



Revivals And Church History :: The Enigma of William M Branham

The Enigma of William M Branham - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/7/25 3:16

The Enigma of William M Branham

By Andrew Strom

William Branham was an evangelist this century who was mightily used of God for a number of years. In fact, there can be little doubt that he was endued with power to a degree that has rarely been seen since the days of the apostles. And there is still a great deal of controversy surrounding his life, death and teachings. To some of his most ardent followers (who are still around today), he seemed to assume almost semi-divine status, - a damaging and tragic fallacy that has frightened many sound Christians away from studying his life. On the other hand, even in his heyday some believers were sceptical and suspicious of the tremendous power and unusual signs and miracles that accompanied his ministry.

There can be little doubt that Branham went astray in his ministry in the latter part of his life. (The fact that God took him home early, and that the cause of death was a car-crash in which his body became horribly tangled in the wreck, though he lingered on for a few more days - bears this out). However, it is my belief, and the belief of many who have studied his life, that in his early years he was one of the most anointed men of God that has ever lived in modern times.

As Gordon Lindsay wrote in his 1952 biography of Branham's early life and ministry: "The story of the life of William Branham is so out of this world and beyond the ordinary that were there not available a host of infallible proofs which document and attest its authenticity, one might well be excused for considering it far-fetched and incredible." (G. Lindsay, 'William Branham - A man sent from God', pg 9). Even his birth and childhood had unusual aspects to them. Born in 1909 in Kentucky, his family soon shifted to the state of Indiana, where they eventually settled not far from Jeffersonville. Branham's family were the "poorest of the poor". When he was seven years old, he experienced the first of many godly visitations: "It seemed to be a very still afternoon. I stepped back from the tree and noticed that in a certain place about the size of a barrel, the wind seemed to be blowing through the tree leaves. Then there came a voice saying: 'Never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way, for I have a work for you to do when you get older.'" (Pg 30).

When he was about twenty years of age, the death of his brother Edward caused him to again turn his thoughts toward God's call upon his life. However, he carried on the way he was going (essentially running away from God) for a couple of years. Finally, he ended up seriously ill - at death's door, in hospital. And suddenly God visited him again. He said, 'Lord, if that is you, let me go back again to earth and I will preach your gospel from the housetops and street corners. I'll tell everyone about it!'... When this vision had passed, I found that I felt better." (Pg 40-41). However, Branham was not completely healed at this time.

He says, "I knew then that if God wanted me to preach he would heal me, so I went to a church that believed in anointing with oil, and I was healed instantly. I saw then that the disciples had something that most of the ministers do not have today. The disciples were baptized with the Holy Ghost and so could heal the sick and do mighty miracles in His name. So I began to pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. One day about six months later God gave me

the desire of my heart. He spoke to me in a great light telling me to preach and pray for the sick and He would heal them regardless of what disease they had. I then started preaching and doing what He told me to do." (Pg 41-42). Branham began tent meetings in his home town of Jeffersonville, and for a 24-year-old who was just starting out, these were astonishingly successful, with up to 3000 people being attracted to the meetings at one time, and scores of conversions.

Miracles follow his ministry

Afterwards when Branham was baptizing 130 converts in the Ohio River, a heavenly light, like a blazing star, appeared above him just as he was about to baptize the seventeenth person. This was witnessed by the vast 4000-strong congregation that stood on the banks of the river looking on. Some of them ran for fear, while others shouted or fainted. A report of this unusual event appeared in the local newspaper shortly afterwards. It has also been reported that a voice spoke from within the light, saying, "As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of the Lord, so you are sent to forerun His second coming..." What is certain is that a heavenly light was seen, and it seems likely also that something along these lines was spoken over him.

It was in this same year of 1933 that a number of significant visions were given to William Branham. In June 1933 he was given a series of seven visions relating to world events that lay immediately ahead (and he told his congregation of these visions at the time). In the first of these he saw the Italian dictator Mussolini successfully invading Ethiopia, but eventually coming to a terrible demise - murdered and spat upon by his own people. In the second he saw America being drawn into a world war against Germany, which would be headed up by an Austrian. The war would overthrow this leader, and he would come to a mysterious end.

The third vision showed the three 'isms' in the world - Fascism, Nazism and communism, and that the first two would come to nothing, but that Communism would flourish. He was told, "Watch Russia. She will become a great world power." In the fourth vision he was shown some of the tremendous advances in Science that would come after the Second World War.

The fifth vision showed the rapid moral decay in the world, relating especially to women. He was shown this decline from the beginning of the feminist "liberation" movement of the late 19th century, and the gradual gaining of worldly power by women, to the eventual election of a 'boy president' (probably Kennedy - known to have been elected because of the women's vote) and after this the progressive decline in the way women dressed - deliberately exposing their bodies more and more in an ever-increasing display of brazen sensuality. With true womanhood so little valued, a terrible decay of all flesh came upon the earth, and every form of perversion arose, just as is prophesied for the Last Days.

In the sixth vision there arose in the United States a beautiful woman, clothed in splendour and royal robes - a woman given great power, and beautiful - yet cruel, cunning and deceitful. She dominated the land with her authority. Branham felt that she represented either an actual person, or else a particular organization (perhaps the Catholic church?) However, surely there is also the possibility that she represents a great "Jezebelic" spirit that utterly dominates the landscape? In the seventh and final vision, he witnessed a great explosion that rent the entire land and left America a smouldering, chaotic ruin, with no humanity in sight.

The amazing thing about this series of seven visions is that they were given at

a time (June 1933) when Branham had no way at all of coming to these conclusions through mere guesswork. In 1933 Germany was by no means ready for war, Russia was by no means a dominant world power, and Communism was a relatively minor force in the world. Some of the details given in the visions were just too extraordinary to pass off as mere coincidence. (See 'The Acts of the Prophet' by Peary Green, pg 48-51, for a fuller description). Also, the fact is that these visions were given to an uneducated, simple man in the back-blocks of Indiana, a man who had little understanding at all of political complexities. And the fact that at least five of these visions have now been precisely fulfilled, means that we should surely take the others seriously also.

