

A Critique of Brownsville's Response to the Pensacola News Journal

By
Paul G. Sutliff

Brownsville Assembly of God (BAG) is reporting experiencing a revival that is two and a half years old. This revival was investigated by the Pensacola News Journal and articles appeared in a five part series from November 16-20, 1997. On November 22nd Brownsville Assembly took out a two-page ad in the Journal to reply to its recent coverage of the revival. The reply by Brownsville was not in a forum that allowed the Journal to answer its rebuke, as the Journal is not allowed to respond to a paid advertisement. Thus, I have taken it upon myself to critique Brownsville's response.

It should be said that this critique does not dispute the question of revival but rather the issues that are raised by the Journal and the response. Like the Pensacola News Journal cited below, I believe there are certain undeniable things occurring.

“Much about the Brownsville Revival is unquestionable: Millions of people from far and near have attended the four nights-a-week revival. Many have had an emotionally and spiritually stimulating experience there. Many have been baptized. Many have made a commitment to change their ways and live closer to God.” (“Secrets inside the revival,” 11/16/97)

In writing this criticism, I strived to hear both sides of the issues, communicating with Brownsville Assembly of God's Assistant Pastor, Rev. Carey Robertson, Douglass Hawk of “Together in the Harvest Ministries,” Rev. Thomas E. Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and several other sources. All was done with the intention of obtaining as objective a point of view as possible.

Brownsville's Response: How Does it Rate?

Brownsville's response was labeled "The Fact's About The Brownsville Revival." Its format included a brief reasoning, and listed several "facts." Because Brownsville chose this format, I have numbered the "facts" for easier reference. Above each “fact” a rating will be given to show how each “fact” measures up against the Pensacola News Journal articles. Following the fact there may be a quote from the Journal that demonstrates agreement or disagreement with the stated “fact.” A brief commentary will then address the issues relevant to the “fact.”

Ratings

A (Agree)	Brownsville makes a statement that agrees with the Journal articles.
C (Controversy)	Brownsville makes a statement that is disputed in the Journal articles.
NI (New Information)	Brownsville provides new information not previously given in the Journal articles.
V+ (Valid Point)	Brownsville makes a valid point against the Journal's report.

A, NI

FACT 1 –John Kilpatrick's salary and housing package from Brownsville Assembly of God is \$73,600, plus utilities, health insurance, and retirement contributions. Pastor Kilpatrick would have been more forthcoming with the Journal, regarding personal finances if not for the accusatory attitude with which he was approached.

PNJ – He refused to disclose information about his salary or his Feast of Fire corporation's finances. (Allman & Streater. "Pastor's homes raise financial questions," Nov. 17, 1997)

Commentary:

An important issue to note here is that Pastor John Kilpatrick no longer keeps office hours at the church, as noted in **PNJ**. While this issue is neglected, I placed this here because "a laborer is worthy of his hire," (I Timothy 5:14) providing he does the required work (Proverbs 10:4).

Kilpatrick has retreated from close contact with his flock while rapidly moving up into a luxurious lifestyle outside Pensacola. His new home, at an Alabama location he tried to keep secret, has barbed wire, a security guard and a metal gate. Months before an injury that kept him at home for weeks, Kilpatrick had ceased to keep office hours and had delegated his pastoring duties to assistants. (Davis, J. "Secrets inside the revival" Nov. 16, 1997)

I wrote to Brownsville Assembly of God regarding this and other questions. Below you will find excerpts of the relevant matter (Copies of this correspondence are available on request), regarding Pastor Kilpatrick and his responsibility's as head-shepherd of the flock.

(E-mail 1/13/98)

Q: According to the Journal both Pastor Kilpatrick and Evangelist Hill have moved out of state. Pastor Kilpatrick is stated to not keep office hours any more. **How does he then fulfill his obligations as shepherd of the flock?**

(E-mail 1/20/98)

A: As to Pastor Kilpatrick and Steve Hill moving out of state. They both live in Alabama. If you look at a map you will see that the Alabama state line is only about ten miles west of Pensacola. Pensacola is not a large city in population (about 85,000) but it is spread out geographically. Pastor lived on the East side of Pensacola before moving to Alabama and the driving time to the church from there was the same as it is now (about

A – Agree **C** – Controversy **NI** – New Information **V+** - Valid Point

20 minutes). Since the church and where he lives now are both on the west side. **Pastor Kilpatrick has an office at home and is constantly available by phone. He is also available by cell phone when traveling. Day to day operation is carried out by myself and a capable and dedicated staff.** Pastor is always here Wednesday -Sunday (at home) and preaches every Sunday. **The church is very well cared for and pastored.**

Respectfully yours in Christ,
Carey Robertson

(Email 1/21/98)

Q: I asked how Pastor Kilpatrick could fulfill his pastoral duties when he does not keep office hours at the church. **Your reply agrees that he does not keep office hours but is available by phone. In your reply it is not stated that this phone number is unlisted.** While I understand the need for an unlisted phone number, I question how he fulfills his obligation as Senior Pastor. **Your reply indicates that you and others do the pastoring. If this is the case, Kilpatrick is then not fulfilling his role as shepherd of the flock.**

(E-mail 1/23/98)

A: As far as Pastor Kilpatrick pastoring the church is concerned, **he is doing so quite well.** Perhaps not to your liking, but **everyone here is satisfied with this arrangement.**
Respectfully yours in Christ,
Carey Robertson
Assistant Pastor

This communication was troublesome and led me to seek the comments of a local Assembly of God pastor and his input on whether a pastor can fulfill his obligations as shepherd of the flock if he does not keep office hours at the church. Below are the results of an interview with Rev. Ronald Domina, Sr. Pastor of Bethel Full Gospel, Rochester, NY :

"It all depends on whether he has the heart of a shepherd." When asked if he thought the job of a shepherd could be done effectively, if that pastor's phone number was unlisted, Pastor Domina had some reservations. He told me that all of his staff, including himself, are listed in the local directory. Pastor Domina also communicated that there is a danger of being in the office too much, and shared that he is working on a way to free up most of the pastoral staff so they won't be trapped in their offices. This way they will be able to spend their time ministering to the people in their community. (Interview Feb. 2, 1998)

I also wrote to the Rev. Thomas E. Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God and asked him whether he thought a pastor could be a good shepherd if he does not keep office hours. His response follows:

Senior pastors of individual churches may keep hours as they feel necessary to pastor the church properly. Many churches have assistants or associates that also work in church ministry along side, and at the directive of the senior pastor. There are some churches that ask the senior pastor to focus on preaching the Word, and his time may be involved in reading, studying, and preparation for this important task. We have no jurisdiction over matters of this nature. However, every pastor serves the church through a church board and he is accountable to these officers who are elected by the church membership. (Personal correspondence, Jan. 29, 1998)

What I neglected to mention in these inquiries was that Pastor Kilpatrick has an armed guard at the gate of his present home, an intimidating factor to anyone who wants to visit

their pastor. Thus, we are left questioning how Kilpatrick could have “the heart of a shepherd” and have little or no venues for people to gain access to him.

V+?, C, NI

FACT 2: When Reverend David Wilkerson, the founder of Teen Challenge who has known Steve Hill for more than 20 years, learned that the Journal was accusing Steve Hill of being a phony who falsified his testimony, he immediately responded with this letter dated November 19, 1997: "To Whom It May Concern: **Steve Hill was a debilitated, stoned addict** when he first surrendered his life to Christ. He became an active worker with our ministry, helping rescue other addicts and alcoholics. Though many of his old friends had died, he related well to the street addicts, having been a drug pusher and having spent time in jail. Steve graduated from our bible school in Texas. He has always been diligent and faithful. His story of deliverance from drug addiction and crime is a true testimony to the power of the gospel of Christ. One thing I know for sure - Steve Hill is not a phony!"

