



## Revivals And Church History :: Brownsville, Pensacola: Toronto Or Not? by Andrew Strom

**Brownsville, Pensacola: Toronto Or Not? by Andrew Strom - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/12 16:13**

*Andrew Strom, a Revival historian, closely aligned with the Charismatic and Prophetic movements, examines the 'Pensacola Outpouring', based in Florida in the U.S.A.*

In America in recent months there has been a good deal of attention given to what is known as the "Pensacola Outpouring", which is associated with an Assembly of God church in Brownsville, Pensacola. Of course, this is only one of a number of Christian 'revival/renewal' movements that have emerged in America over the last few years, the most well-known of these being the "Toronto Blessing".

As I have written in my previous article, "The Toronto Controversy - Disturbing new facts from History," I have been alarmed to find through research that the manifestations associated with Toronto are seemingly identical to many counterfeit movements which have infiltrated and destroyed genuine Revivals down through history. Such manifestations are also identical to those found in the modern 'Kundalini' cults of Ramakrishna, Rajneesh, etc, as well as the occultic Chinese 'Qigong' movement, Franz Mesmer's occultic healing practice and other New Age type groups around the world. And yet, such manifestations are found nowhere in the Bible! As I said in that article, if these are the days of "great deception" amongst Christians spoken of in the Scriptures, then shouldn't we be a little more careful about what we allow into God's church?

Christian contacts that I have in America have assured me that this "Pensacola" movement is quite different from 'Toronto', but is this in fact, the case? Or is this yet another instance of Toronto changing it's spots and acquiring a new "brand-name" in order to infiltrate yet another branch of Christendom?

The fact is, the links between Toronto and Pensacola are so strong that I am surprised that they are not more widely known. (I wonder, could this be a deliberate attempt to put some "distance" between Toronto and Pensacola?) Actually, one only has to take a cursory look at the readily-available information to begin to see the very strong linkages.

According to one "pro-Pensacola" writer, Beth McDuffie, who has been attending the Brownsville Assembly of God for over eight years now, the true course of events was really very simple. She says that on the 18th of June, 1995, visiting evangelist Steve Hill held an altar call for people who wanted "more power" in their Christian lives. As people went forward, they began to fall down shaking and crying, etc, just like 'Toronto' meetings everywhere. And this was the beginning of the "Pensacola revival". And where had the evangelist, Steve Hill, picked up this anointing? Very simply, he had done 'carpet time' after being prayed for by a leader in one of the main "Toronto" churches in London shortly before. And now he was simply transferring this anointing into Brownsville Assembly of God. It appears that Steve Hill has in times past been a successful repentance evangelist, and no doubt this has remained with him. But is it not possible that he has also picked up a counterfeit spirit, which is now operating in these meetings? Are not even men of God capable of being deceived? (As history clearly shows?)

The main pastor of Brownsville AOG, John Kilpatrick, himself wrote a brief article shortly afterwards, listing the most common manifestations that were occurring in Pensacola. The major manifestations that he listed were:

Falling on the floor (for the purpose of "deep inner healing, preparation for ministry, physical healing, receiving of visions, feeling the love of God");

Laughter;

Shaking ("head, hands, feet, and body");

Deep bowing.

Can anyone tell me in what significant way such manifestations differ from those of 'Toronto'? The fact is, they are basically identical to the 'Toronto' manifestations which have been seen everywhere, right around the world (including my own nation of New Zealand). And the original source is obviously identical, also.

In a recent article in Charisma magazine, "pro-Pensacola" writer Lee Grady described one famous scene from the Brownsville revival which has been videoed and sent out everywhere. This event occurred on August 18, 1995, when 19 year-old Alison Ward got up to give her testimony. Mr Grady says: "As she spoke, Alison shook in a manner so awkward that a casual observer might think she suffered from cerebral palsy. Then, while trembling violently, she issued a plea so heartfelt that those in the room say they heard God speaking through her. Choking back tears she said intently: 'God is in a hurry. There's not much more time. He aches and He grieves for your spirit.' At that moment Alison fell to the floor. A deafening chorus of moaning and wailing filled the room as people were moved by an almost eerie sense of God's love for lost souls... Alison's eight-minute testimony, which was captured on videotape, represents the defining moment of this revival."