Tragedy

After the baptisms, a church was built for Branham to pastor in Jeffersonville. The next few years were a fruitful time in his life and ministry, during which he married a lovely Christian wife and they had two children. However, several years later Branham came to a crossroads and made a serious error of judgement that was to have serious repercussions for his family and ministry. After attending a Pentecostal convention for the first time (up until then he had been an independent Baptist), Branham was invited by these Pentecostals to become a travelling evangelist for them, and he felt that this was definitely a call from God.

However, he allowed himself to be persuaded by friends that the Pentecostals were "trash" (they were known as 'holy rollers' at the time - the lowest of the low), and he drew back from joining with them.

"It was at this time that the anointing of God which had come upon me left me. It never really returned until five years later... Everything went wrong. With my church going down, I didn't know what to do. Then began the dark period of my life when the Ohio River flood that took so many lives, came, and was responsible for the death of two of those that were the dearest to me in all the world." (G. Lindsay, 'William Branham - A man sent from God', pg 51). The great Ohio River flood of 1937 claimed the lives of Branham's wife and baby daughter, and Branham was left heartbroken, with only his infant son left. This was only eight months after he had drawn back from obeying God and joining with the Pentecostals, and he himself acknowledged the tragic connection.

For a number of years after this, Branham continued to preach and also work at various jobs. He remarried, and when a new visitation of the angel of God came May 7, 1946. He was working as an Indiana state game warden. This was to be the beginning of his international miracle ministry. In fact it was the start of the great American Healing Revival of 1947 through 1955, in which many well-known ministries were raised up, and thousands upon thousands of people were saved and healed. As Branham himself said, "The great things which have taken place during these months are too innumerable to ever be recorded, but God has confirmed the angel's words time after time. Deaf, dumb, blind, all manners of diseases have been healed, and thousands of testimonies are on record to date. I do not have any power of my own to do this... God always has something or someone to work through, and I am only an instrument used by Him."

Of that day, Branham recounts, "Trying to get hold of myself, I sat down and told her that after all these twenty odd years of being conscious of this strange feeling, the time had come when I had to find out what it was all about. The crisis had come! That afternoon I went away to a secret place to pray and read the Bible. I became deep in prayer; it seemed that my whole soul would tear from me. I cried before God...I laid my face to the ground...I looked up to God and cried, 'If you will forgive me for the way that I have done, I'll try to do

better... I'm sorry that I've been so neglectful all these years in doing the work you wanted me to do"

From that point in his life, two things were triggered in Branham. Firstly he could detect or discern illnesses in people via a visible violent reaction in his left hand which would make it red and swollen whenever it came into contact with sickness. The second sign would be a gift that would enable him to discern the thoughts and deeds in the past life of the individual - specific sins that needed to be repented of, etc. It was often found that as Branham challenged people over such specific sins, and they confessed them to God, they would regularly be healed of whatever ailed them even before he had a chance to lay hands on them.

His Heart

William Branham was renowned for his transparency, his simplicity and his genuine humility. No doubt this was due in part to his early life of hardship, brokenness and poverty - a great advantage when it came to his eventual ministry. I have read several of his early sermons, and they often appeared to be little more than personal testimonies accompanied by a simple (yet effective) gospel message. There was little sign of the somewhat strange, divisive and controversial teachings of his latter years. After all, the angel had told him that part of his commission was to help UNIFY Christians of differing backgrounds. Speaking of Branham's "outstandingly humble spirit", one observer wrote: "There is nothing boisterous or arrogant about him. He is a meek and humble man... He is a man loved by all. No-one begrudges him any of his success or is envious of his great popularity." (David Harrell Jr, 'ALL Things are Possible', pg 39).

Over the following months and years, Branham travelled widely in the USA, and also to Europe and South Africa, etc. Thousands came from far and wide to hear him preach and to witness the many outstanding healings, miracles and 'words of knowledge' that accompanied his ministry. Often, he would call out the name, city of origin and background information of people in the audience whom he had never met, who had come to hear his preaching or to be healed. Of all the thousands of such 'words of knowledge' that he gave, none was ever known to be wrong or inaccurate. His gift was reportedly "exactly 100%". The deaf were healed, the blind received their sight, and even the dead were raised.

It became standard for Branham to have the angel of God standing beside him as he ministered, and he would often wait for the angel to arrive before he began. It was also commonplace for Branham to see specific miracles enacted before his eyes in vision form several days before they actually occurred, so that when he found himself in the precise circumstance pictured in the vision, he would know exactly what to do. Astounding! And everywhere he went, God was glorified in the most profound way.

There can be no doubt that Branham was the initial pioneer and the key leader of the great Healing Revival of 1947 through 1955. During this Revival, literally dozens of healing ministries were raised up all over America, some well-known and others less prominent, but all of them inspired by the example of Branham and others. Thousands were saved and healed, not just in America, but in many other nations also. And the mighty 1954 Argentina Revival under Tommy Hicks (with meetings of up to 400,000 people) also had strong links with this Revival. Even amongst the better-known evangelists who came into prominence at that time (such as Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne, A.A. Allen, Jack Coe, etc),

The Fall

However, there were crucial weaknesses in the practices and ministry of William Branham, which tragically began to manifest themselves in the mid-1950's. In 1955, largely through his own carelessness and lack of good management, Branham fell into financial difficulty. He had always been nonchalant, almost naive, toward all business matters. "He sometimes missed scheduled meetings and was totally unconcerned about business details. Some of his business associates came to feel that he was culpably irresponsible. The Internal Revenue Service filed a tax evasion suit against him... and the unsophisticated Branham, apparently little interested in personal wealth, had made no systematic effort to account for the thousands of dollars that flowed through his ministry." (Ibid, pg 39-40).

It is obvious that God was little able to financially bless Branham's ministry any longer, due to the careless and dubious state of his financial management. This had clearly become a "legal gateway" through which the devil could now disrupt and tie-down Branham's ministry. And one of the most devastating results of this was that when most of the other prominent healing evangelists were called into large, mobile tent ministries (which God used very effectively at that time), Branham was unable to make this jump, due seemingly to the parlous state of his finances.

