As you may be aware, I have decided to concentrate on writing an article on the Florida Outpouring, to try and warn other believers of the danger of this false revival. There is a lot of information to consider, and this is going to take some time to complete. I am going to put parts of the article up on the website as I write them, and then collate the whole thing together at the end. I believe it is important to get this information out as quickly as possible, to prevent this thing from taking hold any more than it has already.

A Scriptural analysis of the Florida Outpouring

When the disciples asked the Lord what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, His first words to them were ones of warning. "Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many
", Matthew 24:4-5. These words might have come as a surprise to the disciples. Why did the Lord take the time to warn them against being deceived before even beginning to answer their question? We would do well to consider these words of warning as the time of the Lord's return draws near.

The Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples of a coming day in which false messiahs (or 'anointed ones') and false prophets would rise up, performing great signs and wonders, and would deceive many people (Matthew 24:24). The Lord said that these signs and wonders would be so convincing that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the genuine believers. The Apostle Peter also warned that just as there were false prophets among the nation of Israel, so false teachers would rise up among the Church (2nd Peter 2:1-3). These false teachers would secretly bring in damnable heresies, even going so far as denying the Lord Jesus Christ, and would make merchandise of their followers through their smooth words. I believe we are now living in the days the Lord spoke of.

With the advent of satellite television and the Internet, great opportunities have opened up for the proclamation of the Gospel. But just as there is great opportunity to enlighten people to the truth of God's Word, there is also great opportunity to deceive. You wouldn't buy a second-hand car from a dishonest salesman. Then why are so many Christians prepared to accept dodgy doctrine from false teachers? Paul said of the Bereans that they were more noble than the Jews of Thessalonica, because they "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so
", Acts 17:10-11. Paul commended the Bereans because they weren't prepared to just to take his word for it, they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether he was telling them the

truth. The Scriptures are the litmus test of truth. If anything doesn't match up with what the Word of God teaches, we can safely reject it. And so we hold the 'Florida Healing Revival' up to the light of the Scriptures to see whether this is a 'move of God' or not.

The roots of the movement

Matthew 12:33
Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by [his] fruit.

In an unprecedented move, the managers of GOD TV cancelled their busy programming schedule in order to cover what they believe to be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a church in Lakeland, Florida. The services are being broadcast across the world through satellite television and the Internet. Many people are coming forward claiming to have been healed of all sorts of ailments. People are claiming that revival has broken out in America, and that it is spreading across the globe. But what is the driving force behind this revival? To find that out, we must first examine where this movement began.

Todd Bentley believes that this movement is the "third wave" of revival following the outbreaks at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in Canada, and the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. The 'Toronto Blessing', as it has come to be known, broke out at the Toronto Airport Church in January, 1994. Randy Clarke, a pastor of a Vineyard Church in St Louis, Missouri, met with a man called Rodney Howard-Browne in Tulsa, Oklahoma, after having been inspired by his ministry. Rodney Howard-Browne claims to be the father of the 'laughing revival', in which members of his congregation would suddenly burst out into uncontrollable fits of laughter while he is preaching from the Scriptures. Browne has been afflicted with the phenomenon himself on occasion, and believes it to be a manifestation of the presence of God. John Arnott, a senior pastor at the Toronto Airport Church, invited Randy to speak at one of his meetings. Both pastors were surprised after members of the congregation began to laugh hysterically, cry, leap, dance and roar like lions after hearing Randy preach. They put it down to a move of the Spirit of God, which has since spread throughout the world.

