

# GOD'S GENERALS

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## GOD'S GENERALS

Why They  
Succeeded  
and Why  
Some Failed



*Roberts Liardon*

WILLIAM  
BRANHAM

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WILLIAM  
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Roberts Liardon Ministries P.O. Box 2989

Sarasota, Florida 34230

[www.robertsliardon.org](http://www.robertsliardon.org)

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## Introduction

When I was almost twelve years old, the Lord appeared to me in a vision. In this vision, He told me to study the lives of the great preachers—to learn of their successes and their failures. From that day on, I gave a large portion of my life to the study of church history.

When prominent people in the secular world die, people begin to look at their natural accomplishments. But when leaders in the body of Christ die, I believe Jesus would have us look at not only what was accomplished in the natural world through their lives, but at what they also accomplished within the body of Christ. The purpose of their remembrance is not to praise or criticize the leaders, but to see him or her as an example for our own lives.

The “Generals” that are written of in this book were human. Their stories represent a collaboration of the way life is. I have not made anyone out to be superhuman or bionic. I have told of their tears, their laughter, their successes, and their failures. They were all persecuted, lied to, betrayed, slandered, as well as honored, adored, and supported.

But most importantly, I have attempted to reveal the secrets of the power in their individual calls to the ministry—how they operated, what they believed, and what motivated them to change each of their generations for God.

The failures that took place in the lives of these great men

and women will attempt to take place again. But their successes also challenge us and are waiting to be grasped again. There is nothing new under the sun. If there is something new to you, it is because you are new under the sun.

It takes more than a desire to fulfill the will of God. It takes spiritual strength. As you read these chapters, allow the Spirit of God to take you on a journey that points out the areas in your life which need to be focused or subdued. Then, determine that your life and ministry will be a spiritual success in this generation that will bless the nations of the earth to the glory of God.

—Roberts Liardon

## **William Branham**

“A Man of Notable Signs and Wonders”

“You are of the devil, and deceiving the people,’ he shouted, ‘an imposter, a snake in the grass, a fake, and I am going to show these people that you are!’ It was a bold challenge, and everyone in the audience could see that it was not an idle threat.... It appeared to be an evil moment for the little figure on the platform, and most of them must have felt exceedingly sorry for him. Certainly they could see there was no room for trickery. The man on the platform would have to have the goods or else take the consequences.

“The seconds passed.... Presently it appeared that something was hindering the challenger from carrying out his evil designs. Softly but determinedly the voice of the evangelist...could be heard only a short distance.... ‘Satan, because you have challenged the servant of God before this great congregation, you must now bow before me. In the name of Jesus Christ, you shall fall at my feet.’

“Suddenly he who a few minutes before had so brazenly defied the man of God with his fearful threats and accusations, gave an awful groan and slumped to the floor, sobbing hysterically. The evangelist calmly proceeded with the service as if nothing had happened

as the man lay writhing in the dust.”<sup>1</sup>

William Branham was a humble, soft-spoken man familiar with tragedy, heartbreak, and poverty. Semiliterate by worldly standards, Branham was educated through supernatural occurrences. Gordon Lindsay, founder of Christ For the Nations, was a personal friend of Branham’s, as well as his official biographer. He said Branham’s life was “so out of this world and beyond ordinary” that if it had not been for documented truths, a person could, under normal circumstances, consider the stories of his life and ministry “far-fetched and incredible.”<sup>2</sup>

Simple in his reasoning abilities and poor in his command of the English language, Branham became the leader in the Voice of Healing revival, which originated in the late forties. There were many healing revivalists who came to the forefront during this era, each of them unique in his or her own way. But none was able to combine the prophetic office, the supernatural manifestations, and divine healing as William Branham did.

Sadly, the final phase of his ministry carries a shadow. As this chapter progresses, what is written will be shocking to some, and sad to others. Understand that the details are for instruction. Branham’s life is a tragic illustration of what happens when one does not follow the times and seasons of heaven. However, the beginnings of Branham’s life and ministry are a tribute to the supernatural influence of God in the earth. If there is any “religious” tradition in you, the early life and times of William Branham will, no doubt, send a shock

wave through your system.

## **A WHIRL OF LIGHT**

Just as morning dawned on April 6, 1909, a baby boy weighing only five pounds was born in the hills of Kentucky. Pacing the dirt floor of the old cabin, the eighteen-year-old father was dressed in his new overalls for the occasion. The baby's mother, barely fifteen years old, held her new son, and they decided on his name: William Marrion Branham.

With the light beginning to break through the early-morning skies, the grandmother decided to open a window so the Branhams could better see their new son. It was then that the first supernatural occurrence happened to young Branham. In his own words, he tells the story as it was described to him: "Suddenly, a light come whirling through the window, about the size of a pillow, and circled around where I was, and went down on the bed."<sup>3</sup>

Neighbors who witnessed the scene were in awe, wondering what kind of child had been born to the Branhams. As she rubbed his tiny hands, Mrs. Branham had no idea those same hands would be used by God to heal multitudes and to lead one of the greatest healing revivals to date.

Two weeks later, little William Branham had his first visit to a Missionary Baptist church.

## DIRT FLOORS & PLANK CHAIRS

William Branham's family was the poorest of the poor. They lived in the back hills of Kentucky, with dirt floors and plank chairs. These people were totally uneducated, as far as worldly standards go. And reading any book, let alone the Bible, was nearly impossible.

Living conditions were abysmal, and there was little emphasis on serving God. The Branham family had a general knowledge of God, and that was about it. Theirs was a rugged environment, and they gave all their effort to survival. The Branhams went to church mainly as a moral duty or a social obligation.

When you understand William Branham's background, it is easier to see why God used sovereign and supernatural signs to speak to him. He didn't know how to read or study the Bible for himself. He didn't know how to pray—throughout his youth, he never heard anyone pray.

If you do not know how to read, then you can't hear from God through His Word.

If you do not pray, then you can't hear from your inner voice, or spirit.

If no one around you knows God, then there is no one to teach you.

In these kinds of situations, God is left to convey His

message to a person through signs and wonders. It is rare, but God is not limited because of ignorance and poverty. It happened then, and it can happen today. God will get His message to an individual, one way or another.

In the Old Testament, a donkey spoke to Balaam. It was the only way Balaam would hear the Word of the Lord. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. In the book of Acts, signs and wonders empowered believers to turn a dark, “religious” world upside down.

God is not limited to the confines of educational theology. He is God—and sometimes, He will call a person like William Branham to come along and break our religious molds. Religion wants us to forget that the word “supernatural” describes God’s presence. It makes some people nervous when God breaks through the confines of their religious mind-sets.

It was God working through signs and wonders that caused Branham to know God, to understand God’s call on his life, and eventually to walk in it.