By 1958, William Branham (along with many of the other healing evangelists) was deeply re-assessing his ministry. It was clear that the great Healing Revival was now well and truly over, and there can be little doubt that the decline in Branham's own ministry had contributed to this. You can never afford to lose such a leader in any move of God, as history clearly shows. It was after this that Branham began to gradually withdraw into his own little circle, where he had an adoring and loyal following. (Essentially this circle was made up of "Oneness" or 'Jesus Only' Pentecostals). And instead of his previous unwillingness to speak about contentious or divisive 'minor' issues, he now gradually began to emphasize such things more and more in his preaching. Slowly, these teachings became ever-more alarming and extreme.

As early as 1957, Branham had received a dream in which he was ministering in a 'white disk' above a pyramid. A voice from heaven proclaimed that no other man could stand in the disk "unless he die or be killed", and that Branham was "the only one who can and will stand there." Branham apparently considered this dream to be of 'spiritual significance'. (Ibid, pg 41). By the 1960's, he had clearly become convinced that he was the end-times "Elijah" and the true "Messenger of the Covenant". And the adoring followers in his tight little circle were certainly not going to contradict him

The End

There were a number of men who tried to warn Branham, and to bring him back into some form of balance, including his respected colleague and old friend, Gordon Lindsay. But Branham would not listen: "Brother Lindsay said, 'I begged him not to teach. I said, "... Leave the Bible teaching to the teachers. Just go ahead and preach and exercise the word of knowledge and gifts of healing as the Spirit wills, and be a blessing to the Body of Christ.'" This prophet said to Brother Lindsay, 'I know I'm not a teacher, but I want to teach. And I'm going to teach!' Under grace, people in disobedience can last for a while, but sooner or later, those who intrude into ministry offices to which they are not called will be judged. It is dangerous to intrude into another man's office."

Two years later, when driving to Tucson, Arizona, William Branham was involved in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. His wife was badly injured in the

smash, and Branham's body was horribly tangled in the wreck. He lingered on for a few days in hospital, though his head became terribly swollen and a tube was placed in his throat to assist his breathing. William Branham died on Christmas Eve, 1965, just before the turn of the year, exactly as the prophecy had predicted. Once more - "How have the mighty fallen". Satan had again succeeded in 'taking out' one of God's great servants. And there can be little doubt that God's full purposes for Branham's life and ministry remained at least partially unfulfilled.

There was talk amongst a few of Branham's followers that he might rise from the dead after several days, but it is clear that only a relatively small number believed this. (Such Branham-followers can still be found around the world today, some of whom adore him with a fervour bordering almost on idolatry - a sad and tragic epitaph to a once-mighty man of God).

Re: The Enigma of William M Branham - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2006/7/29 20:07

Very interesting.

I don't think I have ever heard of this guy. Lots of lessons to be learned.

Re: The Enigma of William M Branham - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/7/29 21:21

Quote:
-----And instead of his previous unwillingness to speak about contentious or divisive 'minor' issues, he now gradually began to emphasize such things more and more in his preaching. Slowly, these teachings became ever-more alarming and extreme

I think as I read this account I am taken by the fact that sometimes God will reveal things to people or use them in a certain way and in time they begin to take on an spiritual superiority complex. The enemy then steps in with deception. This is why the OT prophets were VERY versed in the scriptures. The enemy is always twisting the word and we must never think the 'gifts' of the Spirit or some thing God has done to reveal Himself, somehow elevates us beyond our need for sound doctrine.

I know folk who God has shown things to and they are now very recluse. They are uncoachable (unteachable). Once they think God has shown them a dream or a vision they will follow that thing no matter how unbiblical it is. I think it is essential for all believers to have a firm foundation of the basic fundamentals of the historic Christian faith.

Re: - posted by WorldView (), on: 2006/7/30 0:57

"On December 18, 1965, while travelinbg back to Indiana via Texas, Billy Paul Branham was driving the car in front of Branham and his wife. A drunk driver swerved and missed Billy Paul, but crossed the middle line and hit Branham's car head on.

Turning his car around, he headed to the scene of the accident. Jumping out of his car, he noticed that Branham had gone through the windshield and back again.

Checking his father, Billy Paul noticed that his bones were broken, but there was a pulse. In ckecking Mrs. Branham, there was no pulse. She was abviously dead.

Suddenly Branham stirred. Upon seeing his son, he asked, 'Is Mom ok?' Billy Paul answered, 'Dad, she's dead.' Then Branham said, 'Just lay my hand on her.'

Billy Paul picked up Branham's bloodied hand and placed it on Mrs. Branham. Instantly, a pulse returned and she revived.

William Branham remained in a coma for six days before dying December 24, 1965. Mrs. Branham lived.

Though saddened by his death, the Pentacostal world was not surprised. Gordon Lindsay wrote in his eulogy that Branham's death was the will of God. He said, 'God may see that a man's special ministry has reached its fruition and it is time to take him home.'

I think it is interesting to note that Lindsay had accepted the interpretation of the young evangelist, Kenneth E. Hagin, from Tulsa, Oklahoma. God had told Hagin of Branham's death two years before it happened. In a prophetic word spoken through Hagin, the Lord said that He was 'removing the prophet' from the scene. Branham died exactly when the Lord told Hagin he would.

Hagin was conducting a meeting when the news came of Branham's accident. Hagin called the saints to the front of the altar to pray. As Hagin himself knelt to pray, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to him saying, 'What are you praying for? I've told you that I'm taking him.' Hagin got up, unable to pray any further.

Because of Branham's disobedience to his call and the creation of doctrinal confusion, Hagin believed that God had to remove the 'father' of the healing revival from the earth.

Four times the Holy Spirit had told Lindsay that Branham was going to die, and that he was to tell him. But Lindsay couldn't get through the barrier of 'yes' men that surrounded Branham.

Finally he got through the barrier, and slipped through to Branham unannounced. He attempted to reason with Branham. He asked Branham, 'Why don't you function where God wants you and manifest the gift God's given you? Stay there! Don't try to get over into this other ministry.'

