Kilpatrick admits to sending his wife to Toronto so she could learn how to minister “Toronto-style.” See Marcia Ford, *Charisma Reports: The Brownsville Revival* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1997), 75-80.

⁶ Rodney Howard-Browne, *The Touch of God*, 13-14.

it all as a man who did not pull from any source other than those that are available to man.”⁷ In other words, the Jesus did miracles because He was merely a man anointed by the Holy Spirit, or “an anointed man.”⁸ This is a veiled claim that Jesus, while on earth, was not fully God--the Spirit had to do the miracles because Jesus was missing some aspects of deity. Additionally, Kilpatrick makes this claim in a not-so-veiled manner. He teaches that Jesus “did not move in omnipotence on the earth.”⁹ In other words, Jesus was not all powerful when He was on earth. Next, Kilpatrick claims that Jesus “did not move in omniscience on earth. Had Jesus been omniscient, He would have known when He was coming back.”¹⁰ Finally, Kilpatrick strips Jesus of His deity by claiming, “Jesus was not omnipresent on earth. . . . Jesus could be only in one place at a time because He was not omnipresent.”¹¹ In all fairness to Kilpatrick, he does claim that Jesus was divine, which is totally contradictory to the statements in the text above. At best, Kilpatrick’s statements are contradictory, and thus, by teaching unsound doctrine, he has disqualified himself as a church leader (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). Thus, the Jesus of Kilpatrick, at the very least, is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent.

There are several problems with such Christology. First, when Jesus took on flesh, He was 100% God and 100% man. The Incarnation did not subtract from His Deity, but added a human nature to the divine Person. The infinite, eternal, unchanging divine Person, without changing or giving up any attribute, took on a new nature, a human nature. Thus, Jesus is two undiminished natures in one Person. He did not become less-than-God as Kilpatrick and Howard-Browne suggest. Second, Jesus did not give up any of His divine attributes. The subtraction of even one divine attribute would mean that Jesus was not God, because the attributes of God “are essential characteristics of His being. Without these qualities God would not be what He is--God.”¹² In other words, God minus even one attribute equals non-God. Apologist Norman Geisler explains that, “God is by his very nature an absolutely perfect being. If there were any perfection that he

⁷ John Kilpatrick, *When the Heavens Are Brass* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 1997), 22. The claim that Jesus did not “pull from any source other than those that are available to man” is debatable. This teaching leads to the conclusion that Jesus, in and of Himself, was not responsible for any of His miracles--it was the Holy Spirit who did all the miracles. While it is true that Jesus did attribute supernatural works to the Holy Spirit, such as the casting out of demons (Matt. 12:28), it is not necessary to attribute all Jesus’ miracles to the Holy Spirit since Jesus was fully God Himself. Jesus, as God, was fully capable of doing any and all the miracles attributed to Him in the Gospels. Theologian Charles Ryrie comments, “Some of the Lord’s miracles were undebatably done in the power of the Spirit. This claim was what evoked the incident concerning the unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:28, 31). He also gave sight to the blind because the Spirit was upon Him (Luke 4:18). . . . But some of the Lord’s miracles were evidently done in His own inherent God-Man power. . . . He did some of His miracles in the power of the Spirit (particularly those which gave evidence of His claim to be Messiah by restoring sight to the blind) and some in His own power” (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1995], 350-51).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹ *Ibid.* 20. While this is an ambiguous statement, other statements Kilpatrick makes in the same context show that he means that Jesus did not have certain divine characteristics when He came to earth.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 451.

lacked, then he would not be God.”¹³ Third, Jesus did not give up attributes, but submitted to a *voluntary non-use* of His divine attributes while on earth. He did, however, display His divine attributes at times.