## **SAVED FROM A FREEZING DEATH**

The providence of God was with Branham from his birth. His father, working as a logger, had to be away from home for long periods of time. When Branham was only six months old, a

severe snowstorm blanketed the mountains, trapping the young child and his mother inside their cabin. With firewood and food supply gone, death seemed inevitable. Branham's mother wrapped herself and her baby in ragged blankets, and then they lay hungry and shivering in bed to face their fate.

But even "fate" cannot trump God's plan. He was watching over them through the eyes of a neighbor. This neighbor, concerned that smoke was not coming from their chimney, trudged through the heavy snow to their cabin and broke through their door. He quickly gathered wood for a fire and waded through the heavy snow back to his own cabin to get food for the Branhams. This man's goodness and alertness saved their lives.

Soon after this ordeal, Branham's father moved his family from the backwoods of Kentucky to Utica, Indiana, where he went to work as a farmer. Later, the family moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana, which would become known as the hometown of William Branham.

Although the family had moved to Jeffersonville, a moderately sized city, they remained extremely poor. At age seven, young Branham didn't even have a shirt to wear to school, only a coat. Many times he sat sweltering in the heat of the small school, embarrassed to take his coat off because he had no shirt underneath. God never chooses between the rich and the poor. God looks upon the heart.

# THE WIND FROM HEAVEN

School had just ended for the day, and Branham's friends were going to the pond to fish. Branham wanted to go with them, but his father had told him to draw water for that evening.

Branham cried as he drew the water, upset that he had to work instead of going fishing. As he carried the heavy bucket of water from the barn to the house, he sat down under an old poplar tree to rest.

Suddenly, he heard the sound of wind blowing in the top of the tree. He jumped up to look, and he noticed that the wind was not blowing in any other place. Stepping back, he looked up into the tree, and a voice came, saying, "Never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way, for I have a work for you to do when you get older."

Startled by the voice and shaking, the little boy ran home crying into the arms of his mother. Wondering if he had been bitten by a snake, she tried to calm him. Failing to soothe him, she put him to bed and called the doctor, fearful that he was suffering from some strange sort of nervous disorder.

For the rest of his childhood, Branham did everything he could to avoid passing by that tree.<sup>4</sup>

As strange as that experience may have been to Branham, he found that he could never smoke, drink, or defile his body.

Several times, as a result of peer pressure, he tried. But as soon as he would lift a cigarette or drink to his lips, he would hear the familiar sound of wind blowing in the top of the tree. Immediately, he would look around to see, but everything else was calm and still as before. The same awesome fear would sweep over him and he would drop the cigarette or the bottle and run away.

As a result of his strange behavior, Branham had very few friends as he was growing up. Branham said of himself, “It seemed all through my life I was just a black sheep knowing no one who understood me, and not even understanding myself.” He often commented that he had a peculiar feeling, “like someone standing near me, trying to say something to me, especially when I was alone.”<sup>5</sup> So Branham spent the years of his youth searching and frustrated, unable to answer or understand the call of God upon his life.

## **NO PLACE TO TURN**

Although Branham had received supernatural manifestations in his life, he was not yet born again. When he was fourteen, he was injured in a hunting accident that left him hospitalized for seven months. Still, he didn't receive the urgency of God's call that pressed upon him. He had no idea what was happening to him. His parents weren't familiar with God, so he had no encouragement from them. All he had was his own limited knowledge, so he resisted the call of God.

At the age of nineteen, Branham made a decision to move, hoping that a new location would relieve him of this pressure. Knowing that he would meet with disapproval from his mother, he told her he was going to a campground that was only fourteen miles away from his home, when actually he was going to Phoenix, Arizona.

With new surroundings and a different way of life, Branham secured a day job on a local ranch. At night, he pursued a professional boxing career and even won a few medals. But, try as he might, Branham couldn't run from God, even in the desert. As he looked out upon the stars at night, he would again sense the call of God upon him.

One day, he received news that his brother Edward, who was closest to him in age, was seriously ill. Branham felt that in time, everything would be all right, so he continued working at the ranch. Just a few days later, Branham received the heartbreaking news that his brother had died.

The grief was nearly unbearable for Branham. "The first thing I thought of was," Branham recalled, "whether he was prepared to die.... Then again God called me, but as usual I tried to fight it off."<sup>6</sup>

As Branham traveled home, tears ran down his cheeks as he thought of their childhood together. Remembering how hard things were for them, he wondered if God had taken Edward to a better place.

The death was very hard on the family, because no one

knew God, and it was impossible for them to find peace. As a matter of fact, it was at his brother's funeral where Branham remembered hearing his first prayer.<sup>7</sup> It was here that he decided to learn to pray. After the burial, Branham intended to return to Arizona, but his mother begged him to stay at home. Branham agreed and found a job at the Gas Works in New Albany.

## **IN THE FACE OF DEATH**

About two years later, while testing gas meters, Branham was overcome with the gas. The entire lining of his stomach was coated with chemical acid, and he suffered for weeks before seeking medical help from specialists.

The doctor diagnosed Branham with appendicitis and placed him in the hospital for surgery. Because he wasn't experiencing pain, Branham asked for a local anesthetic only. Then he could remain conscious and watch the surgery. Even though he was not yet born again, Branham asked a Baptist minister to go into surgery with him.

After surgery, Branham was moved to his room, where he found himself growing weaker and weaker. As the beating of his heart became fainter, he felt death upon him.

Gradually, the hospital room grew dark to Branham, and in the distance he heard the sound of wind. It seemed as if it were blowing through a forest, rustling the leaves of the trees.

Branham remembered thinking, Well, this is death, coming to take me.

The wind came closer—and the sound grew louder.

“All at once, I was gone,” Branham said. “I was back again a little barefoot boy standing in the same lane, under the same tree. And I heard that same voice, ‘Never drink or smoke.’ But this time the voice said, ‘I called you and you would not go.’ The words were repeated the third time.

“Then I 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!’”

Suddenly Branham awoke and saw that he was in his hospital room. He was feeling better, but the surgeon thought him to be dead. When he came in and saw Branham, he said, “I’m not a churchgoing man,...but I know God visited this boy.”<sup>8</sup>

A few days later, Branham was released from the hospital, and, true to his vow, he immediately began to seek the Lord.

### HEALED! AND PROUD OF IT!

Branham searched church after church, trying in vain to find one that preached repentance. Finally, in desperation, he went out to the old shed in back of his house and tried to pray. He had no idea of what to say, so he simply started talking to God as he would talk to anyone.

Suddenly, a light came and shone on the wall of the shed, forming a cross. Branham believed it was the Lord, as it seemed “a thousand pounds were lifted off him.” It was there by that old shed that Branham was born again.

The accident he had suffered with chemical acid left Branham with strange side effects, and when he looked at anything too long, his head would shake. Branham told the Lord that if he was to preach, he would have to be fully healed. So he found a small, independent Baptist church that believed in healing, went forward for prayer, and was healed instantly. Seeing the power this church exhibited, Branham began to pray and seek God for that kind of power in his life. Six months later, he received his answer.