Branham said simply, 'Yeah, but I want to teach.'

Branham had an incredible healing gift. But having no Bible knowledge to match it, he turned into a doctrinal disaster. Ignorance is not bliss, especially when you affect the multitudes with your words. God had given Branham a great gift, He couldn't take it back. That gift was misleading people, causing them to follow Branham's doctrine, so God practiced His severing right in 1 Corinthians 5:5; 'To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'

God's Generals - Roberts Liardon

My Experience with Branham - posted by Gery, on: 2006/8/4 16:52

Dear Brothers

I was once invited to a supper by some people. I did not know them well, but I felt the Lord wanted my wife and I to be there. Not long after we arrived, I was taken on about my beliefs. They told me about the Serpent Seed doctrine, which is a doctrine much the same as what the Moonies believed, just a different variation. They spoke of the only baptism that was right: theirs! (in the name of Jesus only, Not in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as Matt 28 says.) And of course, the blasphemous "Oneness of God theory". At the time I had no clue who Branham was, but clearly I felt that they were of a different spirit than what I had. Being a young convert, I went home and studied the life of Branham. This is what God showed me:

What I found was that William Branham was deceived and clearly a false prophet. Any prophet that predicts a lie is a false prophet, according to my Bible (Deuter. 18:20-22). Branham prophesied that the USA was going to be destroyed in 1977. He did not believe in Hell. He also believed that the occultic Zodiac and the Pyramids were other forms of the Bible.

A great man of God said: "There is a way next to the truth of God, but it is not the truth itself"

Luther told how he dreamt of someone preaching the most wonderful truths of God, but when he came to the place, it was as the devil himself preaching!

The Bible says: "having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; even turn away from these."

The devil is never more dangerous than when he comes as an angel of light. Signs and wonders! Satan is not scared, we read of him entering heaven and even standing before our God (Job 1:6). He can come with truths, but it is not the truths of God! Or it is half truths.

Greg Denyschen from Jivinnadi Mission tells of a women who came for deliverance, she was invovled with the occult and had to renounce her occultic practices before they would pray for her. He said when she started praying, it was so beautiful and touched them, but after a while they realized that it was a demon praying through her.

It is only by God's eternal truth and His undeserving grace that we have our eyes open. May God have mercy and keep us in His marvelous light and under His precious Blood.

Just a few thoughts to shed some more light, out of a personal experience.

In Him,
Gery

Re: My Experience with Branham - posted by todd, on: 2006/8/4 17:53

Quote:

"Branham prophesied that the USA was going to be destroyed in 1977. He did not believe in Hell. He also believed that the occultic Zodiac and the Pyramids was other forms of the Bible."

Do you have original sources that clearly show this? What, exactly, did he say? Do you have any direct quotations?

Re: My Experience with Branham - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/8/4 19:00

Quote:

-----What I found was that William Branham was deceived and clearly a false prophet.

Sigh.

I'm so tired of hearing and seeing this label being applied to everyone from Finney to Parham to Dave Wilkerson to Billy Graham to George Jeffreys. We label men "false Prophets" and "false evangelists" almost as haphazardly as we call them Christians. If someone messes up, this does not make them a "false prophet"; If a man who loves the Lord falls into sin, this does not make him a "deceiver". Peter used profanity and denied the Lord - if this were to happen today while Peter was in the Christian limelight, nobody would take any of his subsequent epistles seriously. Had David committed adultery and murdered today, nobody would take Psalm 51 seriously - or anything else he wrote, for that matter. Some of us would even slander Peter and David here on SI.

I'm so tired of the loose judgments. If we don't understand a person's ministry, or if we don't agree with it, we simply call them "deceived" and heretics. There are many websites that say that Finney was a heretic and a deceiver. But then the same website will lavish praise on Ravenhill who spoke very highly of Finney!

We see things through a glass, darkly. We know only in part. We should pray for wisdom. God has lately been showing me the fallacy of casting disparaging statements and trampling the names of men He once used. The truth is, God uses men *I don't agree with and who have just as many faults as I have*. I don't agree with Spurgeon's five-point Calvinism, and I have some very strong things to say about 98% of the Charismatic guys on TV. I know they're wrong on many points, but I also acknowledge that God can use them. I will not get on SI and slander them under the guise of "warning the flock." There is a difference between slandering, and simply choosing not to fellowship with them (which I do).

God has appointed a day in which he will clean up all this mess. But until that day, *we know things only in part, and we see through a glass, darkly.* (1 cor. 13:12)

Brothers and sisters, let's not say anything we'll be ashamed of at the judgment. What if you see Branham and Finney crowned by Jehovah, and knew your turn was coming up, and that all the ruinous things you said and wrote about them were about to come into the light? Remember, you told everyone that they weren't of God! That they were false prophets and evangelists! You broadcasted it to thousands and thousands on SI! How ashamed you would be! Even David, knowi

ng that Saul was wrong, did not dare lift a finger against him or speak evil of his name. May we exercise similar wisdom when it comes to brothers and sisters we don't agree with. Rebuke in private, do it the way Jesus Christ taught us. But please, don't come on a public forum and say so-and-so is a false prophet - unless you know for sure and are willing to eat those words at the judgment.

Do you realize how many people think that Art Katz is deluded? Or that the Azusa Street Revival was a "false revival" having never been there? Do you know how many people have told me that Arminianism is a heresy? It's funny how God used Wesley, since God doesn't use heretics to shake the world for Jesus Christ and establish and influence tremendous, Spirit-honoring organizations like the Methodist church and the Salvation Army. Do you know how many preachers thought Wesley to be a false preacher? And Booth? And Whitefield? I've read reports that Dave Wilkerson is a "false prophet" who blends metaphysics into his preaching. I've also read that Ray Comfort is a "false evangelist" for one reason or another. Smith Wigglesworth? Forget it; he was the devil himself, doing false signs and wonders whilst spreading the Pentecostal heresy of Holy Ghost baptism by speaking in tongues. Charles Stanley can't be trusted because he went through a divorce. And the list goes on and on. Any minister you can think of. If Branham messed up, he messed up. God will judge him and give back to him accordingly. But I'm not so quick to call the man a "false prophet" on a public forum. I fear the judgment!