PNJ: “The self-proclaimed ‘former junkie’ was never an addict. The truth, which Hill admits, is that he inflated the stories about his drug use to make a bigger impression on audiences. ‘I don’t mean to call myself a junkie. I call myself a drug addict,’ he said during a recent interview. ‘Heroin addict’ has more of an impact on people’s lives when they hear it.’ (Allman. “Hill’s bio fraught with fallacies” Nov. 18, 1997)

Commentary:

I give Brownsville credit for using a letter by Rev. David Wilkerson in defense of Evangelist Steve Hill. David Wilkerson has been a highly respected member of the Christian community for a number of years, and a strong statement in defense of Hill should hold a lot of merit. So the issue here becomes, “Did Rev. Wilkerson write such a letter?” I have sought to obtain a copy that I would happily place here, but to date my requests have been ignored. The non-response on the part of Brownsville causes question regarding the letter’s very existence.

The Brownsville-Revival web site <<http://www.brownsville-revival.org/hill.html>> has a brief biography of Evangelist Hill. Here it states “Steve tried cults, travel, hard narcotics, friendships, parties and music and ended up being a mainliner by age 16.”

Fact 2 and Brownsville Assembly’s web-site conflict with Rev. Hill’s recorded statement to the News Journal that he was never an addict, and that he “calls himself” a drug addict/heroin addict, “because it has more of an impact on people’s lives when they hear it.” Rev. Steve Hill has been caught in a lie. His deliberate statements that he was a drug addict/heroin addict to the masses that attend the Brownsville Revival are masks of deceit.

NI

FACT 3: Although Pastor Kilpatrick's non-profit corporation, Feast of Fire Ministries, received \$798,000 in book sales, royalties (which are payable to the ministry, not directly to Pastor Kilpatrick), and honorariums through October 9 of this year, by the directive of

the Feast of Fire board, he will not receive more than \$100,000 in annual income from that ministry.

Commentary:

Pastor Kilpatrick's books royalties, and honorariums do not have to be placed in a non-profit corporation. He could receive them directly. The name of the corporation includes the word "Ministries." This word implies that the money will be spent furthering the gospel message. It does not imply that the author receives 13% of the proceeds.

C, V+

FACT 4: Pastor Kilpatrick **does not and has never owned a Rolex watch**, contrary to the Journal's claims. **The diamond ring he wears cost \$382 and was purchased for him as an anniversary gift by his wife Brenda.**

Commentary:

It is interesting that the issue of the Rolex came up. Several sources have testified that they have seen Pastor Kilpatrick wearing the watch. A blow up of the picture of the watch on Kilpatrick's wrist, that accompanied the article "First day crowd slow to respond," could prove interesting.

A, NI

FACT 5: Rather than the church becoming rich through the revival or hoarding its resources and neglecting missions as suggested by the Journal, it has expended itself sacrificially in order to host the revival and its guests -- including missionaries, struggling pastors, and lost sinners -- from around the world. The church staff has expanded from 23 to 110; custodial supplies have gone from \$600 a month to \$3500 or more monthly; security, which in the past was unnecessary, now amounts to more than \$19,000 monthly -- all to watch over the cars and property of those attending the revival. Whereas before the revival, there was no need for paid nursery works during the week, the nursery worker budget averages \$10,000-\$12,000 a month --all to take care of the babies and small children of the guests of the revival. Such expenses could be multiplied almost ad infinitum (e.g., just cleaning the church carpets now amounts to \$4,500 monthly), but this sampling is sufficient to indicate the enormous cost involved in hosting this revival, a huge missions project in itself.

PNJ: (Headline) "Revival costly, but figures are vague" (Streater. Nov. 16, 1997) (same article) "Church officials just say the revival is costly. 'It's unreal, the expenses,' church administrative assistant Rose Compton said."

Commentary:

The News Journal records church officials making comments regarding the "revival's" costliness. It however voices concern regarding vague figures. I wrote to Pastor Robertson regarding this, and he replied:

Consider also that approximately two million people have visited the church from the US and 110 countries of the world. In order to meet their needs (the visitors) the following expenses have escalated:

- the church staff has expanded from 23 to 110
- custodial supplies have increased from \$600 to \$3500 a month
- security of buildings, grounds and parking lots is \$19,000 monthly**
- nursery worker salaries \$10,000 to \$12,000 per month
- cleaning the church carpets \$4500 a month**
- purchase of additional property for parking and building a family life center to accommodate the crowds runs into the millions

The point is, hosting this revival is a huge mission project within itself and beyond the above mentioned figure. (E-mail 1/20/98)

Even though there are high numbers of attendance, some of the expenses [highlighted above] appear incredibly large.

The \$19,000 for security is used to employ a service of armed guards within the sanctuary, and outside the church as well.

The carpets are supposedly cleaned monthly at an incredible expense. In general, churches clean rugs seasonally. A monthly expense in this regard is highly unusual.

C

FACT 6: Neither the church nor any of the ministries were approached by the Journal to supply detailed financial information before last month, although the Journal states that it was investigating the revival for the past four and a half months. Facts and figures that presented a positive picture of the church's benevolent giving were either overlooked or down played by the Journal.

Commentary:

According to my research, the News Journal requested financial records from the non-profit organizations in September of 1997. They requested the church's financial records in October because that information was thought to be more accessible.

A, NI

FACT 7: Because Pastor Kilpatrick does not fly, **Feast of Fire Ministries purchased a 1994 coach** (already with 40,000 miles) in which he travels and works while speaking across the country. This coach cannot be used for any personal travel or recreation, and it has already saved approximately \$40,000 in airfare since its purchase. Should the ministry cease to exist for any reason, this coach, along with all other assets of Feast of Fire Ministries, will be given to the church, not Pastor Kilpatrick or his family.

PNJ: "His corporation, Feast of Fire Ministries Inc., **bought the bus in 1996** for \$310,000 because Kilpatrick does not like to fly." (Allman. "New lifestyle includes a \$310,000 coach" Nov. 17, 1997)

Commentary:

I wrote to Pastor Carey Robertson to question how the church came up with \$40,000 in airfare savings. He replied: "Pastor Kilpatrick travels constantly and has done so for about **two and a half years**. Had he done so by plane he would have spent about that amount (it is an estimated amount), instead of spending that money on airfares **it was spent to help purchase the coach.**" Brownsville Assembly is counting all the flights he has taken in the past two and a half years, excluding the fact that he has only had the bus since 1996. The \$40,000 figure was posted on November 23, 1997. This leaves only a year of travel to be considered.

It has been implied in both the News Journal and in Brownsville's reply that the coach was paid for. But within the article, "Pastor's homes raise financial questions," by Allman & Streater, it is indicated that coach was obtained by a loan from the Welch State Bank. Pastor Carey Robertson alludes to loan payments in his reply as well.

A, C

FACT 8: After living in the same house for 14 years, pastor Kilpatrick moved to Alabama for privacy's sake. He would have stayed in his present home if not for recurring invasions of his privacy. His new house, which should cost approximately \$270,000 upon completion, is being financed on the basis of his church and outside ministry salary, and not a dime of the construction cost is being funded through the nightly revival offerings. Note also that **the square footage of heated and air-conditioned living space in his new home totals 3543 square feet, not the 5557 square feet reported in the Journal, and contrary to any impression that may have been given to the readers, Pastor Kilpatrick does not simultaneously own three houses.**

Commentary:

The Journal repeatedly states that Kilpatrick moved to Alabama after living in his previous home for fourteen years. A pictorial essay is labeled, "Kilpatrick's progression of homes" within this article, his Pensacola home was indicated to have been bought in 1982, and sold in 1996. In the article, "Pastor's homes raise financial questions," Pastor Kilpatrick gives a narration regarding his loss of privacy.