After accepting the call to preach, Branham was ordained an independent Baptist minister. Securing a small tent, he immediately began to minister with great results.

### THERE'S THAT LIGHT AGAIN!

In June 1933, at the age of twenty-four, Branham held his first major tent revival in Jeffersonville. As many as three thousand people attended in one night.

He conducted a water baptism service on June 11, immersing one hundred thirty people in the Ohio River. As he baptized the seventeenth person, another supernatural occurrence took place. In Branham's own words, “A whirl came down from the heavens above, here come that light, shining down...it hung right over where I was at...and it liked to a-scared me to death.”

Many of the four thousand on the riverbank who saw the light ran in fear, while some remained and fell in worship. Some claimed to hear an actual voice; others didn't.<sup>9</sup>

That autumn, the people who had attended his meetings built a tabernacle, calling it "Branham Tabernacle." From 1933 to 1946, Branham was the bivocational minister of the Tabernacle while he worked at a secular job.

### HIS WONDERFUL "HOPE"

It was during this happy time of the 1930s that Branham met a wonderful Christian girl. Her name was Hope Brumback. She met Branham's requirements; she never smoked or drank, and he loved her greatly.

After several months, Branham decided to ask Hope to marry him. Being too shy to speak with her, he did the next best thing and wrote her a letter. Fearing her mother would get the letter first, he hesitatingly slipped the letter in her mailbox. But Hope got the letter first and promptly answered, "Yes!"

The two were married shortly afterward, and Branham recalled, "I don't believe there was any place on earth that was any happier than our little home." Two years later, a son, Billy Paul, was born to the Branhams. As he described that moment, Branham said, "When I first heard him cry in the hospital I seemed to know that he was a boy, and I gave him to God before I even saw him."<sup>10</sup>

# A NEW DOSE OF POWER

The Great Depression of the 1930s soon hit the Branham Tabernacle, and times became a little hard. Soon Branham began to preach without compensation. He continued to work a secular job to support his family. After saving some money, he decided to take a fishing trip to Michigan. All too soon, he ran out of money and started back home.

On the return trip, he saw a great group of people gathering for a gospel meeting and wondered what kind of people they were, so he stopped and had his first experience with “Pentecostalism.”

The gathering was a “Oneness” camp meeting. (The Oneness people were a denomination of people who believed, as they explained it, in “Jesus only.”) Branham was impressed with their singing and clapping. The longer he stayed, the more he realized there was something to this power they talked about.

That night, Branham drove his Model T into a cornfield and slept in the car. He was eager to return the next day. He had introduced himself as a minister, and that very day the leader announced that the group would like to hear from the next to the youngest minister there, William Branham.

Branham was so shocked that he ducked in embarrassment. He didn’t want anyone to know he was there. He had used his good trousers for a pillow the night before and was wearing an

old pair of seersuckers.

The speaker again asked for William Branham to come to the platform, but Branham sat still, too embarrassed to respond. After all, no one knew who he was, anyway, so he thought he was safe.

Finally, a man leaned over to him and asked, “Do you know who William Branham is?” Branham replied, “It’s me,” but he explained that he couldn’t preach before these people appearing as he did. The man said, “They care more about your heart than how you look.” The man stood up and, pointing to Branham, yelled, “Here he is!”

Branham reluctantly walked up and took the platform, and as he began to preach, the power of God engulfed him. The meeting lasted two hours. Afterwards, pastors from all over the country approached Branham, asking him to come to their churches to conduct a revival. When Branham left, his calendar was filled for the year. These Oneness people had no idea they had just asked a Baptist to conduct weeks of meetings in their churches!

### “TRASH” AND TRAGEDY

Branham raced home. As he pulled into their driveway, Hope ran out to meet him. Branham, excited from his experience, told Hope of the camp meeting and the meetings he had scheduled. She seemed as excited as he, but family and friends were not as jubilant. The main opposition came from Branham’s mother-in-law, who was adamant in her opposition.

She exclaimed, “Do you know that’s a bunch of holy rollers?... Do you think you’d drag my daughter out amongst stuff like that?...Ridiculous! That’s nothing but trash that the other churches has throwed out.”<sup>11</sup>

Influenced by his mother-in-law, Branham cancelled his meetings for the Oneness Pentecostals. Later, he regretted it as the greatest mistake of his life. If he had gone on to hold those meetings, his family would not have been in the great Ohio flood of 1937.

The winter of 1937 was severe. As heavy masses of snow began to melt, it caused the Ohio River to swell over its natural boundaries. Even the dikes and levees couldn’t hold back the great swell of water.

The flood couldn’t have come at a worse time for the Branhams. Hope had just had another baby, and this time they were blessed with a baby girl, whom they named Sharon Rose. Because of childbirth, Hope’s immune system had not been completely restored, and as a result, she contracted a serious lung disease.

It was during Hope’s convalescence that the levee on the Ohio River gave way to the force of water, which quickly flooded the area. The sirens blared out the warning that all must evacuate for their own safety. Hope was in no condition to be moved, yet there was no choice. Despite the cold and the rain, she was transported to a makeshift hospital on higher ground. Also, during this great flood of 1937, both Branham

babies became seriously ill with pneumonia.

### “WHERE’S MYFAMILY?”

As much as he wanted to stay with his loved ones, Branham knew he must help the town fight the rising flood. So he joined the rescue squad, only to return to the hospital four hours later and find that floodwaters had broken down the walls, and his family was gone.

Frantically, Branham searched for his family throughout the night. Finally, he was told they had been placed on a train and sent to another town. Feverishly, he attempted to make his way to them, but the floodwaters trapped him. For two weeks he was marooned and unable to leave or hear any word regarding his family.

As soon as the waters went down, he left in his truck to search for his family. He didn’t know if they were dead or alive. When he arrived at the next town where he supposed they had been sent, no one knew of a hospital, much less about his family.

Totally despondent, Branham walked the streets with his hat in his hands, walking, praying, and crying out for his family. Someone recognized him and told him where his family had been sent, but the floodwaters had cut off any travel to that city. Branham thanked the man and continued his search.

Suddenly, as if it were an act of God, he ran into a friend who told him that he knew where his family was, and that

Branham's wife was near death. The two men searched until they found a way to bypass the floodwaters, and by evening Branham and his friend pulled into the town and found his family.

“I WAS ALMOST HOME...”

The Baptist church in this town had been turned into a makeshift hospital. When Branham found Hope, he knelt down beside her bed, only to learn that the X-rays had shown tuberculosis creeping deeper and deeper into her lungs. Branham spoke with Hope softly, and she told him the children were with her mother. When he found them, their health was deteriorating, as well.