It is incontestable that Brownsville’s leadership has serious Christological problems. From the pantheistic Jesus of David Yonggi-Cho, the man who prophesied the revival, to the merely human Jesus of Rodney Howard-Browne, the man who started the revival, to the confusing statements of pastor Kilpatrick, the man who sustains the revival, the Brownsville Revival is preaching a false Jesus. Therefore, this revival cannot be a move of God. As apologist Ron Rhodes has correctly stated, “A counterfeit Jesus who preaches a counterfeit gospel yields only a counterfeit salvation.”¹⁴

The False Spirit of Brownsville

Brownsville not only preaches a false Jesus, they impart a “different spirit” than the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Brownsville is localized, transferable, and imparted through various occultic techniques. Furthermore, it causes un-Christlike behavior, such as barking, roaring, vomiting, shaking, and paralysis.

The spirit is localized and transferable. The spirit of this revival is contained in one place--Brownsville. Therefore, in order to encounter that spirit, one must visit the “power center” where the spirit operates. To receive the spirit of Brownsville, one must go to Brownsville. Thus, Steve Hill, a Brownsville evangelist, can be heard touting the “value of a pilgrimage” in order to “receive a fresh touch from God.”¹⁵ In other words, one must travel to the power center where the spirit is manifesting itself if an impartation of this spirit is desired.

The spirit does not necessarily remain localized. Once one visits the power center and receives the spirit, one can take that spirit back to one’s own congregation and start another power center. Steve Hill claims “People from all over the world have been touched by God’s Spirit, either as they come worship with us, or as they visit others who have been here.”¹⁶ Thus, the spirit is passed on exponentially from Hill to seekers, and from seekers to those in their home churches, much like one candle lights a second, then the second one lights a third, and so on. The point is that you cannot receive this spirit unless someone that has it gives it to you.

In contrast, the Holy Spirit of the Bible is omnipresent, or everywhere present. Moreover, He is all-powerful everywhere. Surely, by claiming that the power is localized, Brownsville denies both the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. Also, one need not visit a “power center” in order to encounter the Holy Spirit. In fact, the notion that the Spirit is more powerfully located in one place and can only be encountered by pilgrimage is thoroughly occultic. One can meet the Holy Spirit anywhere at all. Finally, the Holy Spirit is not invoked by means

¹³ Norman Geisler, *Creating God in the Image of Man?* (Minneapolis: Betheny House, 1997), 28.

¹⁴ Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers,) 291.

¹⁵ Steve Hill, *The Pursuit of Revival* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 1997), 105.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

of a pilgrimage, but sovereignly indwells a person the moment a person believes the Gospel. God is a divine Person we encounter through a loving relationship, not an entity we invoke through various deeds of worship (cf. 1 Kings 18:17-40).

The spirit is received through various “techniques.” The spirit of Brownsville is transmitted by various techniques such as touch, repetition of words, or turning off the mind (meditation).

One technique for imparting the Brownsville spirit is touch. This differs from the biblical practice of laying on of hands to impart the Spirit, because only the Apostles had such ability.¹⁷ This was one of the ways God showed new believers that the Apostles were the chosen leaders of the Church. Common believers did not engage in this activity. Yet, night after night, Brownsville leaders touch seekers to impart bizarre manifestations. Steve Hill enthusiastically moves from seeker to seeker touching forehead after forehead. The result is always the same--the spirit is imparted, causing seekers to shake, laugh, roar, collapse, etc. There is absolutely no biblical basis for this practice, yet it is very common in occultic practice.