The first issue is the figure for cost for his new home given by Brownsville (\$270,000) and the Building Permit on which Pastor Kilpatrick stated the cost would be \$343,860. The Building permit pictured below is quite interesting. It not only tells the cost of the building, it records Pastor John Kilpatrick as the General Contractor for the project. The sub-contractor doing the work is Harlin Stoner, the cousin of Charles Stoner, the president of Welch State Bank, who gave Kilpatrick the loan to build the house. Is this conflict of interest? You decide.

Also in dispute is the question of square footage regarding his house. Below you will find a greatly reduced copy of the blueprints of the home in question. Let the facts speak for themselves and you decide who is telling the truth.

C, NI

FACT 9: Although offerings are received in the five weekly services in Brownsville, there is not a suggested nightly donation, as repeatedly claimed by the Journal. The **only exception has come during the Friday night missions offering, when it has sometimes been suggested that those who can contribute \$100** to Together in the Harvest's missions projects would consider doing so (although **this practice has recently been discontinued**). Those visiting the services know that **very little emphasis is put on money** each week, and revival attendees are instructed not to put their tithes, which belong in their home church, in the revival offerings.

Commentary:

The **Pensacola News Journal** does not indicate that this is singularly a Friday night offering request in its coverage of the Revival. The article headline, “Give at least \$100, revival leaders urge” generically indicates this happens more than once throughout the week. However, the News Journal only covers Friday night in this article. Yet, in another article by the same writer, Amy Streater, the News Journal, prints “the high cost of putting on the revival is always emphasized during the nightly call for \$100 donations at the Pensacola Brownsville Revival.” This passage clearly indicates that the practice is more frequent than a regular Friday night plea. My research indicated that the \$100 plea occurred regularly, not just on Friday nights.

Fact 9 states in parenthesis that “this practice has recently been discontinued.” Why, because it received media attention? The practice continued up to the first printing of the “expose” on November 16, 1997.

The last sentence of Fact 9: “Those visiting the services know that very little emphasis is put on money each week ...” Yet, the rebuttal does not deny the News Journal’s account that Evangelist Hill sometimes makes speeches “that extend to a half-hour,” nor the account that Associate Pastor Carey Robertson’s nightly collection speeches “can stretch for more than twenty minutes.”

NI

FACT 10: Brownsville Assembly of God has never once made a financial appeal during eleven years of weekly TV broadcasting. This is because fund-raising has never been the church's goal. Earlier this year, the revival was offered free air time on national Christian TV, with a personal 800 number to be supplied as well, but this offer was refused by the leaders despite the fact that it could have generated millions of dollars in income.

Commentary:

This topic is not addressed in the [Pensacola News Journal](#).

C

FACT 11: At no time did Steve Hill falsify his testimony, nor did he ever admit to such a claim. In point of fact, **there are numerous witnesses (including Steve's own mother and family members) who have corroborated the details of his life story and conversion.** However, the Journal chose not to print any of the evidence presented to them, **including written corroborating testimony from the man who broke into the Madison, Alabama pharmacy with Steve.**

PNJ: “Hill wrote in “Stone Cold Heart”: *I was constantly being led down the school corridors to the principal’s office. Expelled from school – again! ...* Hill admitted in an interview with the News Journal that he was never expelled from Grissom. ... After high school graduation, Hill said, he took to the road for three years, criss-crossing the country from the East to the West Coast and back again. Yet from Sept. 21, 1973 to March 4, 1975, Hill was employed full-time at John Blue Farm Equipment Co., making castings for farm equipment in the foundry. ... Company records show no indication that he missed work.” (Allman. “Hill’s criminal record not what he says it is” Nov. 18, 1997)

Commentary:

The real issue here is whether Steve Hill falsified his testimony in Stone Cold Heart. We have already observed how Hill was recorded, stating he was never an addict, and that he “calls himself” a drug addict/heroin addict, “because it has more of an impact on people’s lives when they hear it.” If Hill made these statements, he is testifying to the falsification of his life story recorded in Stone Cold Heart.

The Journal does cite more than one interview with Hill’s mother, Ann (Allman. “Hill’s boasts often exaggerate the facts;” & “Hill’s criminal record not what he says it is.” Nov. 18, 1997). Also cited are quotes from his older brother George, and his sisters Susan and Marcia. Some family members would only quote Stone Cold Heart while others contradicted the events that it records. His high school Assistant Principal, Mr. Ray Reynolds was quoted contradicting Hill’s biography. Judge John David Snodgrass, who sentenced Hill to two years in the state penitentiary but changed it to two years probation was also quoted.

C

FACT 12: Stone Cold Heart is a 56 page mini-book containing a synopsis of 25 years of Steve Hill's life and is, quite obviously, not intended to be exhaustive. **The only “fictionalizing” of any kind in the book is that the names of some characters have been changed to protect their identity and safeguard them from unwarranted intrusion and embarrassment regarding the life they left behind over 20 years ago.** This, of course, is commonly done in biographical writing, and all details of the book are completely true and accurate.

PNJ: “Even minor details who opened a door, who placed a telephone call are not accurate and Hill admits it. Hill told the News Journal that he even made up names in his book. Nowhere on the cover or inside the book does he say that names have been

changed. Nor does the book warn the reader that the stories are anything other than what they seem.” (Allman, “Hill’s bio fraught with fallacies,” Nov. 18, 1997)

Commentary:

See the commentary on Fact 11. It appears that a lot more than names have been changed to “protect” the truth.

A,C

FACT 13: Contrary to the implication of the Journal, **Steve Hill never claimed to have been arrested 13 times in Huntsville, Alabama from 1972-1975 but rather said that he was arrested a total of 13 times in different areas of the United States during those years.** Some of these arrests were with companions who have testified to the validity of the accounts as given by Steve, but **the Journal did not contact these sources.** It should also be noted that **Federal Law ordered the destruction of arrest records for various minor offenses for those born before 1955, a fact which the Journal also ignored.**

PNJ: “He uses vague terms when he mentions his arrests. Though he claims police took him to jail in Colorado, Arizona and California, as well as in Alabama, he can offer no proof that any arrest outside Alabama ever happened. His explanation is that many were for crimes that were never solved. Hill’s attorney, Walter Chandler, suggests that some were not actual arrests but were instances in which Hill was picked up for questioning. One story that Hill told on stage numerous times is that he and some friends were arrested “for breaking into a drug store” in Madison, Ala. That arrest is not on his record. **National law enforcement reports, Huntsville police records and Madison County records together show four arrests: two on drug charges, in 1974 and 1975; two on charges of attempting to break into an automobile, in 1973 and 1975.**” (Allman. “Hill’s criminal record not what he says it is,” Nov. 18, 1997)

Commentary:

Noteworthy is the mention of the Brownsville-Revival site <<http://www.brownsville-revival.org/hill.html>> where Steve Hill’s brief biography is posted. Within this posting it states: “Through these rebellious years he was arrested 13 times for car theft, narcotics trafficking and other related crimes.” Thus, according to the Brownsville Revival site, Steve Hill’s arrests were not for minor offenses, which questions why they noted a Federal Law that “ordered the destruction of arrest records for various minor offenses for those born before 1955.”

I also sought comment on this matter from Brownsville. They directed me to seek the information I requested from “Together in the Harvest.” Douglass Hawks of “Together in the Harvest Ministries, Inc.” answered my request for more information.

Concerning crime records, each arrest was not for as serious an offense as drug trafficking or auto theft Possession of a narcotic, while serious by some standards, is not in the same league as trafficking. Nevertheless, several of the arrests were of a serious felony class. The simple answer

to this question is that arrest records exist outside of Huntsville that were never investigated by News-Journal writers.

