

Editorials

BROWNSVILLE PASTOR CONFIRMS NON-PROPHET STATUS

On April 6, Pastor John Kilpatrick of Brownsville Assembly of God Church in Pensacola, Fla., asked his congregation to "pardon me for being beside myself." He said his passion resulted from receiving "a word from the Lord" the previous night, which he would share with the congregation. He informed them that, "And the Lord said, 'I want you to go before My people and I want you to tell them something.' He said, 'Even in regard to what you're upset about and worried about.'"

Kilpatrick had been angered by comments made by Christian Research Institute president Hank Hanegraaff on CNN's *Larry King Live*, where the Southern California apologist said those attending the Pensacola meetings were being worked into altered states of consciousness. Kilpatrick responded by denouncing Hanegraaff before his faithful: "I'm going to prophesy to you that if you don't [stop criticizing the Brownsville Revival] ... within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down."

Both the Christian (including Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal alike) and the secular media reported on the dispute and Kilpatrick's prophetic warfare. The revelation of Hanegraaff's demise was an issue that even caught the eye of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Mo., whose leader stated "very clearly we have been monitoring" the situation.

Following Kilpatrick's declaration, PFO addressed letters to both the Brownsville Assembly and the denominational headquarters inquiring what would the response to Kilpatrick's failed prophecy be when Hanegraaff, his ministry and his criticisms of the Brownsville spectacle continued

unabated on July 5, the day following the 90-day deadline. Would disciplinary action be taken against Kilpatrick by his church board and/or the leadership of his denomination? Claiming a "word" or "prophecy" from the Lord is a serious matter and should be judged in a likewise solemn manner (1 Corinthians 14:29).

Brownsville's resident theologian, Dr. Michael L. Brown told PFO, "We take prophecy seriously." And then offered this rebuke to director G. Richard Fisher who asked what would be done when the prediction failed: "Your presumption ('when' instead of 'if') is surprising. We will address things if Hank (not CRI) is fully in business after July 5th" (parenthesis and underline in original). As it turned out they had to address things before July 5th and Fisher's inquiry proved to be valid.

The General Superintendent of the Assemblies, Thomas E. Trask, replied in a letter that, "It was unfortunate that Pastor Kilpatrick made the statement relative to the matter of Hank Hanegraaff. I have talked with pastor on this and it would have been better had he not made any statement. ... John Kilpatrick doesn't have to be the mouthpiece for God." However, Trask avoided any remarks that disciplinary action would or would not be initiated against the pastor when the prophecy failed and Kilpatrick was proven to be a false prophet.

The media attention, letters from other apologetic ministries to both Pensacola and Springfield, and almost daily exposure on Hanegraaff's daily radio broadcast all combined to keep the prophetic declaration of Kilpatrick alive. The pressure was on. Would Hanegraaff and his ministry be brought down by the Holy Spirit or would Kilpatrick be proven a false prophet?

Measures were implemented to lessen the fallout of the
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but is a different faith altogether, the missionary will be able to pull from his bag of materials a book by an Evangelical publisher which says on page 195, '...we jointly and sincerely affirm the following foundational propositions of the Christian gospel as we both understand it.' IntVarsity Press and Dr. Craig Blomberg need to realize their grave error and either retract the book or correct it to show that, in fact, Evangelicals and Mormons do not agree on these areas."⁴³

And to that this writer adds a hearty AMEN!

Endnotes:

1. Stephen F. Cannon, *The Quarterly Journal*, "Behind the Deseret Veil," Vol. 14, No. 4, pg. 6.
2. Cited from Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, pg 309.
3. *Mormon Doctrine*, op. cit., pg. 592, italic in original.
4. *Journal of Discourses* (JOD), Vol 6, pp. 32-33. Reprint of the Original Edition, Salt Lake City: Fifth Reprint, 1967, upper case in original, italic emphasis added.
5. The four standard works of the LDS church in order of importance to doctrine and practice are: *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price*, *The Book of Mormon* and the Bible.
6. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*. Downers