This technique, touching to impart power, finds no support in Scripture. Touching in order to impart a spirit, however, is very common in occultic practice. For instance, Swami Baba Muktananda imparted “guru’s grace” to followers through touching foreheads. This is a Kundalini yoga technique called “shaktipat,” which produces various “physical and emotional awakenings” such as “laughing, roaring, barking, hissing, crying, shaking, etc.”¹⁸ Guru Shri Dhyanoygi Madhusudandasji, a Kundalini expert, says the following about shaktipat:

Another technique of great importance is Shaktipat, the transmission of energy. A powerful yogi can transmit energy to an aspirant and awaken the Kundalini [power in one’s body]. This is accomplished in one of four ways: by touch, gaze, sound or thought. The yogi may touch the disciple and transmit energy through physical contact, or gaze at the disciple and energy flows from the yogi’s eyes. The yogi may utter words which carry energy or, more subtly, energy can be transferred directly by the yogi’s thought or will.¹⁹

Surprisingly, this occultic transmission of power from the leader to the disciple, so popular in non-Christian religions, is being emulated and embraced by many in the Christian community.

Another technique employed by Brownsville leaders to impart the spirit is the repetition of words. This causes a spirit to be passed from those who have it to those who want it. This is a Hindu technique called “mantra.” According to *Harper’s Dictionary of Hinduism*, “The mantra is a formula comprising words and sounds which possess magical or divine power.”²⁰ A person

¹⁷ For a good discussion of Apostolic authority, see John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1992), 120ff.

¹⁸ Warren Smith and Danny Aguirre, “Some Examples of Holy Laughter in Other Religions,” *SCP Newsletter*, Volume 19:2, Fall 1994, 14.

¹⁹ Shri Dhyanoygi Madhusudandasji, *The Path of Kundalini Maha Yoga*, On-line article, <<http://www.dyc.org/path/index.html#Shaktipat>>.

²⁰ Margaret and James Stutley, *Harper’s Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore, Philosophy, Literature and History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 180.

simply repeats a word or phrase over and over to bring about a desired spiritual effect. This is very common in eastern religions and the New Age.

Shockingly, Steve Hill describes his salvation in terms of mantra. In his testimony, Hill claims that during a low-point in his life, he was visited by a Lutheran minister. The minister never presented the Gospel, but merely told Hill, then an atheist, that he must repeatedly say the name “Jesus” in order to be delivered from his degenerate lifestyle. Hill complied.

The sound of that name again and again seemed to bring hope from nowhere. The confusion and fear faded slowly as I looked to the ceiling and began to utter, ‘Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!’ A peace, a warmth such as I never felt before, flooded my body. This power rushed in like a river and took command of everything. I kept crying out His name, louder and louder: ‘Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!’ The more I said it, the greater was my deliverance.”²¹

In short, atheist Hill uttered “Jesus” repeatedly and consequently was overcome by a spiritual power. What is the problem here? The experience Hill described is not Christian salvation. This is clear for several reasons. First, Hill’s testimony does not correspond with biblical testimony of how one must be saved. The Bible claims that one is saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. However, Hill was “saved” through the repetition of a name. Which “Jesus” was the Lutheran minister advocating? Certainly not the Jesus of the Bible because He is not conjured through the repetition of a word, but received through believing the Gospel. Second, by Hill’s own admission, the Gospel was never presented. The Lutheran minister never presented evidence for the existence of God, nor did he even mention the work of Christ on the cross. The preacher only instructed Hill to speak Jesus’ name, and this would bring about a changed life. There was nothing mentioned about putting faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In fact, when this took place, Hill did not even believe in God! Third, Hill’s experience, the use of a mantra, is widespread throughout Hinduism, occultism, and the New Age. Yet, this is exactly how Hill describes his conversion. He repeated words and was overcome by power. Unless salvation can occur apart from believing the true Gospel and apart from the true Jesus Christ, Steve Hill was not saved at that moment, because, according to his own testimony, he was not presented with the Gospel nor was he presented with the facts about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Hill is using the mantra technique, repeating “More, Lord!,” and “Fire! Fire! Fire!,” to pass on the spirit at Brownsville. For instance, Brownsville’s altar call prayer team is instructed to impart the spirit only through touch and repetition of words. Dr. Herb Babcock, former prayer team member recounts,

While on the prayer team, we were instructed to NOT pray in Jesus’ name. We were told to NOT pray for the needs of people. The only thing we were to do was touch people on their forehead and say, ‘More, Lord!’ and keep repeating that until there was an ‘impartation’ of the spirit being promoted in these meetings. If the person did not respond in a reasonable time, move on to someone else. Any deviation from the limited procedure

²¹ Hill, *The Pursuit of Revival*, 30.

would result in being removed from the prayer team, which did happen to a few individuals.”²²

Dr. Babcock separated from Brownsville Assembly of God over this issue. To forbid prayer in the name of Jesus is anti-Christian, as is the practice of imparting spirits through occultic techniques.

