

# Report Concerning the Revival at World Revival Church

## Kansas City, MO

By Rev. Mel C. Montgomery



Revival Scene



Rev. Steve and Kathy Gray  
Pastors of World Revival Church

## **Introduction:**

After finding it necessary to give the Body of Christ stern warnings about the Lakeland Revival and similar pseudo-moves of God, it is both refreshing and a great relief to me to be able to give you a positive report concerning the revival services at World Revival Church in Kansas City, MO. The Revival at World Revival Church in Kansas City, MO pastored by Steve and Kathy Gray, appears to me to be a genuine move of the Spirit of God.

## **History:**

The current services in Kansas City are an outgrowth of the original revival that took place in the 1990's in a church Steve and Kathy Gray pastored in Smithton, MO. As I understand the story, Steve Gray was burned-out and discouraged when he visited the revival meetings at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. He threw himself on the mercy of God and the Lord met him in a powerful way. When he returned to his church in Smithton, MO the Spirit of God quickly began moving in a manner that was similar to what Brother Steve had experienced in the Pensacola. The move of God continued unabated over the ensuing weeks, months, and eventually, years at Brother Gray's church. Smithton's small population of approximately 500 people was quickly overwhelmed as hundreds of thousands of people came in from around the world to attend the revival services. Eventually, Rev. Steve Gray felt it prudent to move the revival to a larger venue within the region—Kansas City, MO—in order to better accommodate the recurring crowds. He and several church families moved to Kansas City, and after overcoming some obstacles, the revival continued in the new location and city. I read, and shared with my subscribers, an e-mail from Charisma in which it was noted that the revival had begun to wane. But Steve, Kathy, and the World Revival family, humbled themselves and sought God anew, and the revival reenergized and the Spirit of God returned to manifesting Himself in power in their midst.

## **Disclaimer:**

I never attended the Revival meetings at Brownsville Assemblies of God in Pensacola, FL. In approximately the year 2000, Pastor John Kilpatrick and other leaders of the Brownsville Revival held a conference at the Mabee Center at Oral Roberts University. I was specifically led of the Spirit to attend. I appreciated the humble spirit in which the speakers presented themselves and their message. The music, preaching, and personal ministry blessed me immensely. The Lord ministered to me greatly. Over the years, I have read reports of things that occurred at the Pensacola Revival, which if true, certainly gives me pause. But in the conference I attended, I saw nothing out of order, and heard nothing objectionable preached.

I do not know and have never met Steve or Kathy Gray. I have met only one staff minister at World Revival Church. The man's name is Rev. Bryan Riportella. The brochure I later read describes him as "Associate Pastor, Online Pastor and Dean of Students of World Revival School of Ministry." I met him before the service, and gave him some CD's I had created of some of the rare recordings we feature on my website, [www.brothermel.com](http://www.brothermel.com). I told him briefly of the resources God has entrusted us with and gave him the CD copies for the edification of the pastoral staff and the students in the World Revival School of Ministry. Our conversation was brief, but he struck me as an intelligent and sincere individual.

Other than Rev. Riportella, I know only two individuals who attend World Revival Church—a young married couple. The husband is a remarkable man of God who is one of the few individuals I've ever met whom God consistently uses in some instances to interpret dreams. I have shared with him two or three dreams the Lord has given me, and have been surprised, as he has pointed out to me details of the dreams that I had overlooked, which when he pointed them out to me, increased my understanding of what the Lord was telling me through those dreams.

### **Initial Observations:**

Driving up from Joplin, Missouri and finding the church was easy. I printed off a map from the msn site. I went up Highway 71, turning off on Interstate 470, and a few miles later, exiting on exit number 5. After exiting Interstate 470, I followed a winding road for a mile or so, and the church was on the left. A white wooden fence lined the front of the property, and there were beautiful ponds in front of the church.

I commend Pastors Steve and Kathy for the friendliness and attentiveness of their parking lot people and their greeters. A man with a flashlight stood at the entrance of the parking lot. I pulled up along side of him. He asked if this was my first time at the church. When I replied that it was, he indicated I should park in one of the parking spaces close to the entrance. I appreciated this welcoming gesture. With traveling so far and entering a church with which I was not familiar, it was a blessing to be given a parking space near the entrance so I didn't have to wander around trying to figure out where the church entrance was.