- Grove, Ill.: IntVarsity Press, 1997, pg. 14, emphasis added.
7. *Ibid.*, pg. 25, emphasis added.
8. I use the term "progressive Mormons" to identify a group of people within the LDS church that seem to be trying to downplay the more embarrassing and bizarre elements of the historic LDS church and more closely identify with mainstream Christianity. It is my opinion that the LDS/MGS is using this group to help in the church's ongoing public relations campaign to make the LDS seem more mainstream, but that their eventual agenda is to absorb and ultimately supplant Evangelical Christianity. Any hint of tolerance toward Evangelical Christianity can be eradicated in a heartbeat with the absolute power possessed by the LDS/MGS.
9. *How Wide the Divide?*, op. cit., pg. 14.
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 20.
11. *Ibid.*, pg. 70.
12. *Ibid.*, pg. 165.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 38.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 41.
15. *Ibid.*, pg. 118.
16. *Ibid.*, pg. 11, italics in original.
17. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
18. *Ibid.*, pg. 16.
19. *Ibid.*, pg. 12, italics in originals. Also I find it interesting that Robinson decries "stereotyping," yet all counter-cult researchers are "extremist," "mean-spirited" and "dishonest" fundamentalists.
20. David Van Biema, *Time* magazine, August 4, 1997, "Kingdom Come," pg. 56.
21. Harold B. Lee to seminary and institute of religion personnel, July 1964, pg. 16, DCSM:45.
22. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: De-

- seret Book Company, 1976, pg. 354, emphasis added.
23. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1982, pg. 293.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, Vol. 6, pg. 411.
26. *How Wide the Divide?*, op. cit., pg. 14.
27. The ability to hold two mutually exclusive beliefs at the same time.
28. *How Wide the Divide?*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
29. *Ibid.*, pg. 208.
30. *Ibid.*, pg. 68.
31. *Ibid.*, pg. 57.
32. *Ibid.*, pg. 58.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 68.
34. *Ibid.*, pg. 73, italics in original.
35. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, pg. 95.
36. See further my article, "Behind the Deseret Veil" as cited above.
37. See further, Scott Abbot, *Sunstone* magazine, "On Ecclesiastical Endorsement at Brigham Young University," April 1997, Vol. 20:1, Issue 105, pp. 9-14.
38. *How Wide the Divide?*, op. cit., pg. 22.
39. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
40. Dr. Gordon R. Lewis is Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Denver Theological Seminary.
41. *How Wide the Divide?*, op. cit., pg. 27.
42. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, pg. 51.
43. L.L. (Don) Veinot, *Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. Journal*, "Why The Divide?", Vol. 3, No. 3, July/August, 1997, pg. 9. 

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false prophecy. The Brownsville Assembly stopped making available the videotape of the April 6 service. However the Brownsville staff stood by Kilpatrick's words. PFO learned that internal pressures were being turned up on Kilpatrick at Brownsville as the weeks rolled on.

And then, with only 18 days left, Kilpatrick issued a "public statement," faxed to Hanegraaff and posted on the Internet. The pastor, evidently knowing the imminent failure of his "word from the Lord," admitted that "in April [he] got in the flesh and lashed out" at Hanegraaff. Acknowledging his "unChristlike behavior," he claimed "I was not speaking that as a prophet but as a shepherd putting something in the ears of God." He further contended, "This is by no means to be interpreted as an attempt to wiggle out of a prophecy."

Yet, PFO maintains that Kilpatrick's statement is intended to do just that, for the following reasons:

- In his April 6 declaration, Kilpatrick said emphatically,

"I'm speaking this not just to you, friends, to impress you, but I'm saying this as a man of God from behind this holy desk in this holy environment of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. ... I'm going to prophesy to you."

- For nearly 2½ months following Kilpatrick's declaration, the warning stood as a prophecy. Even Kilpatrick's Brownsville colleague, theologian Michael Brown, did not disavow it was a "prophecy" and said they would address it if Hanegraaff "is fully in business after July 5th."

- Kilpatrick is not being honest in disclaiming his pronouncement. He now claims he "felt indignation and anger." Yet in his original prophetic diatribe, he asserted: "I speak that as a man of God. I don't speak that out of vengeance, I don't speak that out of selfishness, and I don't speak it out of a hurt feeling, because my feelings are not hurt. I feel as normal today as I've ever felt. I don't have a chip on my shoulder, I don't have an ax to grind." All the while Kilpatrick knew he was lying.

- God's Word says the false prophets will be humiliated by their spurious predictions. Zechariah 13:4-5 declares: "On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his

prophetic vision. He will not put on a prophet's garment of hair in order to deceive. He will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.'" How strikingly similar Kilpatrick's diversion: "I was not speaking that as a prophet but as a shepherd." Often false prophets when caught, try to shift the emphasis and evoke sympathy by falling back on their humanity. They would like everyone to forget the original facade and arrogance as they pretended to be the pipeline of the Holy Spirit.