Additionally, any word will suffice as a mantra--even “Christian” words such as “Jesus” or “Lord.” One occultist, Michael Balarama of the Bhaktivedanta Meditation Society, advises the use of a number of mantras, saying, “You can choose one that appeals to you. They are all effective. The Vedas say there is no need of understanding the language of the mantra, nor is there any need of mental speculation, nor intellectual adjustment.”²³ Remarkably, two of the mantras recommended by Balarama are, “Lord Jesus have mercy upon us,” and “Hail Mary mother of grace, blessed is thy name and the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”²⁴ Thus, in order to conjure the magical effect of the mantra, even “Christian” words such as “More, Lord!,” “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!” will work. This is confirmed by the fact that even occultists and pantheists use the name of Jesus as mantras. Hence, even if the name “Jesus” is used as a mantra, that does not make it “Christian.” Any use of a mantra is occultic. And by repeating the words “More, Lord!,” or “Fire!,” with the intent of imparting power, Steve Hill has unequivocally left the Christian Faith and is practicing occultism.

Another technique used to pass on the spirit of Brownsville is to lead the congregation to turn off their minds and succumb to an altered state of hypnotic meditation. The Brownsville requiem is “Turn off your mind and let the Spirit do what He pleases!” Rodney Howard-Browne instructs his audience to “tune out,” saying, “You can’t understand what God is doing in these meetings with an analytical mind. The only way you’re going to understand what God is doing is with your hearts.”²⁵ In other words, “Don’t think. Turn your mind off and let God take control!”

Thus, Brownsville instructs a seeker to clear the mind in order to conjure the spirit. The mind is the enemy of true spirituality. Steve Hill instructs the crowd at Brownsville, “Now, let yourselves go. Don’t even think about what you are doing. Forget about those around you and what they are doing. Release your mind. Release your spirit and let the mighty river of the Holy Ghost take you wherever He wants you to go.”²⁶ Notice the similarity of Hill’s command to the commands of several New Age/Hindu teachers:

²² Dr. Herb Babcock, “That’s How They Do It In Toronto!,” *The End-Times and Victorious Living*, Vol. 11, No. 2, March/April 1997, 18.

²³ Michael Balarama, “Bhaktivedanta Meditation,” On-line, <<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8612>>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Larry Thomas, *No Laughing Matter* (Excelsior Springs, MO: Double Crown, 1995), 48.

²⁶ Jimmy Robbins, “Pensacola Experiences,” *The End-Times and Victorious Living*, Vol. 11, No. 2, March/April 1997, 16.

- Withdraw your mind from all created things (thinking about no thing). Such withdrawal of the mind is not the same as simply becoming unconscious, because there is a new focus of awareness . . . your mind will eventually become naturally quiet and still.²⁷
- You must achieve elimination of the mind, which is the arch obstacle in the spiritual path.²⁸
- Do not listen to your mind [but] . . . to my voice. . . . Give [your minds] to me . . . but it must be a complete handing over; no reservations; the mind is the source of delusion.²⁹

In contrast, Christianity encourages thinking. The God of the Bible demands His followers to “love the LORD your God with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). God, the ultimate rational Being, desires His people to be rational beings. To turn off the mind for even a moment or to fail to use it to the best of one’s ability at all times is disobedience to God. The mind is an essential ingredient of the Christian life. The mind is the main battleground of spiritual warfare, and Christians grow in Christ-likeness primarily through disciplining the mind. The Apostle Paul commands the church to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:1-2). Truly, without our minds we cannot discern truth from error. That is precisely why so much error--a false Jesus, a false spirit, and a false Gospel--is being accepted by revival attendees. Brownsville says “Out with the mind!” but Christianity says, “Transform your mind!”