Inside the door, I was met by a greeter who introduced himself and asked my name. The conversation was brief and warm. As you enter the church, you find yourself in a vestibule that is larger than most churches. Restrooms, a bookstore, and other amenities are nearby and easily accessible. I arrived about 15 minutes before the service, and the vestibule was already packed. The ushers held the sanctuary doors closed until the "sound check" was complete, and allowed us in about 10 minutes before the service. People were allowed to enter the sanctuary through one door only, one person at a time. This is a much more dignified option than blowing a whistle, throwing open all of the doors, and

watching people stampede and stomp all over each other in a mad rush for the best seats. At every stage of this operation, I saw great courtesy and wisdom exercised.

The sanctuary is large, with a high ceiling that accommodates all of the TV equipment without distracting from the activities on the platform. There is a giant screen directly behind the platform and pulpit, and several others suspended from the ceiling. This ensures that even if you are some distance from the platform, there really are no “bad” seats. The aisles are wide. The seats are padded and comfortable. Now that I am in my 50’s I appreciate all the padding I can get. :)

A few minutes passed during which you had ample time to find your seats and socialize a bit. Then Steve and Kathy came to the pulpit. They exhorted everyone for a few seconds, explaining that Daystar Christian television would begin broadcasting the service live in a few minutes. They then turned the service over to the music ministers. I did not recognize any of the music. Most of the lyrics were conducive to a revival atmosphere, focusing on asking God for a flood of His Spirit, wanting to “go deeper,” and no longer wanting to hide anything from God. Having served God as a pastor, I couldn’t help but think of how many people—including me at times—have attitudes and motives we hide from people, and try to hide from God. How futile that all is! God already knows *everything*. All of the music in this particular service seemed to be fairly fast-paced, and loud, with a sort of in-your-face-Devil attitude. The tenor of the praise service seemed to me to be quite healthy. The lyrics were bold confessions about our inability, but God’s ability; our weakness, but His Strength; and the futility of hiding anything from God and the desire to no longer do so anyway.

There was a great deal of very exuberant praise, with many people jumping up and down in time with the beat of the music. There was, of course, great emotion. To come into an atmosphere in which the people of God are fervently and unashamedly praising the King of Kings, oblivious to what anyone else was doing or thinking, can be overwhelming to the mental faculties and the senses. A cameraman frequently zoomed in on individuals who were in a highly emotional state. I imagine this is done to present the image of someone who is being deeply moved emotionally, or who is reaching out to God in great earnestness, thinking that such images would encourage others to do likewise. However, at one point after worshipping the Lord with my eyes closed, I opened them to see my face splashed across several giant screens. I think this camera work should be reconsidered. My worship is between me and God alone.

### **Live Television Aspect:**

I think the way Steve and Kathy structure the service around the demands of live television is very well done. For instance, they receive the offering before being joined by Daystar’s live broadcasting of the service, as Steve puts it, “. . . so that we don’t start a broadcast by asking people for money.” Further, I commend

them for presenting the offering time as an opportunity to give and support the revival, and not as a no-holds-barred twisting of both arms and both legs, and wrestling to get every last penny out of your pocket—as is disgracefully common in many Word of Faith and Charismatic services.

As the praise portion of the service progresses, Steve and Kathy stop a couple of times to encourage viewers to call in their prayer requests, which does indeed break the flow of the service in a small measure, but it actually proves out to be only marginally distracting. They seem to find the correct balance in which they are able to minister to the assembled crowd, while inviting viewers to enter in to the moving of the Spirit. In fact the crowd seems to get into the spirit of the invitation by shouting and waving at the camera to the viewers.

### **The Sermon:**

In the July 19<sup>th</sup> service I attended I was greatly blessed to note that Pastor Gray actually preached a sermon. In far too many revival reports, and in services I have attended in various locations, those “revivals” contained no discernable sermon. The speaker would just make some meandering statements and then begin inviting people to “enter in,” offering to lay hands on individuals to “receive.” When such individuals offer no sermon, just what is it exactly they are inviting us to “enter” into, and “receive?” So many people any more seem to believe that you have to choose between having solid preaching from the Scriptures or having a strong move of the Holy Spirit. This is a false choice. The Holy Spirit inspires preaching, and His manifestations will always be in line with scripture.