Branham determined he would work and make whatever amount was necessary to see Hope and the children recover. One day while working, he received a call from the hospital. The doctor told Branham that if he wanted to see his wife alive, he needed to come right away.

Racing to the hospital, Branham ran through the door, where the doctor met him and took him straight to his wife's room. The sheet was already pulled over her face. Nevertheless, Branham grabbed her and shook her, crying, “Honey! Answer me!...God, please let her speak to me once more.” And suddenly, Hope opened her eyes. She tried to reach out to Branham, but she was too weak.

She looked at her husband and whispered, “I was almost home. Why did you call me?” Then in her weak, faltering voice,

she began telling Branham about heaven. She said, “Honey, you’ve preached it, you’ve talked of it, but you can’t know how glorious it is.”

Tearfully, she thanked Branham for being a good husband, then she began to grow quieter. Branham finishes the story this way: “She pulled me down to her and kissed me good-bye....Then she went to be with God.”

As Branham drove home, alone in the darkness, everything he saw reminded him of Hope. His grief seemed unbearable. At home, thinking of his motherless babies, he fell asleep, only to be awakened by a knock at the door.

## **THE SADDEST NIGHT ON EARTH**

“Billy, your baby is dying now,” were the words spoken by the man at the door.

Feeling that his life was at its very end, Branham got into the man’s pickup truck, and they transported baby Sharon to the hospital, but to no avail. X-rays showed the baby had spinal meningitis.

The hospital moved Sharon into the basement, where they kept isolated cases. The fatal disease had twisted her little leg out of normal position, and the pain caused her eyes to cross. Unable to see her in such agony, Branham laid his hands on

Sharon and prayed, asking God to spare her life. Sadly, Branham thought God was punishing him for not going on the Oneness revivals. Shortly after his prayer, baby Sharon joined her mother in heaven.<sup>12</sup>

In just one night, Branham had lost two of the three most precious people on earth to him. Only Billy Paul was left.

Two days later, a heartbroken man buried his daughter in the arms of her mother. It seemed his grief was too great to be endured. Yet, in the coming years, the remembrance of those feelings would cause the tears of compassion to flood his cheeks as William Branham prayed for the sick.

## **THE WIND RETURNS**

The next five-year period was a “wilderness experience” for Branham. No one seemed to understand. His Baptist church seemed to grow impatient with him, calling his visions demonic. They even suggested that the light which had appeared at his birth probably indicated the presence of a demon in his life. They went on to warn Branham to stop the visionary experiences, or his ministry “would fall into disrepute.”<sup>13</sup>

During these years, Branham married again. He said many times that he would have never done so, but Hope had asked him to, for the children’s sake.

He continued to preach at the Branham Tabernacle, working

as a game warden on the side. On May 7, 1946, a very beautiful spring day, Branham came home for lunch, and a friend came over. The two men were outside under a large maple tree when, according to Branham, “It seemed that the whole top of the tree let loose...it seemed like something came down from that tree like a great rushing wind.”

His wife came running out of the house to see if he was all right. Trying to get control of his emotions, Branham sat down and told her the story of the past twenty years. At that point, he made a decision that he was going to find out, once and for all, what was behind this “wind.” He said, “I told her [his wife] and my child good-bye and warned her that if I didn’t come back in a few days, perhaps I might never return.”

### THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME

Branham went to a secluded place to pray and read the Bible. So deep was his travail that it seemed his soul would tear out of his body. “Will You speak to me some way, God? If You don’t help me, I can’t go on,” he cried.

That same night, around eleven o’clock, he noticed a light flickering in the room. Thinking someone was coming with a flashlight, he looked out the window but saw no one. Suddenly, the light began to spread across the floor. Startled, Branham jumped up from his chair when he saw a ball of fire shining on the floor. Then he heard someone walking. As he looked, he saw the feet of a man coming toward him. As he continued up from the feet, he saw a man that appeared to be

about two hundred pounds in weight, clothed in a white robe.

As Branham trembled in fear, the man spoke, “Fear not. I am sent from the presence of Almighty God to tell you that your peculiar life and your misunderstood ways have been to indicate that God has sent you to take a gift of divine healing to the peoples of the world.”

#### THE ANGEL CONTINUED...

“If you will be sincere, and can get the people to believe you, nothing shall stand before your prayer, not even cancer.”

Branham’s first response was like Gideon’s of old. He told the angel that he was poor and uneducated; thus, he felt no one would accept his ministry or listen to him.

But the angel went on to tell Branham that he would receive two gifts as signs to vindicate his ministry. First, Branham would be able to detect diseases by a physical vibration in his left hand.

Some have made fun of this physical manifestation or labeled it demonic. To comprehend the Word of the Lord, we must grasp the law of righteousness and the law of the Spirit, then formulate the principle. It is possible that the “vibration” can be accurately explained this way: When the unclean disease in the afflicted person met with the supernatural power of God through Branham, it would set off a physical reaction, or a vibration.

When the unclean meets the clean, there is going to be a reaction!

In later years, Gordon Lindsay witnessed this supernatural phenomenon. He said that the “electric, current-like” vibration was so strong at times, it would instantly stop Branham’s wristwatch. Lindsay went on to say that after the spirit was cast out of the person, Branham’s “red and swollen” hand would return to normal condition.

The angel continued to instruct Branham, that when he felt the vibration, he was to pray for the person. If the vibration leaves, the person is healed. If not he was to “just ask a blessing and walk away.”

#### THERE WILL BE A SECOND SIGN

Branham responded to the angel, “Sir, I’m afraid they won’t receive me.” The angel responded, “Then it will come to pass that you’ll know the very secret of their heart. This they will hear.”<sup>14</sup>

In connection with this second sign, the angel made this statement: “The thoughts of men speak louder in heaven than do their words on earth.” Any sin in a person’s life that was under the blood was never revealed. But if the sin was unconfessed or covered, it would be brought to light through this spiritual gift, the word of knowledge. When this occurred in his prayer line, Branham would step away from the microphone and speak privately with the person, leading him to immediate repentance.

Was this a true visitation from God? Yes. How do we know? Because angels are sent to minister to the heirs of salvation. (See Hebrews 1:14). Angels announced the birth of Jesus and ministered to Him throughout His life on earth. Throughout the Bible angels ministered, proclaiming the Word of the Lord to mankind.

The angel of the Lord will never reveal anything that is contrary to Scripture. He never adds anything to or takes anything away from the Word of God. In other words, the angel of the Lord neither invents an additional Bible nor does he distort Scripture. The Word of God is always the standard.

During his visit, the angel of the Lord went on to tell Branham many other things concerning his ministry. First, he said that Branham, an unknown preacher, would soon stand before thousands in crowded arenas. Second, he told him if he would be faithful to his call, the results would reach the world and shake the nations. The visitation lasted about half an hour.<sup>15</sup>

## **NO TIME WASTED**

After the visitation from the angel, Branham returned to his home. The following Sunday evening, he told the people in the tabernacle of his visitation. Ironically, they fully believed his revelation.