It is interesting to note the emphasis on this 'Cerebral Palsy'-like shaking (sometimes resembling 'jerking', Epilepsy or Parkinson's Disease) in the Brownsville movement, rather than on laughter, which seems to be only of secondary significance there. However, there is no doubt at all that this is the same movement as the one that has already swept through many churches in the West under the "Toronto" banner. Even these extreme bodily-distortion type manifestations have been relatively common in 'Toronto'. Notice also the emphasis on "inner healing", 'carpet time' and experiencing the 'manifest presence of God' - all likewise identical to Toronto.

Needless to say, such manifestations are found nowhere in the Bible. However, they ARE found right through today's New Age movement, as well as in many counterfeit and demonic spiritual movements down through history. I myself have been studying Revival and Reformation history now for over twelve years, and as I have stated before, many such counterfeiters have infiltrated and destroyed genuine Revivals over the centuries. Great Revivalists such as John Wesley and Charles Finney became more and more aware of the danger of such counterfeiters entering in and ruining genuine Revivals as time went by, and they wrote specific warnings about this. (Please see my 'Toronto Controversy' article).

Some very well-known Revivals have been wrecked or have ended in disarray simply due to the devil successfully flooding them with exactly these kinds of excesses and counterfeiters. In Jonathan Edwards' day, the New England Awakening ended disastrously almost entirely due to the spurious manifestations and excesses that were encouraged by 'revival' preachers such as James Davenport and Samuel Buell. In fact, Jonathan Edwards wrote of the 'heavenly trances' promoted by Buell that, "when the people were raised to this height, Satan took the advantage, and his interposition in many instances soon became very apparent; and a great deal of caution and pains were found necessary to keep the people, many of them from running wild."

The Welsh Revival ended the same way, with excesses and counterfeit manifestations flooding in once the Revival leader Evan Roberts was off the scene. What a nightmare! One of the most promising moves of God in history in absolute disarray after little more than one year. Many of the early Pentecostal pioneers were also well aware of the dangers: "Many are willing to seek 'power' from every battery they can lay their hands on in order to perform miracles... A true 'Pentecost' will produce a mighty conviction for sin, a turning to God. False manifestations produce only excitement and wonder" (Frank Bartleman, a leader in the 1906 'Azusa Street' Revival).

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

Some writers have pointed out that people "fell down under the power of God" during many previous Revivals. Yes, they fell down allright, - under the most PIERCING SORROW AND CONVICTION OF SIN. They fell down under the preaching of Edwards, Whitfield, Wesley and Finney BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT STAND UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THEIR OWN SIN FOR A MOMENT LONGER. They fell as thunderstruck by the awesome HOLINESS of the living God. As I have said, I have been studying Revivals for over twelve years now, and I would have to say that the overriding theme of genuine Revival down the centuries has been TREMENDOUS CONVICTION OF SIN AND DEEP REPENTANCE (not "inner healing", which has always been one of the very major emphases of the New Age movement worldwide, but is not found in the Bible).

As one writer has said, "Revival is not the top blowing off, but rather the bottom falling out." And as Pentecostal pioneer Frank Bartleman wrote: "The depth of revival will be determined exactly by the depth of the spirit of repentance. This will obtain for all people, at all times."

It was said of the preaching of the great Revivalist Savonarola that it caused "such terror and alarm, such sobbing and tears that people passed through the streets without speaking, more dead than alive." And Jonathan Edwards himself is famous for his Revival sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", during which people were observed holding themselves up, as they felt themselves slipping into hell.

Charles Finney wrote of one typical occasion: "I had not spoken to them in this strain of direct application more than a quarter of an hour, when all at once an awful solemnity seemed to settle down upon them. The congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction and cry for mercy. If I had had a sword in my hand I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell. Indeed, nearly the whole congregation were either on their knees or prostrate in less than two minutes from this first shock that fell upon them. Everyone who was able to speak at all prayed for himself."

