

Pensacola Revival Leaders Reconcile After Split

It was an early Christmas for old friends and family at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla., where pastor John Kilpatrick and associate Michael Brown once served together. The two men announced in December that they had repaired their relationship—ending a painful two-year separation that had dampened the fervor of the internationally known Pensacola revival.

The split occurred in December 2000 after Brown was fired from his position as head of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry (BRSM). Brown took most of BRSM's instructors and many students across town to start his own school and church—known as FIRE (Fellowship for International Revival and Evangelism). Kilpatrick, who ordered Brown's ouster over differences in BRSM's direction and other issues, met privately with Brown for the first time since the split on Dec. 12, in Kilpatrick's office.

Kilpatrick said Brown had sent him an e-mail suggesting reconciliation. "I was riding in my car with my wife, Brenda, and my son called me on my cell phone and read me Dr. Brown's e-mail," Kilpatrick told Charisma. "When I heard the tenor of what Dr. Brown had written, I held my thumb up and told my wife 'It's over.' Literally it felt just like a dam broke."

Previous attempts to reconcile had stalled. After the December 2002 meeting, Brown and Kilpatrick issued a joint statement and scheduled a reconciliation service for Jan. 12 at Brownsville, with leaders and congregations from both sides

attending.

The two asked for forgiveness from each other, and apologized for the hurt felt by many believers both in Pensacola and in the worldwide church. Kilpatrick said the two men met from 11:20 p.m. until 3 a.m. to resolve their differences. "It was like old times... absolutely wonderful," the pastor said. "We didn't get into issues. I'm really relieved all of this is behind us now."

Brown agreed. "I'm sure both of us wanted reconciliation for many months now, but two years had gone by, and we still had not talked. This whole process has been painful for everyone involved, but I have no doubt it was God who birthed FIRE and that it is God's desire to continue to bless Brownsville. We are not looking backward. We are moving forward."

Billy Bruce