This answer neglects the News Journal's report that sought input from National law enforcement sources (i.e., National Crime Information Center). According to my research Rev. Hill was questioned about this result before the News Journal went to press. In hopes of finding something to verify his purported criminal record, they even asked if he had been picked up for questioning anywhere. He offered Phoenix, Arizona. An in depth search of all records that would have indicated Hill was pulled in for questioning revealed no proof indicating this happened.

Additionally, the Federal Law mentioned in Fact 13 does not exist. The US Attorney's Office, and Federal Prosecutors have not been able to find this "law" offered in Steve Hill's defense. If this law existed it would only apply to federal charges.

A, NI

FACT 14: Although the Journal claimed that Steve Hill did not sponsor a table at the Teen Challenge meeting in Pensacola this year, in point of fact, he sent \$1000 to the meeting (the equivalent of sponsoring eight tables), and contributes \$1000 a month to the local Teen Challenge branch.

Commentary:

This statement provides new information that was previously unknown to the News Journal.

NI

FACT 15: As of November 18, 1997, Together in the Harvest's year-to-date contributions to Teen Challenge world wide amounted to \$80,021 (and are verified by receipts received from Teen Challenge), while additional foreign missions contributions came to \$203,656 and home missions and benevolence totaled an additional \$320,000, making a grand total of charitable contributions of more than \$600,000, equaling more than 25% of Together in the Harvest's gross income. The reason some of this data is not individually broken down and categorized on the IRS return is that Together in the Harvest's bookkeeper groups much of it together under charitable giving, although Together in the Harvest's financial records do, of course, detail each and every one of these charitable and missions transactions.

Commentary:

These figures at first appearance are confusing, given that the financial statement by TIH was for last year (August 1996 to August 1997(See Fact 18.)) and the new information figures given here are for the calendar year 1997 till November 18, 1997.

C

FACT 16: Steve Hill immediately gave the Journal a complete financial disclosure on October 4, 1997. A breakdown of his finances for the last twelve months indicates that his ministry's charitable giving came to more than six times the amount of his personal salary package, a fact not noted by the Journal. (His wife Jeri does not receive any salary from the ministry, contrary to the implication of the Journal.)

PNJ: “Hill has not provided a list of Together in the Harvest staff. He has not provided an audited statement. He has not specified what role his wife, Jeri, plays in the organization or how much she is paid. Her name appears with Steve Hill’s on the Together in the Harvest letterhead.” (“Ministry fails to meet watchdog guidelines” Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

The financial records that were shared with the News Journal were printed. Hill did not provide an audited financial statement.

It would seem that the questions posed by the News Journal are objectively valid, since her name is on the letterhead of the ministry.

V+, C

FACT 17: Steve Hill offered to fly the Journal's correspondents to his various missions projects anywhere in the world for their personal inspection, but they declined the offer. The one orphanage in Argentina contacted by the Journal was aided by Steve's ministry when it was founded but has long since become funded by the government.

Commentary:

If you go to <http://www.brownsville-revival.org/hill.html>, you will find the Argentine orphanage mentioned, but not in the context it is here. The site highlights the orphanage when after it talks about the missions Hill is involved in. This is done in such a way that you would believe he is currently supporting this ministry financially.

I wrote to “Together in the Harvest” to inquire about the offer Hill gave to fly the News Journal staff to various missions he is supporting, and asked for a listing of those missions and details regarding the News Journal not accepting the offer. Below is the reply issued from Douglass Hawk.

The missions projects that Steve offered to fly any of the News-Journal team to included works in Argentina, Belarus, Colombia, Paraguay and Spain for starters.

Argentina is where Steve worked for 7 years planting churches with the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions. **The main project there is the Centro Evangelistico in Neuquen, in the South West of the country. Neuquen has about 2000 adults who call the church their home and minister weekly to around 8000 children in their Sunday School in the Streets program. From this church another dozen or so churches have been planted in surrounding towns.** In addition, Steve is currently financing the planting of another church in neighboring **Cipoletti** with workers from Neuquen.

The **Belarus project** is another church plant in the city of **Baranovichi**. New Life Church was planted there and is currently being pastored by Misha Kabushko. In addition to this church, Steve is also providing finances for **Baranovichi Teen Challenge**, the only TC center in Belarus and the first in the former Soviet Union. This center has graduated approximately 10 students, some of whom have gone on to the Minsk Bible Institute. In this Institute, Steve **supports A/G Missionary Larry Art** who is teaching and coordinating construction of new facilities and student placement.

The **Spain** project is a church plant working in conjunction with Argentine Missionaries, Daniel and Lilliana Palma. They have planted the **Centro Cristiano** in the city of **Granada** on the southern coast. In addition, Steve supports **Jacob Bock, an A/G missionary** involved in children's ministry around Spain.

Colombia is a church plant project in the city of **Palmira**, near Cali, pastored by Pastor Jose Luis Santibanez. Steve has supported this church financially. In addition, Steve is supplying finances for **Luis Carrera with Teen Challenge International**, planting the first Teen Challenge center in Colombia.

In **Paraguay**, Steve is supporting **Rodney Hart, planting Teen Challenge centers**, most notably, the first Teen Challenge center to be opened inside a prison.

These are some of the projects that were open for any staff writers from the News-Journal to visit. I don't have any details on their refusal, other than the fact they declined to accept to the offer.

The highlighted portion in the first paragraph of Mr. Hawks reply proves interesting. The orphanage described here is the same one mentioned by both the News Journal and Fact 17. According to both sources "Together in the Harvest" does not support this ministry.

According to my research. The detailed information provided by Mr. Hawks was not provided to the News Journal. No indication was given of where the ministries were except a listing of countries. The lack of information provided by Hill's ministry did not give the News Journal enough to plan a trip on.

A, C

FACT 18: Alleged discrepancies between the IRS filings and Steve's financial disclosure are simply due to the fact that the IRS figures are for the calendar year of 1996 (with charitable giving totaling \$298,085), while his disclosure to the Journal was for August, 1996 to August, 1997 (with charitable giving totaling \$639,384). The Journal's presentation of these two reports side by side, without any clarification, was highly misleading.

PNJ: Hill and his attorney both said they did not know whether the IRS return was for the 1996 calendar year or for the same August to August fiscal year as the two other financial statements. The return does not specify the time period, but it was dated Aug. 12 and received Aug. 19. (Allman, J "Money for missions fails to add up" Nov. 18, 1997)

Commentary:

A – Agree C – Controversy NI – New Information V+ - Valid Point

It would seem that the News Journal's reporting here was as open and honest as it could be.

A, NI

FACT 19: Those responding to the altar calls in the revival are urged to destroy any pornographic magazines or videos they own, to flush their alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs down the toilet, and to throw out articles of jewelry or memorabilia they were given during adulterous or sinful relationships. The few articles of jewelry that have been turned in will be sold and the funds put into the church building fund.

PNJ: "During the revival, sinners are coaxed to get rid of "articles of affection"--rings, bracelets, watches and other jewelry they received in adulterous affairs.

"Church leaders will not give specifics about how many such items show up in the offerings." (Streater, A. "Church budget is 6.6 million; 2% is devoted to assist missions," Nov. 16, 1997)

"Some people see the offering as their chance to break away from sin: Heeding Hill's call to give up "articles of affection," they hand over the rings, bracelets, watches they received from their lovers in sinful or adulterous affairs.

"Hill says his ministry has not received a lot of jewelry in the Friday night collections.

"It ranges from a \$2,500 diamond ring to a not-so-impressive thin gold bracelet.

"He is willing to show the items to interviewers.

"He said he has not decided what his ministry will do with them.

"Brownsville church leaders would not allow the News Journal to see any jewelry the church has found in revival collections that go the church." (Streater, A. "Give at least \$100, revival leaders say," Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

Truly, the News Journal and Brownsville agree here.