I could go on and on in this vein. (Please see my book, "The Coming Great Reformation"). I hope you can see how very, very different these genuine 'repentance' Revivals were, to what is happening today.

I have to say that I have been quite amazed at how easily these counterfeit Toronto/Pensacola type manifestations have been allowed to sweep through the church, when they are found nowhere in the Bible, and yet right through today's New Age movement. As one former devotee of Swami Baba Muktananda stated, the 'Kundalini' manifestations that accompanied the Swami's "laying on of hands" included uncontrollable laughter, crying, roaring, barking, shaking etc. This is very common amongst the Hindu-based cults worldwide. And when Yan Xin, a Chinese 'Qigong' occultic Master, gave a talk to a crowd in San Francisco in 1991, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that many in the crowd began to report "spontaneous movements". Yan told his audience, "Those who are sensitive might start having some strong physical sensations - or start laughing or crying. Don't worry. This is quite normal." Tell me, don't these manifestations sound awfully familiar?

And what about the manifestations that resulted from Franz Mesmer's demonic "ministry"? Here is what the history books describe: "...It was not uncommon for that person to then fall to the ground with his or her limbs jerking in convulsions. Twitching, eyeball-rolling, strange grunts and cries, and hysterical laughter were also fairly common. The curious fact was that when these folk awoke from the ensuing coma ... they often claimed to be healed from their particular complaint" (Tony Bambridge). Again I ask the question: Doesn't all this sound awfully familiar? (Such manifestations usually start off fairly 'mild' in any new movement, and then get progressively more bizarre as time goes on).

The fact is, we live today in the very times that Jesus and the apostles warned us about - the "last days" - a time of 'great apostacy', of "lying signs and wonders", of seducing spirits and great deception amongst Christians, that if possible would 'deceive the very elect'. And yet what do we see the church doing? Rushing head-long into the most dubious "experience-based" movement that has happened along in the last fifty years or more, apparently without a care in the world. What do you think God will do to you, Christian leaders, if you are wrong, and you have led His precious flock into open deception?

As I said in my article, "The Truth about Joel's Army", the book of Joel prophesies that in the last days, immediately prior to the GENUINE outpouring of God's Spirit "upon all flesh", a great army of locusts will first sweep through and devour every good thing in the land. First comes the PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS (as a judgement from God), then comes the TRUE REVIVAL. Interesting sequence, isn't it?

I also wrote in that article about the hidden 'strategy' that is seemingly being used to spread "Toronto" through all of the different branches of Christendom at this time. First came Rodney Howard-Browne and Kenneth Copeland - perfect vehicles for bringing this deception into the Faith/Prosperity movement. It was then transferred directly into the Toronto Airport Vineyard church via some Vineyard pastors, thus "distancing" itself from its Faith Movement associations, and taking on a format that was far more "acceptable" to the Vineyard and also to the American prophetic movement (these two are closely aligned). It was then transferred directly via some Anglican leaders into Britain (again, making itself more acceptable through being brought in by their 'own kind'). And now we have a direct transfer through Steve Hill from London into Brownsville, Pensacola,- enabling this deception to once again "change its spots", to distance itself from previous taints and associations, and to now appeal to the conservative Bible-belt Christians. Clever, isn't it?

And recent reports certainly confirm that this deception is spreading at an alarming rate from Pensacola, right through the conservative American Bible-belt. A number of prominent Methodist and Southern Baptist churches, as well as many Assemblies of God, have already aligned themselves with it.