The word of the Lord came to pass quickly. While Branham

was speaking, someone came in and handed him a telegram. It was from a Rev. Robert Daughtery, asking Branham to come to St. Louis and pray for his daughter to be healed. He had exhausted the aid of physicians and felt that prayer was the only answer.

Branham had no money to make the trip. The congregation quickly took an offering, collecting enough money for a round-trip train fare. He borrowed a suit of clothes from one of his brothers, and a coat from another. At midnight, members of the congregation escorted him to the station and saw him board a train bound for St. Louis.

## **THE FIRST MIRACLE**

The little girl in St. Louis lay dying from some unknown malady. The church had fasted and prayed for her, but to no avail. The best physicians of the city had been called, but they had been unable to diagnose her case.

Tears rolled down the cheeks of Branham as he walked toward the little girl. She was skin and bones and lay in bed, clawing at her face like an animal. She had become hoarse from screaming in pain. She had been in torment this way for three months.

Branham joined his prayer with the rest of them, but to no avail. He finally asked for a quiet place to be alone and seek the Lord. This became his pattern in his early ministry. In seeking

the Lord, he would often see the answer through a vision. He would wait until the conditions were exactly as he saw in the vision, and then he would act on what he had seen. The results were always immediate when he followed this pattern.

After a while, Branham marched confidently back to the house. He asked the father and the others, “Do you believe that I am God’s servant?” “Yes!” they cried. “Then do as I tell you, doubting nothing.” Branham proceeded to ask for several things, then prayed for the child, according to the vision the Lord had given him. Immediately, the evil spirit left the girl, and she was healed. She lived to see a normal, healthy childhood.

When news of the healing spread, the people flocked to see Branham, but he withdrew from them, promising he would return later. He did return within a few weeks.

## **THE DEAD ARE RAISED**

In June 1946, Branham returned to St. Louis and conducted a twelve-day meeting to preach and pray for the sick. The tent was packed, and many people stood outside, even in the torrential rains. Tremendous manifestations took place as the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard. A minister who had been blind for twenty years received his sight. A woman who rejected the Spirit of God fell dead outside the tent from a heart attack. Branham went out to her and prayed. She arose and found salvation in Jesus Christ. The healings multiplied and grew beyond count. Branham often stayed until 2:00 a.m.,

praying for the sick.

From St. Louis, he was asked to hold a revival in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where some twenty-five thousand people attended the meetings.<sup>16</sup> During this meeting, Branham slipped out of the service to go inside an ambulance where an elderly woman had died. After he prayed a simple prayer, the woman sat up and hugged her husband. There were so many people standing against the back door of the ambulance that it could not be opened for Branham to leave. The ambulance driver held his coat over the front window so Branham could leave through the front door.<sup>17</sup>

One woman, who had driven hundreds of miles, made a tearful attempt to describe to others the humility, compassion, and meekness of Branham. When she looked at Branham, she said that “all she saw was Jesus,” adding that “you will never be the same after seeing him.”<sup>18</sup>

### LET'S SPREAD OUT

In Arkansas, Branham acquired his first campaign manager, W. E. Kidson, an editor for The Apostolic Herald. This was the newsletter that had published the results of Branham's ministry. Kidson, being a die-hard pioneer of the Oneness doctrine, had introduced Branham to that denomination and took him around to several small churches.

The year 1947 is remembered as a high-profile time for the Branham ministry. Time magazine published the news of his campaigns, and his ministry team took their first tour of the

western states.

T. L. and Daisy Osborn were greatly influenced by his meetings in Portland, Oregon. They had just returned from India, where they had served as missionaries. They were feeling defeated in vision and purpose and were nearly ready to quit the ministry.

The story is told that T. L. was present as Branham turned a little cross-eyed girl around to face the audience. As Branham laid his hands on her, T. L. watched as her eyes gradually straightened. It is said that T. L. heard these words: "You can do that! You can do that!" After the Branham meeting, the Osborns were refreshed, rekindled, and refocused. They finally found the answer they had been searching for. The result was an incredible international missionary and healing ministry through the Osborns to the nations of the world.

It was also in 1947 that Branham met and joined with Gordon Lindsay. Jack Moore was a Oneness minister who had been traveling with Branham when they joined with Lindsay. Although Lindsay was a Trinitarian, the two men formed a coalition that proved imperative to Branham's success.

When Lindsay realized that an unprecedented divine move of God had begun, he urged Branham to take his ministry beyond the boundaries of the Oneness circles and into the Full gospel circles. Realizing that Lindsay was being used to fulfill the words that had come to him during his angelic visitation, Branham agreed. Lindsay was a master in organization, a skill

that Branham lacked. So Branham gave Lindsay the liberty to organize and promote one of the greatest healing revivals to this day.

Moore and Lindsay formulated the first Union Campaign in the fall of 1947. These meetings were to bring the Oneness and Trinitarian believers together in one great meeting. Held in the northwestern states and parts of Canada, the Union Campaign was well received because Branham's messages avoided doctrinal differences. The people attending experienced "their greatest religious experiences ever." Oftentimes, according to reports, as many as fifteen hundred people were born again in a single service. W. J. Ern Baxter joined the healing team in Canada and wrote that as many as thirty-five thousand healings were manifested during that year of ministry.<sup>19</sup>

#### "VOICE OF HEALING" IS BORN

In an effort to give voice to this message of healing throughout the land, the Branham team devised a new method of publicity. They decided that a new publication should be created, which would circulate outside of the isolated Oneness congregations and into every realm of Christianity. Realizing again that this fulfilled the word of the Lord concerning him, Branham agreed. However, Kidson, his editor, didn't agree, so Branham relieved Kidson of his duties and appointed Lindsay and Moore as editors and made himself publisher. Together, the team conceived The Voice of Healing magazine.

Originally, only one magazine was to be published,

introducing Branham. But the demand was so great, the pilot magazine was reprinted several times. The team finally decided to publish *The Voice of Healing* on a monthly basis.

From that point on, Branham made a point never to discuss doctrinal issues. He said, “God didn’t put His endorsement upon one particular church, but He revealed that the pure in heart would see God.” He added, “Let the fellow believe whatever he wants to about it. These things don’t amount to very much anyhow. Be brothers, have fellowship with one another.”

Branham often said that believers should be able to “disagree a million miles on theology,” but if they ever came to the place where they couldn’t embrace one another as brothers, then they should feel “backslid.”<sup>20</sup>

## **EARTHLY TROUBLE**

In 1948, Branham’s ministry came to an abrupt halt when he suffered a nervous breakdown. He was physically and mentally fatigued from overwork. Before hiring Lindsay as his campaign manager, he would pray until the early-morning hours for those in the healing lines, totally exhausting himself. He did not know when to stop. His weight dropped considerably, and rumors began to circulate that Branham was dying.

