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### William Branham and the Latter Rain Movement

Posted on Wednesday, March 17 @ 14:38:19 EST by [WMB1](#)

Latter Rain

I. Latter Rain Profile

Name: Latter Rain

**Founder:** "The movement began as a revival at Sharon Orphanage and Schools in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, among students assembled by former Pentecostal Assemblies ministers George Hawtin, and P.G. Hunt and Four-Square Gospel minister Herrick Holt" (Melton 84).

- Date of Birth:** N/A
- Birth Place:** N/A
- Year Founded:** 1948

**History:** The Latter Rain Revival was a Pentecostal movement parallel to the healing movement that arose in the midst of the post-World War II evangelical awakening. The movement also bears similarity to the movement that arose at [Azusa Street](#).

The movement was led by William Branham and Oral Roberts. [Oral Roberts](#) was a Pentecostal Holiness Preacher who started his own independent healing ministry in 1947 (Riss, 107). [William Branham](#) began his healing ministry ... read more ...



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William Branham began his healing ministry in the fall of 1946. He claimed to be divinely inspired by an angel and his reputation as a healer grew quickly (Riss, 106).

In the fall of 1947, Branham held meetings in Vancouver, B.C. and the meetings were attended by many pastors and teachers (Riss, 106). Among those that attended were people from North Battleford and they "returned to supply the spark that ignited the controversial Latter Rain movement" (Riss, 106). Therefore, the Latter Rain Revival actually originated at Sharon Orphanage and Schools in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada. Former Pentecostal Assemblies minister George Hawtin, and P.G. Hunt and Four-Square Gospel minister Herrick Holt assembled the students (Melton 84). The Latter Rain revival was very similar to the healing movement in that it emphasized the unity of the body of Christ along with the eschatological hope that Christ was coming again soon (Riss, 112).

The need for a new revival such as the healing movements by Roberts and Branham and the Latter Rain movement, stemmed from the perceived "dryness" of the Pentecostal faith. Pentecostalism was lacking in the manifestations of the Spiritual gifts and the Latter Rain revival focused primarily on the Spirit so it catered to exactly what people wanted (Riss, 113). In 1949, [Assemblies of God](#) and Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada tried to suppress the revival and the revival was forced out of the Assemblies of God church.

The reasons for denouncing the revival according to the Assemblies of God were "(1) it relied too heavily upon present-day apostles and prophets (i.e., a self-appointed charismatic leadership); (2) it practiced the confessing and pronouncing of forgiveness by one member upon another; (3) it advocated the practice of bestowing spiritual gifts by the laying-on-of-hands; and (4) it distorted Scripture so as to arrive at conclusions not generally accepted by members of the Assemblies" (Melton, 84).

The revival continued to spread and ministers left the Assemblies of God church and took part in the Latter Rain movement. In the 1950s, William Branham and Oral Roberts were very influential in encouraging the spread of the Latter Rain revival. The revival died down slowly and most people considered the Latter Rain movement dead along with all of its doctrines. In actuality, the Latter Rain movement had quite an impact on Pentecostal beliefs and certain Latter Rain doctrines can be seen in Pentecostalism such as: the fivefold ministry, the laying on of hands, the feast of Tabernacles and the foundational truths of Hebrews 6:1-2 (Riss, 124). Manifestations of the Latter Rain movement can be seen in the Vineyard movement and most recently the Toronto Blessing and Pensacola Revival. These movements are not new but really just resurgences of Latter Rain.

• **Sacred or Revered Texts:** Bible

• **Cult or Sect:**

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## II. Beliefs of the Latter Rain

The Latter Rain Revival was characterized by healings, the laying on of hands, emphasis on spiritual gifts, fasting, prayer, prophecy, allegiance to the five-fold ministry (Ephesians 4:11), importance of the Jewish feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles, distrust of denominations, manifestations of the sons of God, and the returning of Jesus Christ in accordance with the outpouring of Gods spirit.

Splitting from the Assemblies of God, the Latter Rain Revival became increasingly anti-denominational (Melton, 418). They considered their beliefs to be a continuation or addition of the pentecostal movements (Melton, 418). Now all the churches have independent and autonomous congregations (Melton, 418)

The Latter Rain movement was Pentecostal in nature, yet it was contrasting the old Pentecostalism. NOLR (New Order of the Latter Rain) was more emotional and vibrant in comparison. Also, NOLR believed that spiritual gifts were received by the laying on of hands in contrast to "tarrying" for the Holy Spirit as the old Pentecostals did (Melton, 532).

William Branham has occasionally been referred to as the founder of the Latter Rain revival due to his influential role in the revival's spread. Branham and Oral Roberts encouraged the spread of NOLR with their healing ministry (Melton, 84). Branham was also seen as the prophet (Elijah) of the movement. Franklin Hall was a healing evangelist and his emphasis on fasting and prayer were also instrumental in the development of the Latter Rain revival (Melton, 532).