A

FACT 20: Before the revival, the Brownsville Assembly of God gave approximately 12% of its income to missions and benevolence. Since the outbreak of the revival, the church has continued to keep its previous missions commitments but has added a weekly missions offering taken up for Together in the Harvest. (After this missions offering is counted, it is regularly supplemented by Brownsville.) Thus, when the funds given to Together in the Harvest are included, the church gave almost 18% to outreach and missions in 1996 (\$1,179,926 out of \$6,563,783).

Commentary:

According to the "Brownsville Assembly of God 1996 Financial Statement" released to the News Journal, \$1,179,926 was given to missions. But, after excluding 87% which

goes to Hill's non-profit corporation (\$1,024,776.50), the church missions budget is (\$155,149.84) 2% of \$6,563,783.

C

FACT 21: The Journal frequently lifted quotes completely out of context in order to give a false impression to the readers. To give just one example out of many, Pastor Carey Robertson is quoted as saying, "If you wonder where the money is going, then don't give.... Once it becomes a gift, it is ours to use. It is nobody's business how we use it." In context, he was explaining to the Journal's correspondents that, whereas a member of Brownsville has the right to examine the church's financial books, the fact that a visitor puts \$25 in the offering does not therefore give him the right to examine the church's financial records. Also, as is the universal custom in churches around the nation, when undesignated funds are put into an offering, it is up to the discretion of the church to expend those funds responsibly, whether it be to pay nursery workers or buy bathroom supplies. This was also part of Pastor Robertson's intent. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the Journal's intent was to present a full and clear picture, but rather to give the appearance of a scandal. **Similar examples of other misquotes or quotes taken completely out of context could be multiplied, and numerous sources quoted by the Journal, including those involved with the revival and those unrelated to the revival, have expressed to us their outrage, shock, and dismay at the misrepresentation of their words in the Journal.**

PNJ: "‘It’s nobody’s business but ours,’ Robertson said. ‘We are not accountable to the people who come to revival because they are our guests. They make a free-will offering and therefore should not expect an audit or an accounting. If you wonder where the money is going, then don’t give. Obviously we can’t spend money the way people want us to, but once it becomes a gift, it is ours to use. It is nobody’s business how we use it.’" (Streater. "Details about revival’s budget are sketchy" 11/16/97)

Commentary:

The quote was not taken out of context. It appears that Brownsville’s fact, which pulls a portion of the quote, does not give the full story. This makes Brownsville guilty of the very charge they accused the News Journal of: "lifting quotes completely out of context in order to give a false impression to the readers."

C

FACT 22: At no time did any of the revival ministries **knowingly violate the relevant state tax laws**, as alleged by the Journal. To the contrary, in spite of extensive investigation by accountants and legal representatives for the ministries, **the Department of Revenue of the State of Florida gave varying responses as to the necessity of collecting sales tax on ministry items sold within the church. As soon as a definitive ruling was passed on to each of the ministries, they immediately took steps to begin collecting and paying the appropriate sales taxes and will pay all taxes retroactively due.**

PNJ: "He [Kilpatrick] said in an interview with the News Journal three weeks ago that the ministry was paying sales tax. Receipts for items purchased from his ministry, Feast of Fire, do not show that sales tax was charged. ... Hill said in an interview with the News Journal three weeks ago that the ministry [Together in the Harvest] was paying sales tax. Receipts for items purchased from his ministry do not show that sales tax was charged. ..." ("3 top ministers fail to pay state sales tax," Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

Fact 22 ignores the statements given to the News Journal by Kilpatrick and Hill claiming that their ministries were paying taxes. Why did they say they were paying when they were not? Were they caught in lies here that question their credibility, or were they simply ignorant of this aspect of their ministry? In either case a reply should be given to clear up the matter.

C

FACT 23: Not one of the Brownsville revival leaders has received any financial remuneration from Awake America for participating in these national conferences, although it would have been completely appropriate for them to have done so. However, because the cost of holding these rallies has been astronomical, the leaders agreed to receive no honorariums from Awake America. While ministry books and tapes have been sold at these events and travel expenses have been reimbursed, no honorariums from Awake American have been taken by any of the leaders.

PNJ: "Hill and the Memphis pastor handling the collection, the Rev. Randel McCarty, cite different figure at times -- from \$50,000 to \$130,000 -- for the amount needed to cover expenses. (Streater. "On the road: Pleas for money intensify" 11/16/97)

Commentary:

While it is quite probable that the cost for Awake America is "astronomical," since TV commercials, fliers and many other forms of advertising were involved. Yet, it would be easier to understand if a full accounting of the expenses an Awake America occurs were made public. Also, there remains the issue brought by the News Journal that different amounts necessary to cover the expenses were reported to the public, and a much higher figure was given to the Journal.

C

FACT 24: Since the revival began in the Brownsville Assembly of God, less than 150 previous members have cancelled or moved their membership, while 1530 new members have been added. Of those members who were in the church for 25 or more years, none of them have left because of the revival, and only 4 officials out 27 have left the church since the revival began. Simply stated, there has not been a mass exodus of members, contrary to allegations made by anonymous former members in the Journal.

PNJ: "**Hundreds** of longtime Brownsville Assembly of God members have left their church since the revival began. **They don't know the numbers -- though they believe**

it is about 800 -- because most left quietly and kept their reasons to themselves. But as each day passes the exiles learn about others who have mustered the courage to leave." (Crann. "Sadness, fear fill members who left Brownsville," Nov. 17, 1997)

Commentary:

The manner in which a church keeps track of membership status is often tricky. A church that does not regularly review membership roles and the activity of its members (i.e. tithing/giving, roles (teacher, usher), etc.) may not have a true picture of its membership. The only way a church actively monitors or updates membership is by its receipt of letters that express the intent to remove membership. So, quite often a membership is still counted even though a member may no longer be attending or giving financially to that church. Thus, since some of the members have stated to the News Journal that they left quietly without giving reasons, they may still be listed as members. So a true answer on this matter may never be found.

C

FACT 25: Dr. Michael L. Brown immediately provided the Journal with his salary and benefits package when asked to do so on October 24th (they were informed that it totaled well under \$100,000). Contrary to the Journal's claim that he would not provide a financial statement, all financial information requested by the Journal was compiled by his office, **although it apparently arrived too late for the Journal's deadlines.** To date, **he has received no salary from the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry**, although he serves as the school's President and as a faculty member, and all royalties from any of his nine books are paid directly to ICN Ministries and do not accrue personally to him.

PNJ: " He estimates his books and tapes bring in about \$50,000 a month. That amounts to \$600,000 a year. ... **He would not disclose how his ministry spends the \$600,000.** The IRS aid Brown's ministry has asked for two extensions and is **not due to file until late this month.**" (Streater. "Revival for sale through merchandise," Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

The first issue here is whether Dr. Michael Brown quickly replied to the petition for financial disclosure by the News Journal. According to the News Journal article it was written possibly by the first week of November ("... and is not due to file until late this month.").

The next issue is simply, "What is Dr. Michael Brown paid for if not his work with the school?"

A, NI

FACT 26: In spite of the fact that the tuition costs for the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry are among the lowest nationally and its operating budget ineligible (the figure of \$604,500 given by the Journal referred to the school's total income, not profit), the school also granted \$65,000 in scholarships to needy students. As for the student body, 170 of the school's **510 students** are 25 or older (including 81 who are 30 or older), while 66

have already earned college or graduate degrees. Approximately 140 students were saved through the revival, while 118 testify to being set free from life-controlling addictions.

PNJ: “The revival has given birth to a Bible college that in one year has **brought in about \$604,500**. The church rents classroom space in a defunct bible college on U.S. 98 in west Pensacola and charges its **507 students** an instructional fee of \$975 a semester, which includes books, but not room and board, for the 120 students who live on campus.” (Streater. “Details about revival’s budget are sketchy,” Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

It appears that News Journal has responsibly reported the facts. Close scrutiny might even speak of rounded figures on the part of Brownsville.