Pastor Gray preached a solid sermon built around scriptures, not around visions, personal messages from angels, or third-Heaven conversations with Paul—as was the hallmark of the Lakeland “Revival.” Gray’s sermon was based on the account recorded in II Corinthians Chapters 11 and 12 in which Paul lists his various sufferings, and then speaks of “a thorn in the flesh.” Paul relates that he besought the Lord three times that this thorn might be removed from him, and the Lord told him that His grace “is sufficient for thee.” Steve pointed out that Paul’s explanation of the reason for the thorn was, “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations . . .”—II Cor. 12:7 NIV. Steve drew a parallel by using this passage of scripture to make the point that one of the biggest obstacles to revival is conceit [arrogance, and pride] in the hearts of God’s people. Obviously, making this specific point from this particular scripture is a stretch, but it is a stretch that is consistent with sound doctrine.

### **Observations of Personal Ministry:**

At the end of the sermon, Steve led the crowd in a prayer of repentance to accept Christ as Savior—so sinners actually came to Christ in this service. Praise the Lord. Then an invitation was given to people to come forward to receive

prayer. Nearly the whole room rushed forward. I waited awhile until the crowd began to thin a little, then I went forward to observe the personal ministry, and to receive prayer for myself. I saw numerous people fall on the floor, and observed several Christians shake somewhat. Concerning this controversial manifestation, Dr. Goodwin and I document in our e-book, “To Fall or Not to Fall,” Link: <http://www.brothermel.net/MCM%20CG%20To%20Fall%20or%20Not%20to%20Fall.pdf> that Falling in the Spirit has been a common occurrence in revivals stretching over at least the last three centuries in the meetings of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, Peter Cartwright, Barton W. Stone, Charles Finney, and many others, who were founders or early ministers of several denominations including: Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Church of God, Disciples of Christ, and other denominations.

It is our position that the scriptures are silent concerning the manifestations of Falling in the Spirit, Laughing in the Spirit, and Shaking under the Holy Spirit’s power—neither providing us clear examples of them, nor issuing clear denunciations of them. We see these kinds of manifestations coming neither when Christ or Paul laid hands on people, nor do we see them produced by Simon the Sorcerer in the New Testament, nor by false prophets and sorcerers in the Old Testament. The only thing we can say with absolute certainty is that God sometimes chooses to employ what to our minds are unusual ways to manifest His power: telling a leper to dip in the River Jordan seven times, applying to the eyes of a blind man mud made out of spit and dirt and telling him to wash it off in a particular pool, and so on. If we are going to humble ourselves before God and plead with Him to come into our midst and “have Thine Own way Lord,”—as the old Gospel song says—then we need to accept the fact that He may choose to manifest His power in Laughing, Falling, or Shaking, as He has done countless times in recent centuries.

I believe we need to, as Dr. Charles Goodwin and I advocate in our book, take the same approach to these manifestations as did the major preachers of revivals in the 1700’s and 1800’s. Namely, preach Christ, and if God manifests His power in Laughing, Falling, or Shaking, accommodate such manifestations while keeping people’s attentions focused on Christ’s work at Calvary, and maintaining order. We must be mindful also though that these old revivalists that we revere did not go from town to town promoting unusual spiritual manifestations. Nor did they seek to introduce people to a manifestation. They sought to introduce sinners to Christ, and if the manifestations come, fine. If not, fine. In the revival meeting I attended at World Revival Church, they preached Christ, and ministered to people through the laying on of hands. If you fell, fine. If not, fine. I think this is the appropriate approach.

One might fairly ask, “Was the genuine power of God in operation or was this occult powers in manifestation in this revival service?” As I share in my testimony, in my teenage years—nearly 40 years ago—one summer I had some exposure to psychics and spiritualists. At that time I saw occult powers in operation. Satan can indeed put on quite a show. Having observed occult

powers, and having been used by the Holy Spirit for nearly 30 years, I believe I know the difference between the two powers. I have no hesitation in stating that I saw no evidence of occult powers manifesting in these services.

## **Negatives:**

I saw nothing I would classify as a clear negative. The leadership at World Revival Church has been in this flow for years, so they have had plenty of opportunities to work out the kinks. I imagine they have also observed closely the mistakes that other leaders experiencing revival have made, and sought to avoid the same errors. But I would like to share with you some concerns that arise in my thinking.