As a result, Lindsay, administrator of his campaigns, cut Branham’s ministry time to one hour or less each evening, and

visitors were no longer allowed in Branham's hotel room. Lindsay expanded Branham's meetings but wisely cut down on the interruptions and excesses.

When Branham experienced his breakdown, he began to point fingers at those he blamed for the illness. He accused Lindsay of overextending him. Then he informed Lindsay and Moore that in the future, The Voice of Healing magazine would be their sole responsibility.

Lindsay was shocked at Branham's accusations. He had just planned an extensive healing campaign for Branham, and he felt deserted when The Voice of Healing magazine was dropped in his lap. But he continued to publish the magazine, expanding the articles to cover other healing ministries. Although they continued to work together, Lindsay and Branham's close relationship never quite recovered from that point on.

During this time, other healing evangelists began to surface. Oral Roberts, who had entered the ministry one year after Branham, requested that everyone pray for Branham's restoration. Six months later, Branham suddenly appeared back on the scene, claiming he was miraculously healed. His return was greeted by his followers with great excitement.

Branham held his first major crusade after his illness in 1950. It was at this time that F. F. Bosworth, the great healing evangelist from the 1920s, had now joined the Branham team. Crowds of over eight thousand people came to a single service.

It was here that the most famous photo of Branham's

ministry was taken. It is known as the “halo” photo. A Baptist pastor had challenged Branham to a debate on healing. Branham accepted. The Baptist hired a photographer to capture the event. It was one of the pictures taken there that featured a halo of light resting over Branham’s head. Lindsay immediately had the photo authorized and documented as an original, certifying that no makeovers or touch-ups were performed on either the photo or negative.

## **SHAKING NATIONS**

In April 1950, Branham traveled to Scandinavia, becoming the first Voice of Healing evangelist to travel to Europe.

Before going to Europe, Branham had a vision of a little boy being hit by a car and being raised from the dead. He talked about this vision throughout America.

While in Finland, Branham’s car was behind a car that had struck two small boys. Branham’s party picked up one boy and proceeded to the hospital. Realizing that the boy’s pulse and circulation had stopped, Branham knelt on the floor of the car and prayed for God’s mercy. The boy came back to life and began to cry. He was released from the hospital three days later. The next day, Branham received a vision showing him that both boys would live.

The associate who was traveling with him wrote down the details of Branham’s first vision about the boy on a piece of

paper at the time the vision occurred and then placed the piece of paper in his wallet. After the incident happened, it is said the associate pulled the paper out of his wallet and read it to Branham. It was the exact vision Branham had spoken of throughout America.

He had also received many prayer requests from Africa, some of which were accompanied by a plane ticket. In the fall of 1951, Branham and his ministry team traveled to South Africa. They held campaigns through December. It is reported that the meetings were the greatest ever in South Africa, with crowds estimated to be fifty thousand in number, with thousands turned away.

The city of Durban had a population of well over two hundred thousand people. Every bus in the city was put to work, and still all the people could not be transported to the Branham meetings. The results were so incredible that a book entitled *A Prophet Visits South Africa* was written to describe it.

### HOW DID HE OPERATE?

Branham's personality was captivating. He was neither charismatic nor exuberant, but he was best remembered for his humility and humble origins. He often apologized for his lack of education and cultural abilities. Branham couldn't speak well before crowds. When he did speak, it was usually with a very quiet and stuttering voice. Branham usually left the preaching to Bosworth and others while he ministered divine healing to

the multitudes.

Everything about his ministry was geared toward the supernatural. He refuted any person who was led by intellectualism and would not permit him to share the same platform. His entire ministry team focused on creating an atmosphere in which divine healing could manifest. Baxter and Bosworth preached in the morning and afternoon services. Baxter preached in his evangelistic role, while Bosworth gave special instructions for receiving and maintaining healing. Lindsay, the coordinator of the campaigns, would handle the altar calls. Though Branham insisted his primary role was praying for the sick, he always spoke in the evening services.

Since the demand for a Branham campaign was so great, his meetings became limited to a few nights in each city. To handle the flow of people, Lindsay devised and authored a small booklet, *Divine Healing in the Branham Meetings*, which was widely distributed in a city before the team came to town. Unlike the earlier healing evangelists, Branham couldn't spend weeks instructing the people on healing before he prayed for them. This booklet served as a teaching tool for those seeking healing. As a result, they came ready to receive, and Branham was able to pray for them during the first night of his campaign.

Branham avoided all personal interviews prior to the night services. Most of the time, he spent three days of prayer and fasting before each campaign.

Branham would not pray for people until he sensed his

angel standing at his right side.

“Without this consciousness,” Bosworth said, “he seems to be perfectly helpless. When he is conscious of the angel’s presence, he seems to break through the veil of the flesh into the world of the Spirit, to be struck through and through with a sense of the unseen.”

A few witnesses claimed they had seen the angel standing beside Branham. However, the majority of those who noticed the presence described it as a “heavenly light.” Bosworth wrote that in the 1951 South Africa campaign, a light was seen over the heads of the people whose faith had reached the necessary level. While under the anointing, Branham would recognize that light!<sup>21</sup>

When Branham prayed for the people in a prayer line, he directed them to line up on his right side. This way, he felt the people received a double dose of power because they passed by the angel and Branham. The Branham team used the popular “prayer cards”: each person was given a card with a number on it, and the numbers were randomly called during the service. Branham also prayed over handkerchiefs to be carried to the afflicted. (See Acts 19:12.)

## HIS DOCTRINE IN THE EARLY DAYS

Branham believed that healing was the finished work of Calvary. He also believed that all sickness and sin were caused by Satan. “What doctors call ‘cancer,’ God calls it a devil,” Branham preached.<sup>22</sup>

Branham also had a strong deliverance ministry. Along with sin and sickness, he identified insanity, temper tantrums, disbelief, and lustful habits as the work of demons. Branham didn't believe that deliverance healed a person, but he did believe it cleared a pathway for healing to have entrance.

Before Branham would cast out demons in his services, he would stop and tell the skeptics present that he couldn't be responsible for whatever "evil fate befell them."<sup>23</sup>

If a person desired healing in his meetings, the person had to do two things: (1) believe and confess that Jesus died for his healing, and (2) believe that Branham was the prophet of God sent to administer healing.

Branham believed that faith was a sixth sense. To him, faith was believing what God has revealed. People lost their healing because they quit believing what had been revealed to them. "As faith kills it [disease], unbelief resurrects it," Branham reasoned.<sup>24</sup> A person didn't have to be a Christian to be healed, but he had to become a Christian to remain healed, according to Branham.