For I see things only in part.

Brother Paul

Re: My experience - posted by Gery, on: 2006/8/4 19:08

Just my opinion and experience.

Thanks for yours.

In His love,
Gery

Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2006/8/4 19:35

Good advice Paul.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/8/4 19:41

Quote:
-----There were a number of men who tried to warn Branham, and to bring him back into some form of balance, including his respected colleague and old friend, Gordon Lindsay. But Branham would not listen: "Brother Lindsay said, 'I begged him not to teach. I said, "... Leave the Bible teaching to the teachers. Just go ahead and preach and exercise the word of knowledge and gifts of healing as the Spirit wills, and be a blessing to the Body of Christ.'" This prophet said to Brother Lindsay, 'I know I'm not a teacher, but I want to teach. And I'm going to teach!'

This was the problem and he would not have been a false prophet or teacher by any means if he just ministered in the areas that God willed for Him. I am sure he got puffed up by the following, how awful it is to see men of God fall in this way because of the admiration of followers.

We could definitely covet 1000 Branham's exercising his gift of healing, but not teaching.

Ravenhill said in a prayer "Lord give us 1000 John G. Lakes." We need to see the power of God displayed in our day but not at the excuse of wrong teaching that leads people out of truth.

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2006/8/4 22:04

Re:The Enigma of William W Branham

Thanks for the post Brother Greg...

i myself have come across some articles written on this man. He seems to be highly esteemed in the penecostal/after-rain movements.

I also like some of Robert's insights:

Quote:

I think as I read this account I am taken by the fact that sometimes God will reveal things to people or use them in a certain way and in time they begin to take on an spiritual superiority complex. The enemy then steps in with deception. This is why the OT prophets were VERY versed in the scriptures. The enemy is always twisting the word and we must never think the 'gifts' of the Spirit or some thing God has done to reveal Himself, somehow elevates us beyond our need for sound doctrine.

One article on Branham is at

(<http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/branham.htm>) <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/branham.htm>

I strongly believe that it is foolish to be hold a bias opinion of one without having all of the facts, to only judge with righteous judgement which is truly of the Lord, and not judge unrighteously which is of the flesh and devil.

Another article that discusses some of the influence that Branham helped spread here in Canada is documented here:

(<http://www.2rbetter.org/Embryonics/Intro.htm>) <http://www.2rbetter.org/Embryonics/Intro.htm>Let us cleave to God at this time dear brothers and sisters , continually being aware of the craftiness of the serpent and the pride of life. There is only One Way to eternal life...If this Way isnot enough for some of you, I pray that God will bring you to that place of faith that is required of the elect - and even this is a gift of God lest any man should boast.

May He be our desire,
richie

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/8/4 22:47

Quote:

-----This was the proplem and he would not have been a false prophet or teacher by any means if he just ministered in the areas that God willed for Him.

This merely signifies that Branham was out of the will of God; I think that being labeled a false prophet is an altogether different thing. Was Branham a minister of Satan? That's what being a false prophet implies. False prophets are purposefully wicked men, they are wolves in sheep's clothing. They knowingly speak lies, having not heard from God. They have an agenda. The difference with Branham, is I believe he worked for God and dearly loved Jesus Christ - but along the way he got puffed up with pride and fell into the sin of disobedience. It can happen (and did happen) to God's choicest. What made Branham's fall so cataclysmic was that he was in the star-studded limelight of miracle Christianity. If ministering out of the will of God qualifies one to be a deceiver and a false minister, then I venture to say many of us are false ministers! I know I may have preached messages in the past that God did not specifically call me to preach at that moment. Because of this, am I to be labeled a "false preacher" before thousands and thousands of people in a public forum? No, it simply means I was out of the will of God at that moment. Now, if Branham stopped believing in hell and started putting out false prophecies of the world being destroyed on a certain date...okay, this is very serious. This is the stuff that fueled Russell's theology and Joseph Smith's "visions" (who are TRUE false prophets, along with Jim Jones, David Koresh, Moon, Baker-Eddy, Swedenborg, Herbert Armstrong, etc.), and I am prepared to own these judgments before Jesus Christ when the fire will be put to those statements.

But if Branham was merely out of the will of God, we should be careful. We've all been out of the will of God at one time or another. It's very unfortunate that this mighty man of God sinned (like David when he conducted the military census) and God had to kill him. Or when King Uzziah took the priests' incense. Or when Saul didn't wait for Samuel and offered the sacrifice himself. Notice that after this, David didn't dare call Saul a "false king". May we all learn from Branham's and Saul's demise! To obey is better than sacrifice.

With love in Jesus Christ,

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by chadster, on: 2006/8/5 14:36

Thank you, Paul, for your loving exhortation. I couldn't agree with you more on your earlier post on this thread, and you said it eloquently and in the right spirit!

I frankly stay away from many of the forums because of the pharasaic condemnation of any and every preacher or stream that does not perfectly align with the readers' view.

The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with our whole being and the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, is the 2nd. How can we become so deluded into thinking we are doing God a service by slandering those who have been called by His name and have preached the Gospel and have done the works they were called to do to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth?? God save us from ourselves. Jesus called us to unity and oneness. Instead of the church being united against the forces of darkness, we're arrayed against one another!! There's something so dramatically wrong with this picture and so diametrically opposed to the Spirit of Christ.

Paul said to the Romans that we are to "judge nothing before the time" and "to his own master each man will stand or fall, and STAND HE WILL!!"

The Word says that "knowledge puffeth up". I have found so many scholars on SI who are so "learned", but when they write, I sense no love, no compassion, only prideful ego and arrogance because of all the knowledge they have amassed. Doesn't the Scriptures say that all of our knowledge without love is NOTHING???

Are we not called to LOVE...which covers a multitude of sins? Love edifies...may the Spirit convict us to love those who name the name of Christ and if they are in clear error, (i.e. those who have blatantly departed from the TRUTH of the Word (and not our doctrinal differences) to lovingly pray for them...not slander them!