A, NI

FACT 27: Of the four nonprofit corporations allegedly formed since the revival began, **two of them (vis., Together in the Harvest and ICN) were already operating as international ministries prior to the beginning of the revival.** The other two (viz., MMI and Feast of Fire) were formed so that profits from sales of books and tapes would not accrue exclusively to the individual authors or song writers but rather would also benefit a nonprofit corporation for further ministry purposes. **All four of these ministries are in the process of filing with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and had ordered applications months before the Journal began it investigation.**

PNJ: Feast of Fire Ministries Inc. – “...created by Brownsville Assembly of God pastor John Kilpatrick in October 1996.”

Together in the Harvest Ministries, Inc. – “... created by Brownsville Revival evangelist Steve Hill in December 1992.”

Music Missions International Inc. – “... created by Brownsville Assembly of God Music Minister Lindell Cooley in March [1997].”

ICN Ministries Inc. – “... created by Brownsville Revival School of Ministry President Michael Brown in 1994.” (Stallcup. “Brownsville Revival leaders and their corporations,” Nov. 16, 1997)

Commentary:

It appears that the News Journal had already stated that two of the organizations existed before the revival.

The second issue here is whether or not the above listed non-profit corporations have gone beyond seeking applications to the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). I wrote to them and inquired about this. Cindi Repass, Director of Member Review and Compliance replied:

Though ECFA readily provides information concerning its members, by policy it does not discuss organizations that are not members or that are in the application process with ECFA.

However, we are aware that Rev. Hill has publicly stated he has applied for membership in ECFA, ECFA has acknowledged having correspondence with his ministry, Together in the Harvest.

ECFA does not track those who have requested an application packet from ECFA. Often packets are picked up at conferences or requested by third parties. We do not keep records of this information.
(E-mail, Jan.27, 1998)

The thing to remember here is that none of the ministries has become a member of ECFA, and whether they have sought an application with the ECFA is questionable.

A, C

FACT 28: The revival has been subject to careful theological scrutiny, and its soundness has been recognized by biblical scholars and theologians from leading universities and seminaries. In fact, Professor Vinson Synan, a leading Pentacostal historian and the Dean of the Regent University School of Divinity, has called it “the largest local church revival in the history of America,” writing that, “Brownsville, with its emphasis on conversion and people weeping over conviction of sin, seems to be a revival in the long tradition of American native revivals dating back to the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. There’s heavy preaching on sin, repentance, conversion, and holiness. And there’s a lot more weeping and wailing over sin than there are the so-called exotic manifestations.”

Commentary:

It was stated in the introduction of this article that there are things happening at Brownsville that are undeniable. “Many have had an emotionally and spiritually stimulating experience there. Many have been baptized. Many have made a commitment to change their ways and live closer to God.” (“Secrets inside the revival,” 11/16/97)

C

FACT 29: At no time did the Journal raise the issue of the so called doctrinal improprieties or unusual manifestations to any of the revival leaders, nor were any of the leaders asked to respond to such questions, with the exception of one peripheral question put to Pastor Kilpatrick by one reporter (although his response was not printed). Thus, the Journal chose to give the general public no opportunity to hear a sound, biblical refutation of the charges raised, although it can easily be demonstrated that the emphasis of the revival conforms completely to biblical and historical norms.

PNJ: [Doctrinal improprieties]

“Too much emphasis is being placed on the experiences and the positive testimonies, to the point where the negative effects are largely ignored,” said Albert James Dager, who heads Media Spotlight ...

[Hanegraaff] views the Brownsville Revival as a part of a dangerous “paradigm shift of major proportions – a shift from faith to feelings, from fact to fantasy, and from reason to esoteric revelation.” ...

Stipe said to especially take notice, scripturally and theologically, when Hill talks about Jesus being tempted sexually ...

“You end up with a lot of faulty interpretations of Scripture and a lot of disjointed and irrational thinking,” Hanegraaf said after viewing many videotapes of the revival. (Crann. “Critics attack tactics, theological basis,” Nov. 19, 1997)

Commentary:

The unusual manifestations listed in the News Journal include: shaking, screaming, fainting, falling into trances and, “being drunk in the spirit.” The charge that no question was asked regarding these matters is false. Pastor Kilpatrick was interviewed by Alice Crann. He requested that all questions be submitted to him previous to the interview. While this did not happen, pertinent questions were asked. His answer was not printed because it did not stand up against the comments of the quoted authorities such as Hank Hanegraaff. “The sound biblical refutation” is simply a misuse of scripture. This exactly why Hanegraaff states they use “faulty interpretations and ...disjointed and irrational logic.”

A, V+

FACT 30: Of the pastors and teachers cited in the criticism of the revival, **some of them** (e.g., Mr. Al Dager) **have never attended a single meeting of the revival**, while another **Mr. Matt Costella, is a seminary student**, as opposed to being a recognized authority, biblical scholar, or theologian. For an exhaustive refutation of recent theological and doctrinal criticisms of the revival, **the interested reader may consult Dr. Michael L. Brown's** recent volume, **Let No One Deceive You: Confronting the Critics of the Revival**.

Commentary:

To say that you must experience the revival to judge/criticize what is happening there is like saying, to know what fire is you have to experience it. One does not have to receive a third-degree burn to learn that fire is hot, or that it is dangerous. The same is true in viewing the Brownsville-Revival from a distance.

The valid point here is simply that Matt Costella is not a recognized authority, and that he is as the News Journal stated a student in a Masters degree program. However, he and everyone listed above have more biblical and theological schooling than Pastor Kilpatrick and Evangelist Steve Hill.

An interesting note here is that the fact is ended with a sales pitch. The book costs \$10.99, and is available at the Cyberspace Christian Bookstore at <http://www.reaper.net/com/bo/index.html>.

V+

FACT 31: We first learned about the reduction in juvenile crime in Escambia County from the Journal itself! On January 3, 1997, the Journal ran a front page article compiled by staff writer Ginny Graybiel, proudly announcing that, whereas juvenile crime over the previous fiscal year had risen state-wide by 1%, it dropped by 13% in Escambia county, the first count-wide drop in five years. Now the Journal claims that the juvenile crime rate rose, the exact opposite of its earlier, detailed report.

Commentary:

Yes, the News Journal printed this article. The figures cited by Graybiel are the same as those cited in Fact 32.

A

FACT 32: Mr. Nathan Epps from the Bureau of Data and Research for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, provided revival leaders with the following crime statistics, drawn from 700 pages of information: The 1993-94 juvenile crime rate in Escambia County rose 5.15%; in 1994-95 it rose 17.43%; in 1995-96 it dropped 12.8%; in 1996-97 it dropped an additional 4.53%. Furthermore, using Apopka County, Florida as a point of random comparison, it can be seen that the juvenile crime rate in Apopka rose by .22% in 1995-96 and in 1996-97 dropped by .74%. When one considers that attendance throughout Escambia County at See You At the Pole, the early morning, student prayer gathering held in September of each year rose from less than 500 in 1995 to more than 2100 in 1996 and 1997, such juvenile crime reduction statistics are no surprise.

PNJ: “Revival leaders have also claimed the revival is reducing juvenile crime, and they point to crime data to prove their claim. Law enforcement officials say that data tells only part of the story. The revival leaders are citing state figures for the numbers of juveniles taken into custody, not the number of arrests or crimes for which they were arrested. Escambia Sheriff’s Office statistics show that juvenile arrests almost doubled in 1996 compared to the year before, increasing from 1,243 to 2,392. (Streater. “Escambia sheriff disputes claims of crime reduction,” Nov. 20, 1997)

Commentary:

The News Journal is stating that the figures given in Facts 31 and 32 and 33 and the previous News Journal articles were relaying misinformation because they do not directly reflect the actual numbers of juvenile arrests or the crimes for which they were arrested.