While Branham supported the work of physicians, he also believed their work was limited. He felt that medicine merely "kept the body clean while God performed the healing." Branham asserted, "There's not one speck of medicine ever did cure any sickness." It is said that Branham would "bristle" when one described divine healing as fanaticism. He would respond by stating that "medicine was never defined as

fanaticism when a person died from incorrect medical treatment.”<sup>25</sup>

Branham was also opposed to the prosperity of Christians, especially ministers. He often claimed that he could have been a millionaire from the revenue of his ministry, but chose not to be, refusing great gifts of wealth by stating, “I want to be like the people who come to be prayed for.” When he finally accepted a Cadillac as a gift, he kept it in his garage for two years, out of embarrassment.<sup>26</sup>

### HE BEGAN TO SLIP...

Branham remained very influential in the ministry of divine healing for nine years. During this time, healing evangelists began to surface all over the country, operating through great signs and wonders. In 1952, at one of the heights in the Voice of Healing revival, forty-nine prominent healing evangelists were featured in The Voice of Healing magazine. The revelation of divine healing had reached an all-time peak across the world. But from that year on, the healing revival fires began to dwindle. By 1955, Branham began to experience difficulties, and his ministry took on a radical change.

## **LOST LINDSAY**

Gordon Lindsay was one of the greatest things that could have happened to the ministry of William Branham. Lindsay had the Word, and Branham had the gift. Lindsay also had the

organizational skills that would enhance Branham's gift and ministry. Obviously, they were a ministry team made in heaven. But Branham refused to acknowledge the worth of Lindsay. Instead, he pointed fingers at him, accused him, and abandoned him, to some degree. I firmly believe the Lord had ordained Lindsay to help Branham, because Branham couldn't make it by himself. Therefore, I also believe that Branham's disassociation with Lindsay was a great mistake, and that Branham plunged into doctrinal error because of it.

### SURROUNDED BY "YES" MEN

Due to Branham's coolness toward him, added to the fact that his own ministry was growing, Lindsay left the Branham team after four years. The men who replaced Lindsay were far below his caliber in character and integrity.

Branham was unable to match the wits and sophistication of those who came to take subtle advantage of him. It was a widely publicized fact that Branham had no business sense and really could not have cared less about it. With the hedge of protection that came with Lindsay's management gone, many felt that Branham's managers took advantage of him and his ministry funds by using them for themselves and their own wealth. During Lindsay's management, Branham's ministry had always excelled financially, but under new administration, the ministry was hurting for money. It became so bad that Branham thought he would have to leave the ministry and go to work at a secular job.

Branham's crowds were down in number, and soon the ministry took on a \$15,000 deficit. Branham's mail count had dropped from one thousand letters a day to approximately seventy-five.

In the height of the revival, Branham's carelessness in financial matters didn't seem to show. But now that things were tight, his carelessness brought the attention of the Internal Revenue Service. In 1956, a tax-evasion suit was brought against the evangelist. Despite his objections, Branham incurred a \$40,000 out-of-court settlement, a debt he carried for the rest of his life.<sup>27</sup>

Eventually, Branham found that a cult had formed around his personality. As other healing evangelists began to come to the forefront, these men would pacify Branham's ego. They encouraged Branham in his weird visions, claiming him to be the new Elijah, the forerunner of Christ's return, and the head of the seventh church age. They claimed that only Branham could carry this calling of the Laodicean messenger; no one else would be able to impersonate it.

By 1958, there were only about a dozen prominent healing evangelists. It was evident to everyone that the glory days of the Voice of Healing revival had come to a close. It was now time to seek the Lord and find the roles to be played in the next move of God.

## HE DID NOT STAY IN HIS CALLING

Branham didn't take the change well. In fact, he never made

the transition at all. Instead of seeking the Lord for his place of ministry in the next move of God, he turned to radical doctrine and sensationalism. Branham took on the office of the teacher by his own will, not by the command of God.

It is possible that through his prophetic gift, Branham saw the awakening of the teaching gift that would move on the earth through the Word of Faith movement, which began in the late 1970s. He obviously jumped ahead of its timing, perhaps hoping to regain his status as the leader of it. Branham failed to realize that he was already an undeniable leader in the church world; he just needed to get back into his calling.

God didn't call Branham to be a teacher, because he didn't know the Word. As a result, disturbing doctrines were taught and emphasized through his ministry. Everything he had stood for in the former days of ministry seemed to have escaped him.

Without a doubt, this great mistake caused his life to end early and continues to overshadow his ministry today.

## **HE DID IT HIS WAY**

Branham claimed to have strange spiritual visions that seemed to make him ever searching and driven for their fulfillment. Throughout the 1960s, he lamented his decline in popularity, noting that other evangelists had surpassed him.<sup>28</sup> It had become a competitive race to him.

Branham tried to push his popularity through doctrinal teaching, which, according to him, was given by prophetic revelation. By abusing his gift, the prophecies became warped. Instead of using his prophetic ability to call the hearts of men back to God, he tried to predict international events.

### BRACE YOURSELF...

When you read a sample of these doctrines, you will understand why it was such a great mistake for Branham to allow Lindsay to leave. If Lindsay had remained, all the other mistakes would have been sorted out of Branham's life. Here is a sample of the shocking "prophetic" doctrines Branham taught until the end of his life.

## **NO ETERNAL HELL**

Introduced as new revelation, Branham taught that there was no eternal hell. He said that hell was forever, but not for eternity. Forever, to him, meant a period of time. After this period of time, those in hell would be annihilated!<sup>29</sup>

## **SEED OF THE SERPENT**

He also taught that women weren't a created product of God but were merely a by-product of man. He even suggested that animals were a higher rank of species than women because they were created from nothing. Their secondary status,

according to Branham, marked women as “the most easily deceived and deceitful beings on earth.”

Branham also taught that women carried the seed of the serpent. This doctrine taught that Eve and the serpent had sexual relations in the garden and created Cain. Branham said that God had meant for multiplication to come from the dust of the earth, as occurred with Adam, but Eve’s action with Satan altered that plan. Because of Eve and her sexual relationship with Satan, the inferior method of procreation came about. According to Branham, every woman carries the literal seed of the devil.

Branham once said, “Every time that a funeral goes down the street, a woman caused it... Everything that’s wrong, a woman caused it. And then put her head of the church...shame on her.”<sup>30</sup>

Because of this hereditary and disgraceful act with Satan, Branham argued that women weren’t qualified to be preachers. He also taught that Eve’s supernatural offspring, Cain, built great cities where scientists and intellectualism were born. Therefore, to Branham, every scientist and every intellectual person who rejects the supernatural nature of the gospel is from the seed of the serpent.<sup>31</sup>

## **DIVORCE**

According to Branham, since women introduced men to sex,

polygamy was brought about. Women had to be punished. So, men could have many wives, but women only one husband. Branham taught that when Jesus spoke on divorce, He was speaking to the woman, not the man. A woman couldn't remarry under any circumstances. But a man could divorce whenever he wanted to and remarry a virgin.