**Context**—I hope that the leaders and attendees of this revival will understand this move of God in context. It is easy to make the mistake of equating intensity with anointing. If you were saved through this revival and all you have experienced are these revival services, you may develop a very skewed understanding of what normal Church life is, and what is and is not a valid move of God. You may have no basis by which to come to understand the fact that God’s anointing is usually manifested in a very quiet, low-key, and unemotional way. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ for instance—the greatest spiritual manifestation in history—occurred without fanfare, and with no one present. The first witnesses afterward saw an angel and an empty tomb. They left and shared the matter with the disciples, and later the Lord appeared in their midst. This was all done without trumpets blaring, and without the people being “sold out to the Lord” and without them engaging in “intense worship.” If these kinds of revival services are your only point of reference, you can get the idea that in order for God’s power to manifest, everyone has to get *intense*. You may also conclude that ministers whose services are much more low-key than these revival services are not experiencing much of the anointing of God. That is not true.

From my own experience, I’ve noticed that many of the most anointed experiences I’ve ever had were absolutely unemotional and were anything but “intense” at the time. Never the less, these were life changing times for me. Sister Goodwin laid her hands on me and prayed for God to use me in spiritual gifts. I didn’t Fall, Laugh, or Shake. Her prayer was not “intense.” We didn’t worship God and shout the house down for an hour before she prayed. But three months later, God put a measure of the prophet’s anointing on me that has changed my life.

My hope is that attendees to this revival will develop not only in the area of getting “intense” with God, but will also realize that the Lord usually speaks in the “still small voice.” Therefore, we all need to develop ourselves in other aspects of His character, nature, and manner of ministry by being quiet before Him and waiting on Him.

**Technology**—At this point, I believe the leadership of World Revival Church has found the right balance between no technology and too much technology. It is my prayer that they maintain that balance, and resist the temptation to play up to the camera or to get into the mindset of believing that each service must in some way “top” the previous one. Such a mindset leads to error. It is my hope also that visitors or viewers will not draw the wrong conclusions from the presence of the TV equipment, exuberant praise and worship, and so on by concluding that this move is nothing but hype promoted by TV cameras. We have seen plenty of that. Technology can serve as a means to the end of making a move of God more viewable and more accessible. Were there not a genuine move of God in front of the cameras, this all would have died out and the cameras would have been packed up and taken back to the TV studios long ago. You can keep a Charismatic circus going for a while, but you can’t keep one going for years with this level of interest. This is indeed, in my opinion, a genuine move of God.

**Mimicry**—One of the greatest mistakes that numerous ministers made with the Pensacola Revival was that many attempted to take it back to their own churches by mimicking it. They had their local church pray the Pensacola prayers, while they preached the Pensacola sermons, and they worshipped to the sound of the Pensacola worship recordings. Some actually experienced a brief season of revival. But all such instances, as far as I know, petered out. They did not realize that John Kilpatrick, the pastor of the Brownsville Revival, did not copy anyone else. Nor did he find the “magic formula.” He simply got alone with God and sought Him, until God showed up. I’ve known fellow ministers who for years have chased this revival and that one while it never occurred to them to just get alone with God and seek Him, until He told them what to do.

If you really want to get the most of this Revival and be impacted and changed by it to the greatest extent possible, allow me to tell you what to do. Go to the services. Listen, receive, and judge what you hear. Observe closely the approaches that the Grays take and sift through them. Get built back up spiritually. Then go home and get alone with God, and allow the Lord to bring up in your own spirit *His vision for your ministry*. Then *obey Him and implement what He shows you*. Whatever you do, don’t just copy what you see at World Revival Church. God needs sons and daughters. He has no use for clones and copies.

I am glad to note that the Grays did not tell visitors, “Do things our way.” Instead, it seems to me, they gave general instructions based on scripture and set the correct example by emphasizing humility, repentance, prayer, heart-felt praise and worship, accompanied by biblical preaching that is strong and confrontational. All revivals have been built on these pillars.

## **My Endorsement:**

Do I give the Revival at World Revival Church my unqualified endorsement?

No.

To give my unqualified endorsement, I would have to attend a number of their services over an extended period of time. I would also need to meet with Steve and Kathy and other staff members on an individual basis, discussing ministry matters in private and discerning the motives and attitudes of their hearts. I would need to see also what checks and balances have been built into their ministries to avoid heresy, financial misconduct, and immorality. I have no such access or knowledge.