It is interesting to note that all along, it doesn't seem to have mattered what has been preached in these 'Toronto'- type

meetings around the world. Rodney Howard-Browne himself once reported preaching about 'Hell', and seeing the congregation still exhibiting the usual bizarre manifestations - mainly uncontrollable laughter! He has also preached on the 'blood of Christ' on occasion, and it has made little seeming difference. The same applies to the Toronto Airport church, and many other such meetings around the world. Often, there has been almost no preaching at all - only an altar call. They could probably have preached about life on Mars or Ballerinas in tights, and it would have made little difference. The falling, laughter and uncontrollable weeping would still have gone on regardless. Strangely enough, it is clearly not what is being preached in this movement, but rather the 'spirit' that is at work amongst the congregation that is the crucial factor. And this spirit seems to be very easily passed on from one leader to the next. They then often begin to use their God-given Preaching gift to promote this new 'anointing'. What a deadly mixture! A God-given gift in preaching, married to a foreign spirit moving amongst the congregation. Surely the deadliest form of deception.

Much has been made, in the Pensacola movement, of the number of people they say are being 'saved' or 'going forward' at Brownsville. It is important to remember that such claims were also being made for Rodney Howard-Browne and Toronto in the beginning. The questions I would ask are these: How many of these people are genuine unbelievers from off the street, and how many are just being 'converted' to this new movement from within Christendom? (ie. they come from other churches, or have been brought up within Christendom itself). And are they truly coming to CHRIST for salvation, or are they responding merely to some kind of emotional high? As one young convert told an interviewer at Brownsville, the emotional rush he has felt since his conversion is "better than drugs". But is this a truly legitimate motive for responding to the eternal gospel of the cross of Christ? In many instances, is this truly REPENTANCE that is going on here, or is it something else?

The fact is, these are the "last days", the days when the Bible predicts that a great deception will arise (most likely from within the church itself) that will 'deceive if possible the very elect'. I wonder if you can imagine a movement that more closely fits this description, than the one we are seeing sweep through the church at this present time? For what would it take to 'deceive if possible the very elect'? As Art Katz has said, "in what ways will future 'lying signs and wonders' be different from that with which we are presently being confronted?"

I do want to say here that I myself am definitely a believer in a great last days outpouring of God's Spirit "upon all flesh" a flood of great mercy immediately prior to the great JUDGEMENT that will close this present age. However, I believe that as always, there will only be a 'remnant' a kind of "Gideon's three hundred" who will bring in this last great harvest. For many who 'should be there' will disqualify themselves, just as many of the children of Israel disqualified themselves before they reached the promised land, and only a tiny remnant from that generation survived to inherit the promise.

The Revival I believe in is not some kind of experience-centred "inner healing" extravaganza, but rather a true outpouring, where the glory and the majestic holiness of the Most High God come down, and men are first convicted, then cleansed from their sin. It is my belief that God is about to cleanse and anoint His people, and bring them out onto the streets, just like the book of Acts and also the mighty Wesley and Salvation Army Revivals. And like those last two great moves of God, there will be a new kind of battle and praise music that will be raised up by God. This is to be a Great Reformation the great last-days 'street-Revival'. Yes, there will be healings and miracles, but they certainly won't seem like they're straight out of the New Age 'Kundalini' Instruction Manual. And yes, there will be 'unusual' occurrences (there always are), but they will all have a strong sense of God's true, holy character about them (otherwise they will be rejected). The preaching will be just like the Finneys and the Wesleys of old direct, piercing and cutting to the heart the "Sin, righteousness and judgement" preaching that has always accompanied true Revival. What a glorious end-times move of God this will be! (The above is a summary of what God has shown many praying people and intercessors in New Zealand about the coming move of God - please see my book).

As David Wilkerson said to Charisma magazine recently, "There are people having great emotional experiences right now and calling it revival. But I think that true revival will come through searing, heart-piercing, convicting preaching where people are driven to their knees to repent." I think that pretty-much sums it up.