Bless you, brothers and sisters who have a heart to obey the first commandment!

Re: - posted by WorldView (), on: 2006/8/5 20:06

Quote:

PaulWest wrote:
Sigh.

I'm so tired of hearing and seeing this label being applied to everyone from Finney to Parham to Dave Wilkerson to Billy Graham to George Jeffreys. We label men "false Prophets" and "false evangelists" almost as haphazardly as we call them Christians. If someone messes up, this does not make them a "false prophet"; if a man who loves the Lord falls into sin, this does not make him a "deceiver". Peter used profanity and denied the Lord - if this were to happen today while Peter was in the Christian limelight, nobody would take any of his subsequent epistles seriously. Had David committed adultery and murdered today, nobody would take Psalm 51 seriously - or anything else he wrote, for that matter. Some of us would even slander Peter and David here on SI.

I'm so tired of the loose judgments. If we don't understand a person's ministry, or if we don't agree with it, we simply call them "deceived" and heretics. There are many websites that say that Finney was a heretic and a deceiver. But then the same website will lavish praise on Ravenhill who spoke very highly of Finney!

We see things through a glass, darkly. We know only in part. We should pray for wisdom. God has lately been showing me the fallacy of casting disparaging statements and trampling the names of men He once used. The truth is, God uses men *I don't agree with and who have just as many faults as I have*. I don't agree with Spurgeon's five-point Calvinism, and I have some very strong things to say about 98% of the Charismatic guys on TV. I know they're wrong on many points, but I also acknowledge that God can use them. I will not get on SI and slander them under the guise of "warning the flock." There is a difference between slandering, and simply choosing not to fellowship with them (which I do).

God has appointed a day in which he will clean up all this mess. But until that day, *we know things only in part, and we see through a glass, darkly.* (1 cor. 13:12)

Brothers and sisters, let's not say anything we'll be ashamed of at the judgment. What if you see Branham and Finney crowned by Jehovah, and knew your turn was coming up, and that all the ruinous things you said and wrote about them were about to come into the light? Remember, you told everyone that they weren't of God! That they were false prophets and evangelists! You broadcasted it to thousands and thousands on SI! How ashamed you would be! Even David, knowing that Saul was wrong, did not dare lift a finger against him or speak evil of his name. May we exercise similar wisdom when it comes to brothers and sisters we don't agree with. Rebuke in private, do it the way Jesus Christ taught us. But please, don't come on a public forum and say so-and-so is a false prophet - unless you know for sure and are willing to eat those words at the judgment.

Do you realize how many people think that Art Katz is deluded? Or that the Azusa Street Revival was a "false revival" having never been there? Do you know how many people have told me that Arminianism is a heresy? It's funny how God used Wesley, since God doesn't use heretics to shake the world for Jesus Christ and establish and influence tremendous, Spirit-honoring organizations like the Methodist church and the Salvation Army. Do you know

now how many preachers thought Wesley to be a false preacher? And Booth? And Whitefield? I've read reports that Dave Wilkerson is a "false prophet" who blends metaphysics into his preaching. I've also read that Ray Comfort is a "false evangelist" for one reason or another. Smith Wigglesworth? Forget it; he was the devil himself, doing false signs and wonders whilst spreading the Pentecostal heresy of Holy Ghost baptism by speaking in tongues. Charles Stanley can't be trusted because he went through a divorce. And the list goes on and on. Any minister you can think of. If Branham messed up, he messed up. God will judge him and give back to him accordingly. But I'm not so quick to call the man a "false prophet" on a public forum. I fear the judgment!

For I see things only in part.

Brother Paul

Yes I agree, great post.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/8/5 23:12

To put a just a twist on all of this...

Seems there can be confounding of the issues in these sort of things. To malign someones character and to point out where a teaching is off are not simultaneous necessities. In fact the former really has no place in our thinking, strange that often this is the case, the starting point and unraveling from that point.

Andrew Storms article did bring out the aspect of an "enigma";

Enigma

ENIGMA, n. A dark saying, in which some known thing is concealed under obscure language; an obscure question; a riddle. A question, saying or painting, containing a hidden meaning, which is proposed to be guessed.

Or if I am understanding it as it was approached, more of a perplexity. Having said that, do find a problem with these things being couched in a sort of *this is what God has done because of ...* manner. That is an impossibility to know and only adds confusion to the matter at hand.

There is another thread on the matter of judging elsewhere here and rather than retread the same territory this does present another angle.

It seems there can be as much a problem with making a curt statement that;

Quote:
-----I frankly stay away from many of the forums because of the pharasaic condemnation of any and every preacher or stream that does not perfectly align with the readers' view.

Quote:
-----The Word says that "knowledge puffeth up". I have found so many scholars on SI who are so "learned", but when they write, I sense no love, no compassion, only prideful ego and arrogance because of all the knowledge they have amassed. Doesn't the Scriptures say that all of our knowledge without love is NOTHING?!?

... if one has never entered into the discussions here before (Welcome to SI!) Perhaps you have been watching from afar, hard to know one way or the other and not to single you out, there is indeed often this very thing you spoke of but would say it is the exception rather than the rule.

The whole point here is one of being honest regardless. To dismiss everything under the banner of false prophet is far too easy and questionable to motives as is if the opposite 'side' here has actually read up on any of the things he taught, which would be the point of contention, not the man as a person.

Some perusing around and looking at the things he believed and taught, the 'visions' he believed he received and conveyed to his hearers, his prophecies and so forth are quite problematic.

"Play the ball, not the man"

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2006/8/6 3:50

hi, did you know that bro.ravenhill ministered with bro. branham? jimp

Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2006/8/6 16:06

That is interesting. Are there any sermons where Bro Len mentions him?