In the meantime, I am comfortable with giving the Revival at World Revival Church my qualified endorsement. I believe it shows all the hallmarks of a genuine move of God. What I've heard preached there and seen practiced there so far is, in my opinion, biblical. Although there is much technology involved, this does not seem to me to be an orchestration of men hyped endlessly by men, as has been the case with some recent so-called "Revivals."

I encourage my ministry partners and subscribers to my newsletter to visit the Revival meetings at World Revival Church which are held at 7 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. Past services can be viewed on their website, [www.worldrevivalchurch.com](http://www.worldrevivalchurch.com). Watching these can give you a feel for what is going on, but of course, the experience of attending the services in person is much more powerful. I plan to attend additional services in the coming months as my schedule permits.

## **Addendum**

As those of you who have read my original report on the Kansas City Revival of the services I visited in June of 2009 already know, I have given the revival at World Harvest Church my qualified endorsement. However, there are some additional thoughts I wish to add. Some readers have asked me questions that lead me to believe that I need to expand upon my original comments and clarify some issues. This I do in the following pages.

## Demographics

In visiting the services, viewing them over the internet, and visiting a church service here in Joplin at which Steve Gray was the guest minister, I've noticed something that is both wonderful and disconcerting: I would estimate that approximately 80% or more of the attendees are around 25 years of age or younger. It is wonderful to see so many young people being touched by a move of God. However, we need to ask ourselves, why isn't this move touching more of the middle aged and older people among us?

Some will flippantly reply, "Well they are *old!* They are stuck in the past!" I learned long ago to look past the simplistic and flippant answers, and to dig until I uncover the truth.

The truth, as best I see it, is that this move at World Revival Church is not a full-fledged revival per se. If it were, it would be touching all ages and classes of people equally. It is clearly not doing so. It is a move that is touching young people, while occasionally touching a limited number of older people here and there. Therefore, I would classify this move as a youth revival. Stating that this is a youth revival is certainly not a derogatory comment. It is simply a statement of fact.

When Steve Gray came to minister in Joplin recently, I was excited, and I asked my 81 year old mother to attend with me. As the service began, the local church started up the same exuberant music that I had heard at World Revival Church. The fast tempo music was played at an ear-splitting volume. The drums pounded so hard, it felt like someone was pounding their fists on your chest. They cranked it up to the max for 40 minutes, with most of the crowd jumping, shouting, and yelling out the praise songs, and gesturing wildly. Then the local praise and worship people stepped aside, and the team from the World Revival church took the stage clearly planning to extend the already lengthy praise service for another 20 or 30 minutes, and we were not even close to Steve Gray's sermon being presented yet. I looked over at my mother, and she was visibly drained. The room had grown uncomfortably warm. We were all sweating profusely. Every second of the praise service had been blaring, fast tempo, and relentless. I looked around the room and I noticed people my age—50—and older, were sitting down, and were already worn out. Mom told me she was tired, drained, and she felt she needed to leave, get something cold to drink, and rest. So we left.

We were not leaving in rebellion or in a bad spirit of any sort. We had just had too much intensity thrown at us all at once without even a moment to catch our breaths, and with no end in sight. Had the "intensity" been the intensity of the presence of God, we would have stayed and drank in more. We have sat in services for extended periods of time when God's Spirit was quietly but powerfully moving among His people. God's presence adds to you, it does not

take away from you. The times when God really moves minister peace of mind, calmness, and strength to you. This kind of intensity however was the histrionics of well-meaning men who felt that they had to shout the house down for a good hour or so before God could possibly move. Our senses, emotions, and spirits were overwhelmed. We needed to get away and just assimilate it all. I can see why this move attracts so many young people, and so few middle-aged and older people. The Olympian stamina, present only in the heartiest of the young, that is necessary to endure these kinds of services has not been a requirement of other moves of God.

## Historical Perspective

The Bible shows us that when God really moves in power, He moves also in fullness. The moving of His Spirit is like a widespread flood—soaking into every willing heart, regardless of age, income level, and gender. He moves in a way that touches people of all ages. Speaking of the last days outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Prophet Joel prophesied:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.—Joel 2:28,29.

Young, old, sons, daughters, servants, handmaidens—God included everybody. No one was left out. When you see a move of God in which many of one group are touched, but very few of another group are ministered to, there is something amiss.