The spirit causes un-Christlike behavior. The spirit imparted at Brownsville causes behavior such as shaking, roaring, barking, and paralysis. In an article about the current revival phenomenon, Daina Doucet claims the manifestation is “a transferable anointing. In its most visible form it overcomes worshippers with outbreaks of laughter, weeping, groaning, shaking, falling, drunkenness, and most recently, even sounds and behaviors described as a ‘cross between a jungle and a farmyard.’”³⁰ Contrast this behavior to the behavior produced by the Holy Spirit in a believer. The Holy Spirit will produce the “fruit” described in Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” The Holy Spirit will also empower believers to employ spiritual gifts such as giving, mercy, teaching, service, and evangelism in order to minister to those in need. The Holy Spirit leads a believer to be others-centered, while the spirit imparted at Brownsville leads the seeker to be self-centered. In other words, the Holy Spirit leads believers to minister to the needs of others, while the spirit of Brownsville leads believers to seek increasingly intense and bizarre experiences for themselves. There is a dire contrast between true Christian spirituality and the out-of-control behavior of Brownsville.

²⁷ Deb Platt, *Mysticism in World Religions*, <<http://www.digiserve.com/mystic/>>.

²⁸ Samuel Sandweiss, *Sai Baba: The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist* (San Diego: Birth Day, 1975), 206.

²⁹ Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks*, (Bangalore, India: Sri Sathya Sai Publication and Education Foundation, n.d.), Vol. 4, p. 15, and Vol. 7, p. 50.

³⁰ Diana Doucet, “Toronto: God’s Meeting Place,” *Spread the Fire*, Volume 1, Issue 1, Jan-Feb. 1995, 4.

This section can be summed up as follows: the leaders of Brownsville are using techniques from non-Christian religions to invoke and impart spirits to revival attendees. Whether by touch, mantra, or hypnotic meditation, Brownsville leaders are unquestionably practicing occultism, and, in their ignorance, giving the practices Christian names (i.e., mantra = “persistent prayer”; emptying the mind = “letting God take over”; invoked spirit = “Holy Spirit”). To be sure, revival leaders are invoking a power that yields desired results--lives are changed. Yet, since the doctrine is false, the power imparting the results cannot be the Holy Spirit, but could ultimately be Satan himself, who would gladly give someone a mystical experience and a changed life in order to keep one away from truth. Notice the resemblance between occultic practice and the revival:

KUNDALINI YOGA AND THE BROWNSVILLE REVIVAL³¹

	KUNDALINI	BROWNSVILLE
IDENTICAL MANIFESTATION	“Kriyas” Shaking, trembling, roaring, barking, weeping, laughing, paralysis, heat.	“manifestation” Shaking, trembling, roaring, barking, weeping, laughing, paralysis, feelings of heat or coldness.
IDENTICAL TECHNIQUES	“Shaktipat” Power transferred through touch, mantra, meditation.	“Impartation” “Spirit” transferred through touch, repetitive prayer, emptying the mind.
IDENTICAL INSTRUMENTS	“Guru” Transferred by a guru who is “on fire” (i.e., he has had someone impart the power to him.).	“Anointed one” Transferred by minister who has also been “touched” and received this “spirit” from someone else.
IDENTICAL RESULTS	“Transformation” Surrendering to the power; inner peace; feelings of love; closeness to the deity; purification from doing evil; changed life.	“A Changed Life” Surrendering to the “spirit”; peace; feelings of love; cleansed; renewed commitment and intimacy with God; changed life

³¹ Kurt Keutzer, “Kundalini Frequently Asked Questions” and “Siddha Mahayoga Frequently Asked Questions,” <<http://www.execpc.com/~libra/kund/kundalini-faq.html>> accessed 14 January 1998.