I can't seem to get Branham's ministry, that would be the part he was obedient in, off my mind. Very encouraging, and carries a warning, I suppose, as well.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2006/8/7 2:55

hi, he told me a story of when he was with him and bro branham asked for three people who really needed healing to come forth. the first, a lady was asked by bro branham if God healed her would she stop having sex out of wedlock with the man on the end of her row.he told them that God is no longer going to heal them if they continue in sin. when he turned back around all three were gone. jimp

Re: - posted by WorldView (), on: 2006/8/7 6:07

lol....he read their mail. I guess their pride was more important than their healing.

Re: - posted by boomatt (), on: 2006/8/7 14:10

Here is the article and link to a biographical article on his life. Watchman fellowship is a trusted ministry:

Branhamism/William Branham
By Phillip Arnn

Founder: William Marrion Branham

Founding Date: Branham's Healing Ministry began May, 1946.

Official Publications: The Voice of God Recordings, Inc. (formerly Spoken Word Publications), produces numerous books, tapes and tracts - mostly the messages of Branham.

Organization Structure: The William Branham Evangelistic Association; Branham Tabernacle; The Voice of God Recordings, Inc. About 100 small groups meet worldwide, but there is no official association of churches.

Unique Terms: Laodicean Church Age, Seventh Angel's message, Mark of the Beast.

HISTORY

William Marrion Branham was born April 6, 1909 in the mountains of Kentucky. He was the first of nine children. His father was a logger and their first home was a dirt floor log cabin. Branham was told by his mother that his birth was accompanied by a supernatural sign. He was born in the predawn morning. He was told that when the small window of the cabin was opened, that a light stood in the opening. (Brother Branham, taped sermon transcript, p. 21).

Branham's life was intersected and influenced by numerous visions and angelic visitations. He recalled that at age seven, he heard a voice, "Well, I started up the lane again. And I turned to look at this again. And when it did, a human Voice just as audible as mine is, said, 'Don't you never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way. There'll be a work for you to do when you get older.' Why, it liked to scared me to death!" (Ibid., p. 24). Branham recounted other audible communications and visions that imparted to him specific information concerning future events which later came to pass.

Branham was converted around the age of twenty and married Hope Brumbach. His conversion was a result of a series of visions occurring during and after a life threatening illness (Acts of the Prophet, pp. 40-43).

In his early ministry, he came in contact with "Jesus-Only" Pentecostals. This sect broke away from the traditional Pentecostal movement denying the doctrine of the Trinity. He attended one of their national conventions and was invited to preach. A number of their ministers invited him to conduct revivals in their churches. He returned home and informed

his wife, "Oh, I met the cream of the crop. It's the best you ever seen. Them people ain't ashamed of their religion" (Brother Branham, p. 39). Although he was persuaded not to continue the association by family and fellow ministers, Branham was greatly influenced by the "Jesus-Only" Pentecostal movement. He later adopted a number of their doctrinal views.

Branham's wife and baby daughter died in 1937 from Tubercular Meningitis. He felt that it was because he had not continued in fellowship with the Pentecostals and had missed God's will (Ibid., p. 47).

In 1946, Branham received what he came to call his "charge" from the recurrent audible voice. While baptizing converts in the Ohio River, he claims it happened. "And just then a whirl come from the heavens above, and here come that Light, shining down.... and It hung right over where I was at. A Voice spoke from there, and said, `As John the Baptist was sent for the forerunner of the first coming of < A HREF="..cat95.htm#Christ">Christ, you've got a... have a Message that will bring forth the forerunner of the Second Coming of Christ'" (Ibid., p. 71).

Not long after the commission as the forerunner of the second coming of Christ, Branham was visited by an angel. He was told that he was being given two ministry gifts. He would receive the gift of healing and the gift of the "word of knowledge." Branham came to believe that this angel was the source of all his visions. Branham inquired of the angel why he should believe he was an angel of God. The angel told him that the religious leaders of Christ's day had called Jesus a devil. He should not worry about the opposition from family and fellow ministers. Branham had been told by fortune-tellers in impromptu meetings that he had a special gift of God and was born under a sign. The angel assured him that even devils had confirmed that Jesus was the Christ and not to be concerned by the testimony of fortune-tellers (Ibid., pp. 74, 75, 79).

The next Sunday Branham's first challenge, a woman dying with cancer, was brought before him. Just as the angel had said, he had a vision and prayed for the woman. She was healed. His fame spread far and wide (Ibid., p. 80). From that time forward, Branham claimed the angel was with him night and day. He stated that he was unable to minister unless the angel was at his side (Occult Bondage and Deliverance, pp. 49, 50).

Branham was a poorly educated man and had no formal Bible education. His ministry was proclaimed with alleged supernatural manifestations and empowered by a spirit being.

DOCTRINE

TRINITY: Like the "Jesus-Only" Pentecostals Branham denied the Trinity doctrine teaching a form of Modalism. Instead of three Persons in the Godhead, Branham taught that there was only one Person (Jesus) going under different titles or modes at various times in history. Branham's teaching is a variation of a second century heresy taught by Sabellius know as Modalistic Monarchianism or Patripassianism (see Monarchianism, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, pp. 727-28). Branham explained, "...not one place in the Bible is trinity ever mentioned...It's Catholic error and you Protestants bow to it" (Conduct, Order, Doctrine Q and A, p. 182). "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is offices of one God. He was the Father; He was the Son; He is the Holy Ghost. It's three offices or three dispensations,..." (Ibid., p. 392). This view of the Godhead is called Modalism and has been held to be heretical by both Catholic and Protestant churches.

BAPTISM: Branham claimed that proper baptism was needed to avoid the "Mark of the Beast" of denominational churches and escape the danger of missing the rapture and entering the Tribulation. Proper baptism must be in the name of Jesus only. Baptism with the Trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:18 ("in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost") is unacceptable to God.

Branham explained, "There never was a person baptized in the name of `Father, Son, Holy Ghost' until early Catholic church" (Ibid., p. 178). "Look down on your Bible and see if that says `in the names of...' Does it? No, sir... It said, `in the NAME...'" Branham attempted to explain the distinction, "You see, you misunderstand it then. It's one God in three dispensations.... And when He said, `Go baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit,' it was Jesus Christ. And that's why we baptize in Jesus' Name" (Ibid., pp. 181, 184).