Another example of the wide-spread nature of the moving of God's Spirit is shown to us in the days of Moses. When Moses appeared before Pharaoh and called down the plagues on Egypt, he demanded that the people be let go. Pharaoh asked Moses, "... who are they that shall go?" Moses replied,

"We will go with our young and with our old . . ."  
Ex. 10:8,9.

Notice Moses didn't say, "Well the old people are *old*, who cares about them? They are stuck in the past. They can't keep up with this new move of God. We are targeting the young. They are our next generation of leaders. We will just take the young, move on with God, and if the old can't move fast enough, well, that's just their bad luck." No, when God really comes on the scene in His Sovereign fulness *everybody* gets delivered.

When you look at the Great Awakenings and notable revivals of the past, such moves touched *all* people and *all* levels of society. In Charles Finney's revival of the 1830's in Rochester, New York, virtually everyone in the town and surrounding areas got saved. This included everyone from the oldest of the old to the youngest of the young. All were deeply moved, saved, and revived. There were many instances of even small children becoming greatly convicted of sin, and crying out to God for the salvation of their souls. The oldest and hardest of reprobates were also saved. And among the old and stalwart saints of God who had walked with the Lord with great care for many years, their seasoned and discerning hearts entered fully into the work of the Spirit in their day.

The change throughout Rochester, New York was dramatic and widespread. The saloons and dens of vice all shut down because all of the sinners and all the sellers of sin got saved and gave up all contact with alcohol. The City of Rochester disbanded the police force because crime disappeared. The circus shut down because no one had any interest in worldly amusements and was turned into a candle factory.

## **A Common Pitfall**

In some ways, I think we are rejecting old forms of religious bondage, getting free, then inventing our own new forms of religious bondage. Have you considered our persistent dependence on praise and worship? I mean, we crank that baby up, and we blow the roof off! Yet when we look to the scriptures, we don't have a single example in the Gospels or in Acts of any service held by Jesus, Paul, or the other Apostles, beginning with "intense worship." As far as we can tell, most sermons, like the Sermon on the Mount was not preceded by any praise at all. Jesus just found a place on the side of the mountain, sat down, and began to teach. (Matthew Chapter 5). The sermon that most scholars consider to be the best of all time was preached without any of the preliminaries we now believe to be vital. Do we need such intense praise sessions? Does God need them? Have we turned this into a new legalism by believing that God can not move until we praise Him intensely? I love vibrant praise and worship. But unless God is moving in a special way through the praise, 20 to 25 minutes—at the most—of praise and worship is sufficient to prepare the hearts of the people.

With our current day dependence on beginning every service with a knock-down-drag-out time of praise and worship, it makes one wonder how Wigglesworth and the early Pentecostals accomplished anything at all. Their idea of praise and worship, for the most part, was to sing a couple of old hymns. In fact when the Pentecostal Move came to Great Britain, it underwhelmed just about everybody. Prior to this, God had given a great move of His Spirit for 20 or 30 years through the Salvation Army. They were known for their bands, that played old hymns with great fervency. When Christians who were used to their day's version of "intense worship" attended Pentecostal services, they reported

them to be a little on the dull side. The music wasn't intense, and the initial Pentecostal preachers were anything but fiery. But they also testified that there was a power and presence of the Holy Spirit in those meetings, accompanied by speaking in tongues, that drew them in deeper.

Review videos on You-tube, and elsewhere of the old Healing Revivals, and you don't see a no-holds-barred type of praise and worship going on there. You see them singing hymns. In the Charismatic move, they sang hymns and choruses. How did any of them ever have any sort of move of God if "intense worship" is as vital as many now assume it to be? I think this all just becomes a new routine that replaces the old routine. But a routine is still a routine.

## **The Routine**

I value very much the services of the Pensacola Revival of the past, and the youth revival currently going on at World Revival Church. I praise the Lord for it all. And I intend no criticism of Steve and Kathy Gray. My purpose in my writings is not to criticize. I endeavor to identify the truth, give context, and either commend or caution people concerning events going on in the Body of Christ. I strive to shepherd those who trust me away from the phony and towards the real.