Some within Pentecostal and Charismatic circles have long used visions, dreams, revelation and prophecy as a means to validate their "anointing." They often become militant against those who hold to the Bible alone as the believer's sole and final authority, complete for all matters of Christian belief and practice. Kilpatrick and his Brownsville staff are no exception. According to Luther Edwards in his article, "The Silencing of the Lambs," Brownsville evangelist Steve Hill argued "that God seekers are open to 'new revelation.' That is, those who are so hung up on the Bible that they can't receive new revelation do not qualify as 'God seekers.'"

Edwards also correctly notes that Brownsville advocates categorize doubters and critics as "Pharisees, resisters and blasphemers of the Holy Spirit." The article "Pensacola Intimidation" from March/April 1997 edition of *The End Times and Victorious Living* concurs with the spiritual strong-arming of the Brownsville team:

"If you want to be intimidated and lampooned, go to the Brownsville Assembly to 'try the spirit.' I know because I went. Steve Hill was very upset when he came to the pulpit to preach that night. He said that he had to get something said before he could preach. Then he talked about the 'FBI,' which he defined as the 'Fault-finding Brothers International.' He spoke so arrogantly about anyone questioning this 'move of God' that I had to claim the Blood to resist his criticism" (pg. 14).

Kilpatrick wants to be taken seriously as a prophet of God and respected by the Body of Christ for his efforts to "pastor the revival." His recent action has clearly demonstrated that he will even resort to "prophetic" terrorism in order to realize his ambitions.

While pastors do make mistakes, most pastors are not pretending to be the direct mouthpiece of God. Most pastors are not claiming to be prophets like Isaiah or Ezekiel or Jeremiah and are just humbly struggling to exegete the Scripture. They are not lambasting enemies with phony prophetic utterances. The godly pastor welcomes "Bereans" (as did Paul) to keep them close to Scripture.

Kilpatrick claimed to speak in the name of God with extrabiblical revelation. By virtue of his retraction, he is now admitting that God did not speak through him. He has, therefore, borne a false witness against God. This begs the question: Just how many other proclamations emanating from the Brownsville bunch have originated in the same carnal fashion, yet are purported to be imparted under the

auspices of the "anointing"? (See Jeremiah 23:16.) Truth be known, there are, no doubt, numerous other "spirit-anointed" "ex cathedra" statements which John Kilpatrick has made that were equally just products of his own flesh or wild imaginings.

While his "repentance" and "apology" to Hanegraaff was warranted, he still must face the fact that false prophets must be judged as such, exposed and rejected. *Disciplinary action must and should be directed at Kilpatrick.* Making false pronouncements and charging them as divine revelation is a grievous and flagrant offense. In the Old Testament, the transgression was punishable by death: "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death" (Deuteronomy 18:20).

False prophecy should be regarded just as severely as were all the other capital crimes of the Old Testament. It was a public violation on the same level as witchcraft and gross immorality and therefore is subject to ecclesiastical censure. It is time for Kilpatrick's board and denomination to get serious about dealing with false prophecy and false prophets. They must not allow him to wiggle out of a prophecy or sweep it under the carpet. Michael Brown needs to make good on his pledge. Until now, this serious issue has not been dealt with.

In 1 Timothy 5:19, Paul commands: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses." John Kilpatrick's foolishness and sin was not done in a corner. It far exceeded two or three witnesses as he paraded his deceptions before his entire congregation and the Christian public for over two months.

Further, Kilpatrick should have well thought out the possible consequences of such flesh-induced statements, lest an overzealous, unbalanced follower tried to "fulfill" the "prophetic" pronouncement by causing serious bodily harm to Hanegraaff (or one of his family members) all under the guise of carrying out God's will. This was a legitimate concern for Hanegraaff and CRI. All in all, Kilpatrick had created a shameful spectacle.

In the same morning message, Kilpatrick "spoke in the ears of God" and declared that if someone brought a bomb in a truck to his church, it would not explode! He was almost inviting someone to bring explosives to his Pensacola church. In this day and age, he must realize that he may have invited carnage on his own people. Having a man like this out of the pulpit would be a favor to the Christian world. One may repent of false prophecies, but public trust is broken and shattered and the man is no longer "blameless" or demonstrating "good behavior." These actions and activities of false prophecies and speaking nonsense "into God's ears" should disqualify a man from public ministry for a time pending counseling and a probationary period. The Assemblies of God is just as culpable as the man himself for the fallout and harm that he has created — and is continuing to perpetuate.

—MKG