The False Gospel of Brownsville

The Brownsville Revival is fueled by the preaching of a faith-plus-works gospel. Ultimately, the factor which determines one's standing before God is how one lives instead of one's faith in Christ. In order to have eternal life, Brownsville claims one must 1) turn from sins, repent, clean up one's life, 2) make a public confession of faith, 3) live a holy life from that day forward, and 4) be baptized in water to cleanse one's sins. The following is an analysis of the "good news" preached by Brownsville Assembly of God.

To Be Saved, Clean Up Your Life. The Gospel according to Brownsville claims a person must give up all sin in his life to be saved. Then and only then will Jesus consider saving that person. Steve Hill lays out many conditions for salvation, but his basic message is this: "God wants to set you free but you have to do your part."³² And your part is to clean up your life. For instance, in his sermon, "The Silence of God," Hill states, "There is also a pardon for you, but only after you confess, repent, and submit your life to Him."³³ In another sermon, "The Rebel's Reward," Hill further preaches his clean-up-your-life-Gospel as he says, "If you don't repent of your rebellion, if you fail to obey God and get right with Him, then your wicked heart won't be cleansed."³⁴ Furthermore, in his sermon, "The Violence of Revival," Hill adds, "Since Jesus did His part, you must wage violent warfare against sin. If you want Jesus Christ to touch you and forgive you today, then you had better get violent about it. Get up and shake the devil off your lap."³⁵ Pastor John Kilpatrick also delineates similar life-cleansing requirements for salvation, "Even harlots, thieves, backsliders, and little children can release Heaven's incredible power by repenting, obeying, and submitting to God."³⁶ Thus, according to Brownsville, one must do his part by confessing, repenting, submitting, obeying, shaking the devil off, and getting violent about sin. Only then will Jesus "do His part" and save the person.

To Be Saved, Make a Public Confession of Faith. Brownsville preaches that salvation is genuine only if there is a public confession of faith. Hill claims that one of the many steps to salvation is "Confess Him publicly as our Lord and Savior."³⁷ In his sermon "Counterfeit Conversion," Steve Hill states this very plainly: "I believe people need to come to Jesus Christ the same way he died for them on the cross--publicly, boldly, and in front of everybody. It has to be real. Anything less is going to be counterfeit."³⁸ Thus, if one does not make a bold, public confession of faith when he cleans up his life, the conversion is counterfeit.

³² Steve Hill, *White Cane Religion* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1997), 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

³⁶ Kilpatrick, *When the Heavens Are Brass*, 138-39. Notice the works-salvation mindset of the Brownsville teachers. A person must do something in order to invoke the blessing of God. *If* a person will do such-and-such, *then* God will save. This is very different than the biblical doctrine of salvation which presents eternal life as a free gift to those who simply trust in Christ.

³⁷ Hill, *The Pursuit of Revival*, 45.

³⁸ Hill, *White Cane Religion*, 37.

To Be Saved, Live a Holy Life Until the End. Not only must one turn from all sin and respond publicly to be saved, the person must live a sinless life until he dies if he wants to go to heaven. In fact, Brownsville maintains that if a person who claims to be a Christian has *any* sin in his life, he cannot be a real Christian. In a recent sermon on the steps of the Governor's Mansion in Montgomery, Alabama, Steve Hill yelled, "If there is sin in your life and you are calling yourself a Christian, *change your name!* You are a heathen--at best a backslider!"³⁹ Consequently, the presence of sin means the absence of salvation. Brownsville evangelist Dick Reuben illustrates, "We [at Brownsville] don't differentiate between those that have never received Jesus and those who are backslidden, because, you see, there's no difference between a backslider and one who's never known Jesus. They're both sinners on the way to hell. If you don't think you can backslide and miss heaven, then you didn't read the same book I've read."⁴⁰

