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William Branham : Dictionary Overview

Posted on Wednesday, March 17 @ 21:46:32 EST by [WMB1](#)

Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements
 Burgess, McGee Zondervan 1988
 Page 95-96



BRANHAM, WILLIAM MARRION (1909-65). Initiator of the post-World War II healing revival. Born in a dirt-floor log cabin in the hills of Kentucky, Branham carried his prophetic message of healing and deliverance to the far corners of the earth. A mystic from his youth, he reported divine ...read more ...

BRANHAM, WILLIAM MARRION (1909-65). Initiator of the post-World War II healing revival. Born in a dirt-floor log cabin in the hills of Kentucky, Branham carried his prophetic message of healing and deliverance to the far corners of the earth. A mystic from his youth, he reported divine visitations at ages three and seven. After a personal healing, he felt called to preach and became an independent Baptist. In 1933 he preached to three thousand people in a tent revival in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and later built Branham Tabernacle there. He attributed the death of his wife and baby in 1937 to his failure to heed the call to conduct revivals in Oneness Pentecostal churches.

Branham reported that throughout his life he was guided by an angel who first appeared to him in a secret cave in 1946. He was given the power to discern people's illnesses and thoughts. David Harrell reports of his

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popularity: "The power of a Branham service . . . remains a legend unparalleled in the history of the charismatic movement" (Harrell, 1975, 162). Branham's accuracy is attested by Walter J. Hollenweger, who interpreted for him in Zurich and "is not aware of any case in which he was mistaken in the often detailed statements he made" (Hollenweger, 1977, 354). But he further reports that although many healings were well attested, there were not as many as were claimed. Branham filled the world's largest auditoriums and stadiums. In contrast to the caricature of the image-minded evangelist, he lived moderately, dressed modestly, and boasted of his youthfull poverty. This endeared him to the throngs who idealized him. He was self-conscious about his lack of education, but the simplicity of his messages had worldwide appeal.

By emphasizing healing and prosperity and neglecting his Oneness theology Branham was able to minister in Trinitarian Pentecostal circles as well. In 1947 he acquired as his manager Gordon Lindsay, who edited the Voice of Healing magazine, which served as an advertising vehicle for the rapidly multiplying healing evangelists. He was also highly touted by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, but support declined as he became more controversial in the 1960s. Branham's insistence that believers baptized by a Trinitarian formula must be rebaptized in the name of "Jesus only" was a view shared by a number of Pentecostals. But other teachings placed him on the fringes of orthodoxy. His doctrine of the "serpent's seed" taught that Eve's sin involved sexual relations with the serpent. Some humans are descended from the serpent's seed and are destined for hell, which is not eternal, however. The seed of God, i.e., those who receive Branham's teaching, are predestined to become the Bride of Christ. There are still others who possess free will and who may be saved out of the denominational churches, but they must suffer through the Great Tribulation. He considered denominationalism a mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:17).

Branham proclaimed himself the angel of Revelation 3: 14 and 10:7 and prophesied that by 1977 all denominations would be consumed by the World Council of Churches under the control of the Roman Catholics, that the Rapture would take place, and that the world would be destroyed. He died in 1965, but many of his followers expected him to be resurrected, some believing him to be God, others believing him to be virgin-born.

Branham's influence has continued in many churches where his prophecies are considered to be divinely inspired. His teaching on the power of the spoken word has been a characteristic of later revivalists. Kenneth Hagin identifies Branham as a prophet.

Bibliography W.M.Branham, *Footprints on the Sands of Time* (1975) C Dyck, *William Branham: The Man and His Message* (1984) D.E.Harrell, Jr. *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (1975) W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (1977) G. Lindsay *William Branham: A Man Sent From God* (1950). D.J.Wilson

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