The revival at the Brownsville Assembly of God in 1995 was an offshoot of the Toronto Blessing in Canada the previous year. Several leaders in Brownsville had visited Toronto shortly before the outbreak in their own church. Just weeks prior to the outpouring at Brownsville, Pastor John Kilpatrick sent his wife to visit the Toronto Airport Church to

experience what was going on there. During a trip to England in January 1995, Hill received an 'impartation' from Pastor Sandy Millar of Holy Trinity Brompton Anglican Church, a man who has done much to spread the Toronto spirit in this country. Steve Hill had also visited Toronto on several occasions. Just a few months later revival was to break out in Brownsville following one of Steve's sermons. During a time of prayer, Kilpatrick claimed that God told him that if he would turn his church into a "house of prayer", He would pour out His Spirit on the congregation. He said he was told that this revival would "catch on across the nation", and eventually spread throughout the entire United States of America. During these prayer meetings, Kilpatrick said he would often weep and shake uncontrollably and felt a strange sensation in his stomach, which he attributed to the presence of God. Kilpatrick's grandmother had died several weeks before the revival broke out, and he had asked Steve Hill to preach on Father's Day. When Kilpatrick entered the church the night before the meeting, he felt an unusual presence, and said it was as if he had walked into "the front cutting edge of the glory of God that God was about to send to Brownsville on Father's Day". He said, "When I walked into it… it just took my breath. I had chill bumps instantly that hurt... I mean hair on my arms and legs was standing out, you know, and they hurt!" After the Father's Day service, Steve Hill opened the altar for prayer and 1000 people came forward to pray. As they were praying, Kilpatrick said that he heard a noise like a "rushing mighty wind" pass over his right shoulder. As he turned to look over his shoulder, his ankles slipped and his knees bowed out, and he felt like a "river of the glory of God" was flowing through his legs. "It felt like a telephone pole," he said. "An endless telephone pole was coming through my legs and it was coming in the church". Kilpatrick then leaped into the pulpit and exclaimed, "My God, church, get in! This is it! This is what we've been praying for! Get in!" Kilpatrick said of this particular manifestation, that, "anywhere people were standing in the way of that river, you could just look at them and they'd go down in the Spirit. You could feel the literal current of that river". People would fall out under the power of God and be unable to move for several hours. At other times this unseen force would pull the entire congregation around the room. Kilpatrick said he was surprised that many of the people experiencing these manifestations were not even Christians. He later justified this unscriptural phenomenon by claiming that "when revival breaks out, the Christians run from it and the sinners run to it". Other unusual manifestations occurred in Brownsville following the revival. Young children would cry after claiming to have seen angels hovering in the church, there was a thick blue mist that would sometimes hang in the air, and on one occasion Kilpatrick said the Spirit of God picked him up and threw him sideways "ten or twelve feet" across the platform.

This latest revival in Florida is also an offspring of the Toronto and Pensacola outpourings, just as Todd Bentley claims. Both Todd Bentley and the church he is preaching at are closely linked with Rodney Howard-Browne and the Brownsville Assembly of God. Todd Bentley preached at Brownsville in August 2004. When he came to speak at the church, the pastor said he had read about Bentley two years previous, and wanted to get to know him better. In March 1993 a pastor by the name of Karl Strader invited Rodney Howard-Browne to take a series of revival meetings in Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida. Browne led sixteen weeks of revival meetings over the following ten months. The revival at Toronto was just beginning as

Browne's meetings were coming to an end. The Carpenter's Home Church were eventually forced to sell their building after a drop in membership meant they could no longer afford to run it. One of the congregations that were formed following the break up of the Carpenter's Home Church was the Ignited Church, also based in Lakeland, Florida. It is Karl Strader's son, Stephen Strader, who has invited Todd Bentley to hold a week of revival meetings at his Ignited Church. They are now expecting this revival to last up to three to four months. The Florida Outpouring has also been characterized by similar manifestations to the Toronto and Pensacola revivals. Bentley is afflicted with a constant twitch in his neck, which makes his head shake from side to side repeatedly. On one occasion members of his staff became so 'drunk in the Spirit', they were incapable of interviewing those who claimed to have been healed. One staff member remarked that the 'presence' was strongest closest to where Bentley's pulpit was located. Two women came up to tell Bentley how they had been healed. Both were twitching very badly. When Bentley asked them to stand by his pulpit, they became bent in two and started to shake violently as if they were being attacked from behind by some unseen force.

As you can see, the roots of the Lakeland revival run deep. This is not an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, nor does it seem to be a sovereign move of God. It does seem to be a carefully concerted effort by men to spread the Toronto spirit across the world.