Kilpatrick teaches the same thing: "I'm not so sure that everyone who is in the Body of Christ will be in the Bride of Christ!"⁴¹ In fact, Kilpatrick claims that, "The Lord said to me when I was in prayer, 'Not everyone who is in My Body will be in My Bride.'"⁴² Thus, the factor that determines whether or not one goes to heaven is how one behaves, not one's trust in Jesus. According to Brownsville, there are those who have believed the Gospel that will never see heaven because they misbehave and allow sin into their life. Heaven is only for those with clean lives. Sinful behavior separates one from God forever. This is entirely different than the God of the Bible who declares that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). Eternal life is a free gift, and it is exactly that--eternal. We did not work to receive eternal life, and we can do nothing to lose it.

To Be Saved, Be Baptized For the Forgiveness of Sins. Steve Hill believes that "transformation . . . comes as a result of water baptism."⁴³ Remarkably, in the chapter about water baptism in *The Pursuit of Revival*, Steve Hill clearly declares that cleansing of sin comes through water baptism. Hill claims, "When an individual encounters the living God, like Paul did on the road to Damascus, he or she is changed in no small way. And the lives of those around him are affected as well, especially by the cleansing of sin that comes through baptism."⁴⁴ Thus, Brownsville teaches that unless one is baptized, one cannot be cleansed of sin. The Bible, though,

³⁹ Hill, *The Pursuit of Revival*, 143.

⁴⁰ Dick Reuben, Brownsville Assembly of God Evangelist, 11/21/97 [audiotape].

⁴¹ Kilpatrick, *When the Heavens Are Brass*, 71.

⁴² Ibid. Like Cho, Kilpatrick receives "new revelation" from spirits while in prayer. It should be apparent that if the doctrine is false, then the spirit giving the revelation is not the Spirit of God. Moreover, the practice of receiving new revelation is very problematic because it reduces the Bible to merely a part of God's Word. Orthodox Christianity claims that the Bible is God's full and final special revelation to man. A common characteristic of cults, however, is the use of revelation other than the Bible.

⁴³ Hill, *The Pursuit of Revival*, 113.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 122.

declares that the cleansing of sin comes from the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Matt. 26:28; 1 Jn. 1:7).

A Brief Response to the Brownsville Gospel

If the Gospel of Brownsville is true, then salvation by faith alone is false. Brownsville leaders are teaching a works-centered Gospel that is little more than a contract between man and God in which man promises to behave and then God fulfills His promise to save the man. This is very different from the biblical teaching on salvation. The Bible points to the fact that for a person to be saved, he must simply believe, or trust in Jesus. Jesus did the work for salvation on the cross, and we simply trust in Him (John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, 20:31; 1 John 5:1). Salvation is a free gift (Rev. 22:17), not a contractual obligation.

Must a person fulfill all the Brownsville requirements in order to be saved? Absolutely not! In fact, if a person tries to do works in order to beseech the favor of God, “Christ will profit you nothing” (Gal. 5:2). In other words, those who work for salvation do not receive salvation. Eph. 2:8-9 emphatically states, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. Thus, we have no need to “get violent” about our sin in order to be saved, because Jesus “got violent” about sin in order that the world might be saved. He was tortured, crucified, and died on a criminal’s cross, thereby providing an atonement for our sin. We must simply trust in Him as the atonement for our sin. Since He dealt with our sin “once-for-all,” we do not “deal” with our sin *in order to be saved*, whether it be by confession, repentance, obedience, lifestyle, or baptism--we simply trust Jesus. Jesus paid our sin debt on the cross, and to imply that we need to clean up our act or repent of sin in order to be saved is to deny the sufficiency of the atonement for sin that Christ completed on the cross.

