



STATEMENT DP245

THE COUNTERFEIT REVIVAL REVISITED **by Hank Hanegraaff**

It has now been over two years since my book *Counterfeit Revival* documented the dangers of looking for God in all the wrong places.¹ Sadly, leaders of the Counterfeit Revival have continued to employ sociopsychological manipulation tactics to trap new subjects into their dangerous web of subjectivism.

No one is immune to the contagion of mass suggestion. Once this epidemic contaminates a movement, it can make black appear white, obscure realities, and enshrine absurdities.

One of the newest absurdities is the phenomenon of gold-tooth fillings — that's right, gold fillings! "Fallings in the Spirit" may well have been eclipsed by "fillings in the Spirit." As one Counterfeit Revival devotee proclaims, "Have you heard?...there's gold in Toronto!"² She goes on to write:

Wednesday night, before Dutch Sheets delivered a powerfully anointed message, there was a short video clip shown of John Arnott ministering in a South Africa meeting where people's teeth were being filled with gold. After the clip, John asked for anyone who wanted this miracle to stand and believe for it while touching the sides of their faces. After the prayer he asked that we check each other's mouths and about 10 people went forward, some yelling and all excited because they now had gold teeth and fillings which they did not previously have!

....So John let a couple testify and we prayed again...this time more people received the miracle. A third time of praying came as did more miracles! IT WAS AWESOME!

Then, at just about every meeting there was prayer for this miracle and every time there would be many who would discover their mouth filled with gold! Last count that I heard was over 198 people who were leaving the conference with some gold in their mouths!

....One woman who had been on welfare most of her childhood had 8 new gold teeth! Another woman had 4 gold teeth and/or fillings on Wednesday and by Saturday she had 11! (I saw her at both stages of this miracle). One man had two beautiful, perfect, shiny, gold teeth and one of them had a cross engraved on it!

....The drummer of the worship team received gold teeth as did one of the pastors on staff there at TACF [Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship] and while officially collecting these testimonies from the saints, the man who was recording them received gold teeth as well!

....And on Saturday...the wonderful "gold dust" started showing up on people's hands and in their tears as they worshipped!³ A Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship official statement titled "GOLD TEETH!" reports that perhaps God was filling people's teeth with gold as "a sign and a wonder to expose the skepticism still in so many of us."⁴ The statement went on to say that "reports of people's fillings turning a bright silver or gold color are coming in from South Africa, Australia, England, Mexico and across Canada and the USA. The excitement at TACF is electric with news of how these dental miracles are so rapidly spreading." (This gives new meaning to Arnott's mantra: "Fill, fill, fill!")

Even as reports of gold fillings are pouring in from the Counterfeit Revival leaders in Toronto, leaders at the Brownsville revival in Pensacola have begun citing resurrections from the dead. For \$75 the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry will sell you a video series titled *Faith to Raise the Dead*. Brownsville leaders are claiming that evangelist David Hogan and his associate missionaries in Mexico have seen more than 200 raised from the dead. The expectations of people have reached such a fever pitch that some time ago a parent who lost a child put his baby on ice and drove 350 miles to the Brownsville Assembly of God to

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have the baby raised from the dead.⁵ To some, this father's actions may appear foolish. Yet, if God is indeed raising hundreds from the dead in Mexico, it would be perfectly logical to think that He would raise the dead in the church whose ongoing revival that is being touted as perhaps the greatest in the history of humanity.⁶

While Arnott and his associates are duping people with the gold-filling ruse, and while Hogan's heroes are heralding resurrections from the dead, Rodney Howard-Browne is attempting to make a comeback at Madison Square Garden in New York. With a dwindling following in Florida, Howard-Browne has come up with a new angle. It seems Rodney "had a dream from God"⁷ in which Billy Graham told him about a crusade Graham held in New York back in 1957. Rodney says that as he listened to Billy, he started weeping. Says Howard-Browne, "I wept so hard that when I woke up, my pillow was soaked with tears."⁸ The Holy Ghost allegedly told the self-designated "Holy Ghost Bartender" that he was to launch one of the biggest soul-winning crusades ever. Through a variety of techniques, including a *Charisma* magazine ad, Rodney now raises money and manpower for "Unlocking Heaven at the Garden."⁹

While at first blush the stories of Counterfeit Revival leaders may be amusing, the consequences of their fabrications, fantasies, and frauds are often tragic. The story of the parent who took his baby to Brownsville speaks for itself. Such stories as gold fillings can also have tragic repercussions.

First, when followers finally catch on to the manipulations of revival leaders, they often become disillusioned and disenchanted. They no longer know what to believe or whom to trust and secretly fear that the untrustworthiness of those who claim to be God's representatives translates into the untrustworthiness of God Himself.

Furthermore, these testimonies leave believers with a watered-down understanding of miracles that cheapens their appreciation of the biblical reality. We should ask ourselves why God isn't restoring teeth as opposed to merely filling cavities with gold. While gold and silver fillings might be a human solution to a decayed tooth, one would think that God would provide a solution without the possible side effects produced by placing metals in the mouth. In addition, when Christ healed the blind man in John 9, He didn't give him a super-duper pair of spectacles; He restored his sight. Likewise, when Jesus healed the paralytic in Luke 5, He did not give him a diamond-studded gold crutch. The difference between the "magic" of mental manipulations and genuine miracles is dramatic. As documented by Christian apologist Dr. Norman Geisler, when Jesus and the apostles healed people, the miracles were always 100 percent successful and immediate, and there were no relapses.¹⁰

Finally, the consequences of counterfeit miracles based on sociopsychological manipulation are often far reaching. The power of the Spirit can indeed create life and limb, but the power of suggestion creates only a lamentable lie. It is all too easy to make the masses believe the lie. It is often incredibly difficult to undo that work again.

NOTES

1 Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival: Looking for God in All the Wrong Places* (Dallas: Word, 1997).

2 7 March 1999 e-mail from a devoted observer named Kathy to multiple recipients of the NEW -WINE list (posted at <http://www.grmi.org/renewal/new-wine/list/archives/1339.html>).

3 Ibid. See the TACF Web site for some "incredible" photographs of gold fillings (<http://www.tacf.org>).

4 17 March 1999, Web site at <http://www.tacf.org/confs/archives/intercession99/pressrelease.html>.

5 John W. Allman, "Revival prays to raise an infant from the dead," *The Pensacola News Journal*, 20 September 1998, Web site at <http://www.pensacolajournal.com/brownsville/september%2098/pray.htm>.

6 See John Kilpatrick's sermon of 6 April 1997 at Brownsville Assembly of God Church, Brownsville, Florida.

7 Advertisement for Good News New York crusade with Rodney Howard Browne in *Charisma* magazine, April 1999, 81.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Norman Geisler, *Signs and Wonders* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), 23-32. Geisler explains, "God never performed a miracle 'slowly' nor did an '80 percent' healing. Biblical miracles were 100 percent and immediate. In the case of the few immediate cures in the contemporary signs and wonders movement, most are clearly of the psychosomatic type and none are immediate healings of incurable diseases. There is nothing supernatural about these kinds of cures" (121). See also Hanegraaff, Part Five.