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taken from: (<http://www.banner.org.uk/brn/strom1.html>) <http://www.banner.org.uk/brn/strom1.html>

**Re: Brownsville, Pensacola: Toronto Or Not? by Andrew Strom - posted by Clutch (), on: 2003/12/12 18:24**

Greg,  
The points that you've made are well said, and received. I John 4:1-3 cautions us to try ( judge/discern) the spirits to determine for ourselves the origin. I appreciate your observations, and I have similar misgivings about the "Altar" ministries of those various groups you discussed. The Holy Spirit has not led me to align with that movement, though I have been to a couple of meetings that some of the folks you mentioned preached at.  
Having said that; I've been associated with an evangelist that is connected with the TACF ( has preached there), and works with some of the featured missionaries in Africa that are aligned with that group. Over the course of the past 3 years my friend has teamed with another evangelist in establishing relationships with moderate Muslims in Pakistan.( I don't say his name, because he goes there two or three times per year, and is already in enough danger there. If you have further interest, I'll send you an email). They are allowed to have large open air "Healing" services, but are restricted because of the law in that country, in what they can publicly preach ( under penalty of death). During these services there are many healings that take place, in front of thousands of Muslims. At the conclusion of the services; an invitation is given to those who would like to know this Jesus that has performed these miracles. The responders get a " Study Course", that contains the gospel message. The last meeting they had, about a month ago, 117,000 Pakistani Muslims came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Those new converts are being organized by Pakistani Christians into "Light Houses of Love" ( Cell Churches). Based upon the experiences of the past few years, those " Light Houses " will quadruple in size during the next 4 months.  
I understand your feelings about some of the manifestations at TACF, and other places. My spirit does not bear witness with much of that, nor has the Holy Spirit drawn me to that type church. However, I'm not ready to throw the baby out with the bath water. God has shown me repeatedly during the past few years, that His box is much bigger and more inclusive than the one I put Him in.  
I think you're on the right track brother. I really appreciate you, and the other good folks that make up this web site.  
Clutch ;-)

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/12 21:18**

Quote:  
-----Greg,  
The points that you've made are well said, and received.  
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Hi brother, just so you know I didn't write that article it was written by Andrew Strom. I thought it was a great article to share, very good to keep in mind with the topic of revival these days.

Quote:  
-----I understand your feelings about some of the manifestations at TACF, and other places. My spirit does not bear witness with much of that, nor has the Holy Spirit drawn me to that type church. However, I'm not ready to throw the baby out with the bath water. God has shown me repeatedly during the past few years, that His box is much bigger and more inclusive than the one I put Him in.  
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I agree, I think that its safe to say that we can strive for better things, God is still working amidst alot of the false manifestations and doctrines that are popular in these types of churches. But on the other hand there is lots of damage done by these false teachings, Having a gospel message given to many people is a great thing and I am not against it, but the quality that those individuals grow in Christ is my big concern. Like someone said: "God is not interested in filling churches, He is interesting in filling people."

Quote:  
-----I really appreciate you, and the other good folks that make up this web site.  
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I appreciate your contributions to this website and participation in it ;-)

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/12 21:20**

Here's a very powerful audio message delivered by Andrew Storm that is available on this website:  
(<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid3188>) Thundering In Nashville

*Andrew Strom's best-known sermon. A heart-cry for repentance in the churches of America. Taped in Nashville, USA, in July 2003. (46 mins).*

**Re: - posted by Clutch (), on: 2003/12/13 17:28**

Greg,  
I got a chance to hear A. Strom today as I was working today. He makes several valid observations about America. I can't speak much about an American revival 100 years ago, because I'm nowhere near Ron Bailey's age. :-D But I can speak of America 50 years ago, and I have vivid memories of that era. I remember the Billy Graham, and Oral Roberts Crusades. I don't remember anything being much different because of them. My Daddy could still go to the beer-joint and get drunk. I didn't hear any less cussing after Billy Graham came to town and preached; because a High School was blown up by a man who hated black folks, and didn't want his kids going to school with them. I sure don't recall any lions lying down by any lambs. sorry, I missed THAT one :-o But I "heard" that there had been one about 50 years before THAT one, where the bars went out of business, brothels closed and a LOT of folks got right with God.  
My definition of insanity is: "Keep doing the same things, in the same way, and expect DIFFERENT results". :-P  
Clutch ;-)