I think in many ways, Brother and Sister Gray are doing a remarkable job. However, it also seems to me that services like the Brownsville meetings, and those of World Revival Church get into their own kind of rut. Every service has basically the same theme and procedure:

1. Realize that you are filled with sin.
2. Repent.
3. Humble yourself before God.
4. Come down and have hands laid on you.
5. Fall in the Spirit.
6. Go home.

The next night:

Repeat steps 1 through 6.

The next night:

Repeat steps 1 through 6.

The next night:

Invite your lost or backslidden neighbors.

And have them go through steps 1 through 6.

Now, I realize that in a revival-type of situation, you are endeavoring to reach the lost, to help backslidden Christians to see their condition, and to impart refreshing and renewal to those who are dry. I get it. But after you repent, humble yourself, and get hands laid on you for service after service, where do you go from there? Repentance and humility just gets you in the door—so to speak—of the spiritual things of God. From there, you need to grow in God in a well-rounded knowledge of His word, and I believe also in understanding His leadings, and in being used in spiritual operations. True, World Revival Church may be holding these kinds of services and classes, and I am just not aware of them.

I never attended any services at the Pensacola Revival in their home church. I attended only a three-day conference they held at ORU several years back. According to reports I have received, the leaders at Pensacola allowed much more time for times of personal ministry, and waiting on God. However, they also ran into difficulty and great criticism because as they allowed more waiting and more liberty, a scattering of people began engaging in unbiblical manifestations. Some claimed to be inspired to roar like a lion, or to bark and make other animal noises. It may be that in order to avoid such excesses, the Grays run their revival services in this deliberately frenzied pace.

At the World Revival Church services, praise and worship is loud—drowning out any other sound. The sermon is given in a quick pace—without even a moment's pause for a gift of the Spirit to manifest. Brother Gray gives an altar call, and dramatically leaps off the platform down to the floor like a cat pouncing on a mouse. Praise and worship is cranked up again, and Gray and his wife hurriedly lay hands on the multitudes thronging them. Then once the last person has been touched, they abruptly exit. The music continues to play for awhile as people begin to wander out the exits. Maybe this rush-rush-rush-every minute is done so that it crowds out the opportunities for people to engage in extreme behaviors. If so, I certainly understand their methods and motives. But in crowding out the extremes, they also crowd out any opportunity for the Holy Spirit to manifest His gifts. This is a very high price to pay. There is a better way.

## **A Better Way**

Steve Gray's approach is to rush things, and to crowd out any opportunity for unbiblical manifestations. John Kilpatrick had a different approach. I heard him say that he and his church prayed for three years for the Holy Spirit to move. Then when He moved, Kilpatrick nearly lost his church overnight. Most of his congregation was so ignorant of the moving of the Spirit, that they were terrified when God showed up for church one day. More than half of his regular members were ready to leave the church, frightened by what was occurring. I heard him say, "I found out that most Pentecostal people have never had much of a Pentecostal experience. I found I had to do some teaching real fast." He had to hurriedly teach his people about spiritual gifts, spiritual operations, Falling in the Spirit, and about other unusual spiritual manifestations. Once given this information, they were able to receive the moving of the Spirit in their midst. When he told this story, the thought that immediately cropped up in my mind was, "Why didn't he spend those three years in which the church prayed, in giving them three years worth of instruction in the things of the Spirit? Why leave them in a state of spiritual ignorance right up to the last minute?"

Here is something that may shock you. The move of the Spirit has to be overseen by man. Yes, I know what I just wrote, and I will state it again: The move of the Spirit must be overseen by man. Now, before you shut me off, give me a chance to clarify what I'm saying, and I believe you will agree with me.

Nowhere in scripture are we instructed to just throw the doors wide open to the Holy Spirit, and let whatever happens just happen. In I Corinthians 14:49, Paul writes about the operation of spiritual gifts, stating:

Let all things be done decently and in order..

The leadership in a meeting is given the responsibility by the Lord to see to it that things are done decently and orderly. It does not happen automatically. The Holy Spirit needs no oversight, but the vessels He flows through do indeed need oversight to see that everything that takes place does so within biblical boundaries.

Howard Carter said that the Goodwins provided the best oversight of the moving of the Spirit that he had ever seen.