V+, NI

FACT 33: According to a broadcast aired by Channel 3 News (WEAR American Broadcasting Association) on September 23, 1997, the overall crime rate in Escambia County dropped by 16% in the first six months of 1997 as compared with the same period in 1996.

Commentary:

See commentary on Fact 32.

NI

FACT 34: When Rev. Ken Landon, a counselor at the Waterfront Rescue Mission and New Hope Homes in Gulf Breeze, learned that some sources were questioning the impact of the revival on local drug addicts and alcoholics, he informed us that his own mission alone had baptized more than 120 of its clients in the revival over the last year --

including former crack addicts, alcoholics, repeat offenders, homeless people, violent bikers, and abused women - and less than 10 of those 120 have fallen away.

Commentary:

What Rev. Ken Landon is doing as a servant of God, may have no relevance or connection to the revival in Brownsville.

V+, NI

FACT 35: Our primary source for the positive economic impact that the revival has had on the community was the glowing article published by the Journal on Father's Day, 1997, and it was the Journal article that we sometimes cited for this information. Now the Journal claims that the revival has been more of an economic drain. Moreover, the Journal chose to ignore data pointing to the positive impact the revival has had on real estate transactions.

Commentary:

Once again a citation is given that precedes the News Journals initial investigation of the Brownsville-Revival.

V+

FACT 36: On July 11, 1997, the Journal printed a special, 40 page mini-paper on the revival, paid for by area businesses, and filled with ads from local hotels, restaurants, and vendors. 50,000 copies of this mini-paper were produced by the Journal and were then given to Brownsville with the express request that they be handed out to revival attendees waiting in line. In fact, in that report (p. 19), the Journal quoted Sheriff Jim Lowman as seeing the revival as "nothing but a positive influence in the community," adding, "I just wish people who are going to break the law would go to the church service instead."

Commentary:

A general positive comment by Sheriff Lowman does not dispute the fact that youth crimes have increased in Escambia County. Also note that the research for the "expose" on Brownsville was not started until one month later. I was reliably informed that the New Journal had done several positive articles in the past on the revival. Journalistic integrity prompted them to look deeper into what was actually happening instead of accepting second-hand reports.

V+?

FACT 37: According to the Journal's own reporting in the just cited special 40 page report (p. 19), "Although the revival has critics who describe uninhibited religious demonstrations as 'mass manipulation,' the loudest complaints come from area businesses lamenting the loss of customers when the revival has taken a break for a few days."

Commentary:

The wording of this fact is scary. It ignores the term “mass manipulation” by addressing economics. What accusation by the News Journal is worse? Is Brownsville use of this quote acceptance that “mass manipulation” is occurring in the revival?

NI, C

FACT 38: Rather than relocating to a more upscale neighborhood, Brownsville Assembly of God chose many years ago to remain in the Brownsville area. At present, it is investing considerable time and resources to reach out to the Brownsville neighborhood in a tangible and loving way. (**Contrary to the Journal's claims, this service was begun by Brownsville members and is financed by the church.**) For example, in the last six months, every home in the community north of Cervantes St. -- Mobile Hwy. received a personal visit from Brownsville workers (although some were not at home at the time of the initial visit), and benevolence extended to various families included food, clothing, house repairs, and cutting grass. Moreover, every individual reached was given a ticket enabling them to attend the revival without having to wait in line.

PNJ: Church leaders have said that the revival has generated an out-reach ministry, but the News Journal has found that the program is not funded by the church nor is it an official church function. The outreach was created by two out-of-state visitors who came to the revival, saw the community’s needs and organized a group of volunteers into Brownsville Revival Blessing Outreach. It receives its support entirely from private and business donations, not from the church or revival revenues. The church does help by providing storage space.

Commentary:

The News Journal’s coverage of the “Blessing Outreach” indicates that the church is not involved with the exception of providing storage space. They interviewed the head of the organization and received information from her.

NI

FACT 39: All real estate purchases by the Brownsville Assembly of God in the local community had been purchased at a price above the appraised value in order to insure that no one would feel that the church was taking advantage of them. In fact, the cost of buying properties surrounding the church has escalated drastically, to the direct benefit of the local property owners.

Commentary:

This issue is not addressed in the News Journal.

C

FACT 40: Steve Hill's **statement** that Jesus was crucified naked - thereby experiencing humiliation on our behalf - is supported by Scripture (see, e.g., John 19:23-25), reflects the Roman custom of the day according to the Jewish scholar, S.T. Lachs, "The

condemned were crucified naked, and the executioners were allowed to divide their clothing and property among them"), is attested to by the second-century Church Father Melito of Sardis ("The Master has been treated in unseemly fashion, his body naked, and not even deemed worthy of a covering that [his nakedness] might not be seen:), and represents the majority view of scholars. Thus, Steve is completely correct in stating that "most theologians believe that Jesus was crucified naked." Even the beloved commentator Matthew Henry drew attention to, "The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus, in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He therefore who was made sin for us bore that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with white raiment (Rev. 3:18), and that when we are unclothed we may not be found naked." It should be noted, however, that Steve's preaching emphasis is on the fact that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead, not on the fact that He was crucified naked. It is the critics who majored on that.

PNJ: The Rev. Tom Stipe, one of the founders of Promise Keepers and author of the forward *Counterfeit Revival*, has found serious problems – scripturally and theologically - with evangelist Steve Hill's heavy use of sexual admonitions – frequent references to masturbation and pornography – and sexual imagery in his references to Jesus Christ.

Often when Hill talks about Christ on the cross, he uses these terms:

“With his genitals hanging out for all to see ...”

“With his sexual organs on display ...”

(Crann. “Critics attack tactics, theological basis,” Nov. 20, 1997)

Commentary:

Fact 40 begins “Steve Hill's **statement.**” Statement is highlighted here because its usage indicates a singular item of speech. It ignores the allegation of several such addresses on the part of Evangelist Hill. Note also, the quotes from Hill are not reprinted in the rebuttal. It appears that Brownsville Assembly is again guilty of the charge they placed against the News Journal of “lifting quotes completely out of context in order to give a false impression to the readers.”

C

FACT 41: While sexual sin is explicitly preached against in the revival - following the example of Scripture (see, e.g, Prov. 5:1-32; 7:1-27; Matt. 5:27-30; Eph. 5:1-6) -- **there is no sexual fixation** of any kind in the meetings, as unfortunately stated in the Journal. Rather, the emphasis is on holiness. Anyone questioning this can readily view or listen to hundreds of hours of preaching and teaching in the revival service as recorded on video or audio tape.

PNJ: Stipe said to especially take notice, scripturally and theologically, when Hill talks about being tempted sexually. “That is getting close to blasphemy,” he said.

Stipe refers to Hill's references to a woman washing Jesus' feet and the constant sexual temptations Christ faced.

A – Agree **C** – Controversy **NI** – New Information **V+** - Valid Point

“Where in scripture does it say that Jesus had every opportunity to have sex with women? What Steve Hill is doing is placing a sexual twist on a worship event.” ...

When Hill tells the revival-goers that “Jesus faced every temptation you have” he is again “superimposing a sexual agenda over a text where there is virtually no evidence of that,” Stripe said. “Hill is referring to Luke 4 – but the devil never offered sexual liberties or sexual power to Christ.” (Crann. “Critics attack tactics, theological basis,” Nov. 20, 1997)

Commentary:

If we examined Fact 37 and Fact 38 together, a bigger picture of a sexual fixation on Rev. Hill’s part would appear stronger. Possibly, this was the reasoning in dividing the attention between Fact 37 and Fact 38.