If an incorrect formula was spoken during baptism, Branham felt the convert would go into darkness. "But a tritheist, triune baptism was never recognized in the Church, the New Testament... Now you know what to do, that's right; and if you refuse to walk in Light when Light's brought forth, you turn to darkness. Right! Amen!" (Ibid., p. 190).

Other Doctrines

1) Serpent's Seed: Branham taught that Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) was sexual in nature. According to

Branham, Eve was seduced into a sexual relationship with the serpent and became pregnant with Cain. He explained, "Here is what actually happened in the Garden of Eden. The Word says that Eve was beguiled by the serpent. She was actually seduced by the serpent. He was as close to being a human that his seed could, and did mingle with that of the woman and cause her to conceive" (The Original Sin, pp. 2, 3). The serpent's seed was Cain and all his descendants. They are predestined for Hell. The Godly seed is Seth and his descendants who have been revealed by their call to Branham's ministry. A third group, represented by those still in denominational churches have free will to choose Heaven or Hell. The Godly seed are the Bride of Christ and will be raptured before Tribulation. Denominations are or eventually will be the Mark of the Beast and those who remain therein will go through the Tribulation. (Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p. 96).

2) Last Days Prophet: Branham's followers claim that he held a special role as God's uniquely empowered end-time prophet. "Now, I'm just your brother, by the grace of God. But when the Angel of the Lord moves down, it becomes then a Voice of God to you...But I am God's Voice to you... Now, see, I can say nothing in myself. But what He shows me" (Footprints On The Sands Of Time, p. 214). The angelic visitor told Branham that he would be given two gifts and that he would restore Bible truth.

Branham's followers identified him as the prophetic Elijah of Malachi 4 and the seventh angel of Revelation 10. Speaking of himself, Branham said, "...we are promised a return of that Spirit just before the end-time. He won't start another church, because there is no more church ages to come... because the Laodicea Church Age is the last age, and the messenger of the Seventh Angel,... is the fellow that is going to reveal, by the Holy Spirit, all of these mysterious things.... Notice . This last message of the last church age is not a reformer, he is a PROPHET!" (The Seven Seals, pp. 144, 45).

According to his disciples, Branham is not just a prophet but a major prophet. "A MAN SENT FROM GOD. That the ministry of William Branham qualifies to be that of a major prophet and thus fulfill Malachi 4, 5 and 6 and Revelation 10:7 should become abundantly clear to any who take time to conduct even a brief investigation..." (The Message, Bible Believers, Inc., p. 7).

BIBLICAL RESPONSE

1) The Trinity doctrine cannot be fully comprehended by finite man. However, any other view of the Godhead will not satisfy God's self revelation in Scripture. Modalism teaches that there is only one Person in the Godhead functioning through relational "modes." When He is in the Father mode, the Son and Spirit modes are not functional. In Matthew 3:13-17, however, the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends and the Father speaks. Also, "in the name of" (Matthew 28:19) or in the authority of does not limit the nature of God's unity to one Person but connotes equality of essence within the Godhead (2 Corinthians 13:14).

2) Baptism in the name of Jesus only may have been the early practice in the Jerusalem church. However, all manuscripts of Matthew 28:19 have the Trinitarian formula as being commissioned by Jesus. One document, dating from A.D. 60, the Didache, prescribes the Matthew formula (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) for baptism within the church. Regardless of the formula, baptism is not a requirement for being raptured or avoiding the Tribulation. Full salvation is by grace through faith and not of works such as baptism (Ephesians 2:8-9).

3) The Serpent's Seed doctrine is an improper interpretation of Genesis 3 that is allegorical and arbitrary. Eve's sin was not sexual. She partook of literal fruit from a literal tree. Adam also partook of the same fruit as Eve (Genesis 3:6). This is not a reference to sexual sin. The Serpent's Seed doctrine artificially limits the atonement by race or genetics. While it is true that most of humanity will not benefit from the sacrificial death of Christ (Matthew 7:13-14), Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Christ's atonement is not limited to a certain family or race of people.

The Serpent's Seed doctrine did not originate with Branham. Branham's version of the doctrine parallels the racist views of some groups within the Identity movement and the speculative philosophies of Sun Myung Moon.

4) In light of claims that Branham was God's end-time prophet, it is significant that he falsely predicted that America would be destroyed in 1977 (The Seven Church Ages, p. 322). Branham was guilty of false prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). While he tried to call it a prediction rather than a prophecy (without explaining the difference), he firmly stressed that the 1977 date was based on his thirty year study of the Bible and "Divine inspiration." Branham's ministry and claims were supported by alleged supernatural verification. Signs and wonders, however, are not infallible proofs. Many conflicting sects and ideologies boast similar subjective "proofs" (2 Thessalonians 2:9, Matthew 12:39, 24:24, Hebrews 1:1, 1 John 4:1-3).

RESOURCES

1) Oneness Pentecostals & The Trinity. Gregory A. Boyd. This work focuses on the movement which greatly influenced William Branham. The issues of Modalism, the One Name, baptismal regeneration and others are examined. 234 pages. \$12.

2) God In Three Persons. E. Calvin Beisner. Beisner examines the historic roots of and biblical evidences for the Trinity doctrine. Included in Beisner's work is a refutation of Modalism. 160 pages. \$9.

Re: - posted by martymill (), on: 2006/8/24 7:34

Thank you Boomatt for including the BIBLE RESPONSE section! It's a real blessing.

I'm currently reading the 5 book series of William Branham by Owen Jorgensen (Supernatural: The life of William Branham). I'm on book 3 and this story is absolutely amazing and wonderful to read.

Yet at the same time, I did not know if I should read the last book which refers to his latter years wear he started departing from the truth.

With the Bible response you posted, I have a clearer understanding of what to watch out for and the confidence to keep going.

Thanks again brother,

Martin

Re: - posted by Swampman, on: 2009/8/13 21:26

Having spent over 30 years studying this important messenger, it always strikes me as odd that folks who know nothing about what he said, make all kinds of false statements based solely on Google searches. :(

There is no such thing as Branhamism.