Steve Gray avoids the weird manifestations and many of the problems of Pensacola by rush, rush, rushing things, so that very little gets the opportunity to manifest. Pensacola ignored things, and admitted that there were manifestations they should have reigned in, in some manner, but they did not do so for fear of quenching the revival spirit. I understand their concerns. But the Goodwins chose what I believe was a much better way—they got right in the middle of everything that happened in their services, and they corrected, and rebuked, when they thought it necessary. Believe me, there is no way on earth that

someone would have gotten away with barking in their services for very long! They would have been gently corrected, at first. If that did not do any good, they would have been firmly rebuked. If the Goodwins saw something start to take place in their services that they believed to be unbiblical, they found one way or another to stop it. And it didn't quench the Spirit at all. Kenneth Hagin and many others reported that the move of the Spirit they saw in the Goodwins' church was the strongest they had ever seen in their lives, accompanied by the best order they had ever seen also.

In the meetings I have attended or viewed at World Revival Church, or in Brother Steve's ministry in Joplin, I have yet to see a single spiritual gift manifest. I have heard not one prophecy, not one message in tongues or interpretation. I have seen no miracle or visible healing—although I don't doubt they have occurred here or there, I just haven't personally seen any.

But the point I want to get across to you is that you don't have to choose between the moving of the Spirit in Revival, and the moving of the Spirit occurring in a broader way that includes His gifts and operations, and that touches not just the young, but that reaches people of all ages. You can have a Revival Outpouring that includes salvation, reviving, and spiritual operations. You don't have to ignore excesses, or crowd them out. You can wait on God, give the opportunity to His Spirit to move in other deep manners, while correcting the weirdness and errors that inevitably arise.

The Holy Spirit moving in a widespread and deep manner is what was characteristic of the Pentecostal Outpouring, the Healing Revival, and the Charismatic move. It can be the same way today, if we will cooperate with Him.

## **Summation and Recommendation**

I believe what is occurring at World Revival Church is a genuine youth-based revival. As long as it remains within the boundaries of Scripture, I would encourage everyone to attend the meetings. Get into the atmosphere and get recharged in God. Take the refreshing. Return to your church. Then preach the Word and give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to move in your midst as He desires. Once people repent, shepherd them deeper into the mature things of God and into spiritual operations. And let the trickle become a widespread flood in the hearts of your congregants. Wait on Him. Get quiet before Him. Let Him manifest His gifts, while giving people appropriate oversight and keeping things within scriptural boundaries.

## About the Author

The ministry of author, lecturer, entrepreneur, and revivalist preacher, Mel Montgomery is an example of God fulfilling a word of prophecy.

Mel was mentored in ministry by Sister Goodwin. She and her late husband, the Rev. J.R. Goodwin had sat in meetings conducted by Smith Wigglesworth, Raymond T. Richey, and other early Pentecostals. Then God had used the Goodwins as a bridge to the leaders of the Word of Faith move. The Goodwins taught John Osteen and Kenneth Hagin Sr. about the gifts of the Spirit. Kenneth Hagin patterned his prophetic ministry after the spiritual flow he had witnessed in the Goodwins.

Before her passing, Sister Goodwin laid her hands on Mel, asked God to use him in spiritual gifts, and prophesied that Mel would have “a strong ministry, and an anointed ministry, like *some of the men of old.*” Years after Sister Goodwin’s passing, the Goodwin descendants and others asked Mel to host on his website rare audio recordings of early Pentecostal preachers that were recorded at the Goodwins’ church and elsewhere. Mel uploaded the recordings to his website, [www.brothermel.com](http://www.brothermel.com), making these treasures available to the world by download, for free.

Mel’s message and concept of ministry began to change as he listened to the recordings of the “men of old” like Howard Carter, Stanley Frodsham, F.F. Bosworth, the Goodwins, and others. He discovered that what the Pentecostal giants preached bears little resemblance to the extreme teachings common today in the Charismatic and Word of Faith branch of Christianity to which he belongs. Sister Goodwin’s prophecy is fulfilled as Mel continues to speak in churches around the world, preaching as did the “men of old,” the transforming power of the Cross and Pentecost. He authors articles and e-books, identifying which of our teachings are biblical and which ones are not. Brother Mel calls for a Reformation in Charismatic and Word of Faith circles. Mel’s teachings have been well received, with some being translated and published in foreign countries. In 2007, 2008, and 2009, Mel’s website received over 1,174,000 hits from people in 121 countries. Mel’s monthly e-mail newsletter currently goes out to subscribers around the world.