C, NI

FACT 42: The ministry practices of Brownsville are consistently misrepresented. To cite just two examples, prayer team members use the name of Jesus every night (as opposed to the Journal’s odd allegation that they are forbidden to pray in Jesus’ name), while these lay workers are specifically instructed not to call out, “Fire! Fire!” while praying, although the Journal stated the exact opposite.

Commentary:

The only controversy here is that the issue is never discussed in the articles by the News Journal. This then is a “serious misrepresentation of the facts.”

C, NI

FACT 43: While we recognize that Christians hold to many varied views concerning divine healing, and while we have not made physical healing a major emphasis in the revival, **on numerous occasions revival attendees have publicly testified to being miraculously healed by God during the meetings sometimes holding x-rays and other medical documentation to verify their stories.** While we are aware that many godly Christians remain sick or disabled, never receiving physical healing in this life, we rejoice with those people - Christian and non-Christian alike – who have been healed, and we hope that others too would also rejoice on their behalf.

Commentary:

According to this fact, numerous people have testified to healings at Brownsville Assembly of God. If this is the case, why was Brownsville Assembly unable to communicate one healing that could be verified medically to the News Journal?

C

FACT 44: Although the Journal alleges that Steve Hill secretly planned on sparking a long-term revival when he came to speak in Brownsville in June, 1995, he was actually

schedule to hold major rallies in Belarus in the former Soviet Union later that month and had gone through considerable effort in planning the promotion of those rallies. Because of the spontaneous outbreak of the revival, he was ultimately forced to cancel the Belarus meetings, although two of his staff members were already there preparing for the rallies and expecting his imminent arrival.

- PNJ:** In addition say present and former church members, the revival did not suddenly arrive. They knew what Kilpatrick was setting up because in the months before the revival:
- He talked persistently about bringing revival to Brownsville and threatened to quit if the church did not accept the revival.
 - The pastor's wife, Brenda Kipatrick, and a number of Brownsville church officials traveled to Canada and observed revival crowd-control techniques and prayer-team methods at the phenomenally successful ongoing revival there, the Toronto Blessing.
 - Kilpatrick showed the congregation a video of a Toronto Blessing service, in which people fall to the floor, "slain in the spirit," as they feel the holy Spirit taking over them.
 - Kilpatrick had followers of Evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne attend a Brownsville service, where they functioned as an example of highly expressive worship. ...
 - Kilpatrick invited Hill an "on fire" evangelist whom Kilpatrick knew to be in search of a place to conduct a long-running, big revival – to give the sermon on Father's Day 1995. (Crann. "Pastors orchestrated first revival," Nov. 19, 1997)

Commentary:

Did Evangelist Hill have another meeting planned? Probably! But this is ignoring the fact that the brunt of the charge of planning the revival falls on Pastor Kilpatrick. All of the issues listed to support the News Journal charge, with the exception of one, cited in Fact 45, are never addressed.

A, NI, V+

FACT 45: The Journal's version of the events leading up to the revival is riddled with inaccuracies and misstatements. For example, **the practitioners of so-called holy laughter who were at Brownsville about one year prior to the revival were expelled from the church by Pastor Kilpatrick for disorderly and disruptive behavior after he expressly forbade them from praying over any of the Brownsville congregants.** Moreover, **the group that was expelled was not part of Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry.** (To date, Howard-Browne has never visited the revival.) Even Steve Hill's quote, "**Now if someone falls next to you, work with me, OK? Just work with me,**" indicates that nothing was pre-planned, since there were no "catchers" waiting for people to fall, and Steve was saying, "Please help catch the person next to you if they fall under the power of God!"

Commentary:

If the News Journal's coverage is "riddled with inaccuracies and misstatements," then why is this fact agreeing with its coverage. It agrees that: 1) followers of Rodney Howard-Browne's "laughter movement" were present in Brownsville Assembly of God prior to the revival. 2) Steve Hill stated, "Now if someone falls next to you, work with me, OK? Just work with me."

If the issue of planning the revival is examined, the News Journal only discusses Kilpatrick's and Hill's involvement. Thus, even if the revival were planned, "catchers" would not necessarily have been prepared for the event. Yet, in their defense it must be stated that many pastors have planned for revival and the revival never came.

The valid point is Brownsville's claim that the "laughter movement" people were disciplined for disorderly and disruptive behavior. The only question on this issue centers on whether they were set up as "examples of highly expressive worship." If they were, was the disciplinary action made public to let the sheep know these people were in the wrong?

A, C

FACT 46: The heaven-sent nature of the revival is attested to by more than 1200 Brownsville congregants who were there on Father's Day, 1995 and by multiplied tens of thousands, who have attended the meetings since. Not one single aspect of the revival was planned out in advance, nor could any facet of a revival of this magnitude possibly have been orchestrated or staged. All credit for the revival must go to God, who graciously answered more than two years of corporate prayer for revival by the members of Brownsville Assembly of God.

Commentary:

Pastor Kilpatrick made the comment: "If we could manufacture this we would be [rolling in the dough.] This statement raises the question of whether this is a manufactured "mass hypnotic" event? The issue of whether the revival was planned was addressed above.

NI

FACT 47: While it is undoubtedly true that in the revival, just as in every local church, some of the converts have fallen away, **we have countless hundreds of testimonies on file** from the local area and around the world coming from pastors, church members, and families of converted sinners, attesting to the radical changes that have taken place in their congregations or individuals lives through the revival. We give all the glory to the Lord Jesus and believe that the best is yet to come. It is time for revival to spread throughout the land!

Commentary:

This issue is not addressed in the News Journal. Yet, it is interesting to note that they "have countless hundreds of testimonies on file from the local area and around the world coming from pastors, church members, and families of converted sinners, attesting to the radical changes that have taken place in their congregations or individuals lives through the revival," yet they keep no records of the healings reported to them.

THE SCORE CARD

A – Agree C – Controversy NI – New Information V+ - Valid Point

Out of 47 facts, the following statistics have been arrived at:

Ratings:	Tally	Percentage (x/47)
A	17	36.17
C	26	55.32
V+	10	21.28
V+?	2	20.00 (2/10)

It is interesting to note here that Brownsville Assembly response agrees 36% with what was said in the News Journal. This is highly unusual for a rebuttal. They only disagree 55% of the time in the response, and make valid points 21% of the time, 20% of which are questionable.

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction to the response, Brownsville Assembly states their purpose is to: “correct the many inaccuracies within those articles.” They also state that they are “troubled by their [the Pensacola News Journal’s] misquotes, serious misrepresentation of Facts, and misleading innuendoes.” Yet, in several of the facts listed, issues are ignored, misinformation is given, and incomplete quotes are cited. Objectively, this tells us the response is guilty of the charge that is thrown at the News Journal.

AFTER-THOUGHTS

Since a lot of the issues related in this critique regarded finances, I thought it appropriate to inquire with the Assemblies of God whether they had a financial accountability requirement. Rev. Thomas E. Trask, General Superintendent replied:

The Assemblies of God does not have financial requirements for General Council churches. Some churches serve under District Council jurisdiction and would have accountability to their home district. However, all churches are autonomous and follow their own Constitution and Bylaws for accountability, most submitting to an annual audit review. (Personal correspondence Jan. 29, 1998)

Perhaps closer scrutiny by the larger body would make a difference, perhaps not. John Wesley may have summed this entire matter up when he said:

I fear wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. (cited in: Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. New York, NY: Scribner’s, 1958, p.158)

We must be accountable one to another in doctrine and finances, for in this way we avoid error. Revival may breed riches, but as men and women of God we are to be responsible with what the Lord gives us. Sometimes that requires a little help from someone looking over your shoulder to promote your honesty.