The Gospel as taught at Brownsville is a false Gospel, and a false Gospel yields a false salvation. Therefore, even though Brownsville claims that 135,000 souls have been saved, this claim must be categorically rejected on the basis that the 135,000 people have not responded to the true Gospel, the true Spirit, or the true Jesus. They have responded to a false Jesus, a false spirit, and a false Gospel--something that Scripture warns about over and over again (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:4; Matt. 24:23-24; 2 Pet. 2:1). Tragically, people will spend eternity separated from God because of the revival that is being held night after night in Brownsville, Florida.

CONCLUSION: BROWNSVILLE--APOSTASY FROM THE FAITH

Many revival supporters claim that Brownsville is the spark that will ignite a great end-times revival. Yet, the Bible does not speak of end-times revival but of a great end-times apostasy of believers. 1 Tim. 4:1 says, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” Furthermore, speaking of the last days, Paul states, “For the time will come when they [believers] will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The unequivocal testimony of Scripture is that there will

be a great apostasy among true believers. Could this revival movement be the end-times apostasy Scripture describes? I believe it very well could be.

The end-times apostasy of believers will occur because of a great satanic deception among believers. What would such a deception look like? It certainly will not be something very obvious. Satan is not going to waltz into the church on Sunday morning and say, “OK everybody! Listen up! I’m Satan and this is the great apostasy, so get in line and follow me!” No, his end times deception will be through a subtle twisting of biblical Christianity, mixing biblical truth with demonic error, true doctrine with false doctrine. So close is this mixture, in fact, that many believe it to be biblical Christianity and fall away from the true Faith. Thus, many believers are deceived and lead away from the Faith through false doctrine--a subtly different Jesus, different spirit, and different gospel. Consequently, because of Satan’s disguise as an “angel of light” and his ministers’ disguise as “ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15) everything they do looks and sounds very Christian. In other words, the great apostasy from the Faith will likely be orchestrated by ministers who, on the surface, appear righteous and godly. Their teaching will be so close to true biblical Christianity that many will follow the false “angel of light” and the false “ministers of righteousness” away from the true Jesus, the true Spirit and the true Gospel.

This type of deception is what is occurring in Brownsville. As I have established above, another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel than orthodox Christianity is indeed being preached at Brownsville, and true believers are falling for the lies and near-truths that seem so close to Christian truth. Yet, the difference is subtle enough to deceive many believers. As Charles Colson has pointed out, “I have spoken of frontal assaults and the sneak attacks. There is something worse. . . . The enemy is in our midst. He has so infiltrated our camp that many simply no longer can tell an enemy from a friend, truth from heresy.”⁴⁵ So, beware. True Christianity is under attack. Stand firm in sound doctrine. Test all things to see if they are biblical (1 Thess. 5:21), and if not, defend the Faith (Jude 3). Follow Peter’s decree and “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pt. 3:15). You could very well be the instrument Christ uses to snatch deceived believers from the gates of death (James 5:19-20).

In this article, I have attempted to show how the Brownsville revival is fueled by false doctrine. If the essential doctrine is false, then the whole movement is necessarily false. God does not work through a false Jesus, a false spirit, and a false Gospel--if He did, He wouldn’t have warned us about the dangers of false christs and false gospels again and again. However, there is a sense in which God is working in Brownsville. His work can be seen in the testimonies of the many Brownsville members who have left the church because of its false doctrine--a group which is steadily growing in number.

⁴⁵ Charles Colson, *The Struggle For Men’s Hearts and Minds* (Prison Fellowship, 1983), 16.

It has been said that, "Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it."⁴⁶ And love the truth we must--or else. This new counterfeit form of Christianity, complete with its counterfeit Prince of Peace, is poised at the door, knocking. And many are welcoming him with open arms.

⁴⁶ Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*. <<http://members.aol.com/KatharenaE/private/Philo/Pascal/pascal.html>>