

John Kilpatrick, Leader of Pensacola Revival, Resigns From Pastorate

Kilpatrick says he will remain at Brownsville Assembly of God, but will travel and minister to other pastors

The leader of a revival movement that defined Pentecostalism during the 1990s announced Oct. 19 that he is leaving the pastorate. John Kilpatrick, 53, who for 22 years pastored Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla., said he plans to focus his ministry on mentoring other pastors.

“The Lord told me that He has called me to be a father [to leaders],” Kilpatrick told Charisma. “Brownsville needs to move ahead, but it cannot move ahead with me at the helm because my mantle has changed.”

Brownsville Assembly became a flashpoint for revivalism in June 1995, when a visit from evangelist Steve Hill on Father’s Day triggered an unusual outburst of Pentecostal fervor. Christians and non-Christians alike attended protracted meetings at the church, prompting observers to call it “the Pensacola revival.” At the height of the revival in 1996 and 1997, when meetings were held almost every night of the week, visitors from around the world stood in long lines outside the church to get seats.

Today the lines are shorter, and revival services are held on Friday nights only. Kilpatrick said the church now has about 3,000 members, and a training center the church launched in the late 1990s is grooming 320 students for full-time ministry.

Kilpatrick emphasized that he will remain a member of Brownsville and will base his traveling ministry in Pensacola. The church's board was expected to recommend a replacement pastor soon. Randy Feldschau, 42, an associate pastor at the church since August, was a strong candidate.

"[Kilpatrick's] heart has been torn between pastoring this local church and addressing the national arena," Feldschau said. "It's obvious that his mantle has changed. He ministers to ministers."

Kilpatrick estimates that up to 10,000 pastors visited his church during the revival. About 600 were expected to attend a ministers' conference he will host at Brownsville in November.

One week before Kilpatrick's resignation, the church's popular worship leader, Lindell Cooley, 40, announced plans to leave Brownsville. He told Charisma that he intended to plant a church in Nashville, Tenn., where he was based before moving to Pensacola nine years ago. Cooley helped stoke the fervor of the Pensacola revival by recording several CDs including Integrity's Revival at Brownsville, which sold almost 400,000 units.

Other leaders of the Pensacola movement also have moved away. Evangelist Steve Hill, who moved to Pensacola and preached there nightly for several years, left in June 2000 and launched a church in Dallas this summer. Michael Brown, who helped launch the Brownsville School of Ministry, split from the church in 2001 and started his own school. It is currently based in Harrisburg, N.C.

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