## **MARK OF THE BEAST**

Branham taught that denominationalism was the mark of the beast, that the Protestants were the harlots, and that the Catholics were the Beast. From a vision, he insinuated (though never formally acknowledged) that he was the end-time messenger and the Laodicean prophet, who could reveal the seventh seal in the book of Revelation. He predicted that the destruction of the United States would begin in 1977.<sup>32</sup>

## **HIS MOUTH HAD THE POWER**

Branham felt that there would come a day in his ministry where the “spoken Word” from his mouth would change physical bodies into glorified bodies for the Rapture. This tremendous power would be unleashed because Branham's words would restore God's original name of JHVH. Previously, the name had never been pronounced correctly; however, “Branham's mouth was specially formed to say it.”<sup>33</sup>

# ONENESS

Although he denied it at the beginning of his ministry, Branham now openly declared the Oneness doctrine. However, Branham criticized the “Jesus Only” churches, citing that “there were many people named ‘Jesus,’ but there is only one Lord Jesus Christ.” He would teach one day that Trinitarians weren’t born again; on other days, he would declare that only some were. He even prophesied stating that “Trinitarianism is of the devil,” then commanded everyone listening to the tape of that message to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup>

He often changed in his salvation doctrine, as well. At times, he would say that “anyone could be saved.” Then, he would be heard speaking in line with Calvinistic doctrine. He would say, “There was millions that would do it if they could, but they can’t. It’s not for them to have it.”<sup>35</sup>

A following was born out of this group of disciples. They called themselves “The Messengers.” Today, they are also known as “The Branhamites.” These churches are not affiliated with any denomination, since Branham detested that form of organization. They are followers of Branham, believing him to be the Laodicean messenger for this church age. To this day, a large portrait of Branham hangs in the church, introducing him as their “pastor.”

The Messengers, or the Branhamites, are a worldwide movement. In fact, the fourth largest church in the nation of

Zaire is of this group.<sup>36</sup>

## **THE STORY OF HIS DEATH**

Branham preached his last message during Thanksgiving week of 1965 at Jack Moore's church. Though Moore disagreed with Branham's doctrine, he remained friends with him throughout his ministry.

On December 18, 1965, while traveling 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 checking Mrs. Branham, there was no pulse. She was obviously dead.

Suddenly, Branham stirred. Upon seeing his son, he asked, "Is Mom okay?"

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.<sup>37</sup>

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

Though saddened by his death, the Pentecostal 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."<sup>38</sup>

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."39

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 sovereign 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." Actually, it was an act of mercy on God's behalf. It is believed that He saved Branham from hell.

## **UNABLE TO RESURRECT**

Although the funeral was held December 29, 1965, Branham's body was not buried until Easter 1966. All sorts of rumors were circulating. One was that his body was being embalmed and refrigerated. Many of his followers were

believing Branham would be raised from the dead. Whatever the reason, the official statement came from his son on January 26, 1966, at a memorial service.

It was said that Mrs. Branham had requested the delay in burial because she was trying to make a decision whether to move to Arizona or remain in Indiana. She wanted his body buried where she chose to live. Until she decided, Branham's body remained in the attic of the funeral home.

Still, there remained great hope among The Messengers that Branham would be raised on Easter Sunday. Branham's son affirmed that his father claimed Easter to be the time of the year that the Rapture would take place.

Reluctantly, and with great disappointment, William Branham was buried on April 11, 1966. His grave monument is a large pyramid with an eagle on top. (Unfortunately, the eagle keeps being stolen.) Branham is memorialized as being the only person to open the seventh seal, as the head of the seventh church age.

Branham's followers refuse to see him as a human being, and rumors of his return continued to circulate even through the 1980s. Each year, Branham Tabernacle continues to have a special Easter Service, in which the followers listen to Branham's taped sermons. Some of them still secretly hope for his return at that time. It is said that the current pastor does not encourage speculation of Branham's resurrection, however, the Branhamites have never accepted his death.<sup>40</sup>

# LEARN THE LESSON

The story of William Marrion Branham was not written for criticism. I believe it contains a lesson more powerful than this one chapter can hold.

The lesson here is this: Do what God says to do, nothing more and nothing less. There is no game here. There is one move, and it belongs to God. Your job is to follow it.

In this generation, heaven must determine the timing of your life and your church as a whole. You are either in the will of God or out of it. Your call must stay with the timing of heaven.

All Branham wanted was to be a voice. If he had remained in the plan of God, Branham could have been one of the greatest voices that had ever lived. His greatness in the ministry is never to be forgotten or discounted, his gift was legitimate. But we must understand that great error comes from not having both the Word and the Spirit working together in our lives.

Many of us weren't yet alive when these men and women of God had their great ministries. As a result, we didn't have the opportunity to watch and study their lives. And this is the reason I wrote this book. So study what you have read, and learn from it. Cry out to God to help you in the things you are unsure of. Ask Him to train you and teach you how to operate through His Spirit and within His timing. Follow His exact plan all the days of your life, and never deviate from it because of your own ideas, or pressure from others. Your anointing will

only come when you follow the plan that God has outlined for you. So embrace that plan, and hold to it tightly. Then, run strong with it and do mighty exploits, in Jesus' name.

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1 Gordon Lindsay, *William Branham: A Man Sent from God* (Jefferson, IN: William Branham, 1950), 23–25.

2 *Ibid.*, 11.

3 C. Douglas Weaver, *The Healer-Prophet, William Marrion Branham: A Study of the Prophetic in American Pentecostalism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 22.

4 Lindsay, *William Branham*, 30–31.

5 *Ibid.*, 31.

6 Lindsay, *William Branham*, 38–39.

7 Weaver, *Healer-Prophet*, 25.

8 Lindsay, *William Branham*, 39–41.

9 Weaver, *Healer-Prophet*, 27.

10 Lindsay, *William Branham*, 46.

11 Weaver, *Healer-Prophet*, 33.

12 Lindsay, *William Branham*, 52–63.

13 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 34.

14 Lindsay, William Branham, 76–80, and Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 75.

15 Lindsay, William Branham, 75–79.

16 Lindsay, William Branham, 93.

17 Ibid., 94.

18 Ibid., 102.

19 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 46–47.

20 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 54.

21 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 72. 74.

22 Ibid., 62.

23 Ibid., 63.

24 Ibid., 65.

25 Ibid., 66–67.

26 Ibid., 109.

27 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 94.

28 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 96.

29 Ibid., 118–119.

30 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 110–113.

31 Ibid., 112.

32 Ibid., 116.

33 Ibid., 138–139.

34 Ibid., 120.

35 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 121–122.

36 Ibid., 152–153.

37 Personal interview with Billy Paul Branham.

38 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 105.

39 Kenneth E. Hagin, *Understanding the Anointing* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1983), 60–61.

40 Weaver, Healer-Prophet, 153–155.