Stemming from Ephesians 4:11 of the Bible, the Latter Rain followers believe in the restoration of the five-fold ministry. This ministry consists of apostles, prophets, missionaries, evangelists, pastors and teachers with the addition of apostles and prophets being the most controversial (Melton, 418).

The doctrine of Manifest Sons of God holds that "anointed" ones can enter into sonship and hence become divine (Holy Laughter link). The belief that humans can become gods is highly controversial because it blurs the line between creator and created (Melton, 420). Latter Rain supporters think the doctrine of sonship is aligned with Scripture (1 Corinthians 15:45-47 and Romans 8:19) so that "sonship is an actual gaining of the image and likeness of Christ" (Melton, 420).

Joel's Army is another doctrine of the Latter Rain faith. This claims that the Latter Rain advocates must conquer and dominate the world in order for the new millenium and Christ to come (influence link).

Another common theme in NOLR is the "new thing" of Isaiah 43:19 and Acts 17:18-21. This belief is similar to gnosticism in that they are always seeking a "new thing" or revelation to escape the material world (cross+word link).

One of the most important publications of the Latter Rain movement is "The Feast of Tabernacles" by George Warnock. The belief was that there are three great Israel feasts: feast of Passover, feast of Pentecost, and the feast of the Tabernacle. The feast of Passover was fulfilled in the death of Christ. The feast

of Pentecost was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Spirit, but the feast of Tabernacles has yet to be fulfilled (Melton, 532).

The Latter Rain movement believed it was important to understand the history of their movement. As they saw it, Christianity was slowly disintegrating throughout history and the church was becoming less and less "pristine" (Melton, 418). God began his restoration of the church beginning with Luther, then the process was continued by John Wesley and the Methodists, and then the Pentecostals and now the Latter Rain (Melton, 418).

From the beginning, the NOLR was opposed by the Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Assemblies of God. Later, in the 1980's, it was targeted by the Christian counter-cult organizations due to the Latter Rain doctrine of Manifest Sons of God. This belief claims that humans who believe in the Latter Rain can actually become divine themselves (Melton, 419-420).

The Latter Rain revival was a catalyst for later Pentecostal movements such as the Brownsville/Pensacola Revival and the Toronto Blessing/Laughing Phenomenon. These more recent movements differ from NOLR in that their beliefs are accepted by the Assemblies of God while the Latter Rain doctrines were considered heretical. The beliefs of both Brownsville and the Toronto Blessing are aligned exactly with those of the Latter Rain revival. There is an emphasis on the imparting of spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands and emotion filled "manifestations of gifts of the Holy Spirit." The Brownsville Revival began with a visiting evangelical speaker, Steve Hill, in June 1995.

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### III. Links to Latter Rain Web Sites

#### The Latter Rain Revival

This is the best page for explaining the theology of Latter Rain from a current Latter Rain follower's perspective. Their beliefs are not outlined, but instead they are given in context and contrasted with the "old" way of Christianity.

<http://watch.pair.com/rain.html>

#### Influence Links of The Third Wave Movement

This page gives brief objective descriptions of different new religious movements and the leaders/followers that were instrumental in the faith. This web site also gives a short history, a brief outlined discussion of the Latter Rain beliefs, and information on the Latter Rain leaders.

<http://www.netpci.com/~ssimpson/geneology.html>

#### Life In The Spirit

This web link focuses on the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and was written from the perspective of a believer who's explaining the power of the Spirit. There is a separate section on the purpose of the Latter Rain movement.

[http://www.present-truth.org/beliefs/spirit/life\\_in\\_spirit.html](http://www.present-truth.org/beliefs/spirit/life_in_spirit.html)

#### "The New Thing"-Part Two: Global Revival as the Key Element in Deception in Twentieth Century Pentecostalism

There are multiple counter-cult web pages created by the same authors of this page, Cross+Word. These pages discuss Later Rain doctrines and documents and they place the Latter Rain movement in context of the Charismatic

movement and show where the Latter Rain beliefs are currently.  
<http://www.fardistant.demon.co.uk/res/newthin2.htm>

#### Restoration "The Latter Rain Movement"

This web site is another counter-cult page which gives useful information concerning the origins of Latter Rain theology, NOLR movement, founders and leaders, doctrines, reaction of Pentecostals, and the Latter Rain ministries today.

<http://www.discernment.org.restorat.htm>

#### Latter Rain and Manifested Sons of God

This openly counter-cult link explains the Latter Rain ideas of "A New Thing" and "Manifested Sons of God."

<http://www.hutch.com.au/~rlister/charis/randles/randle5.htm>

#### Latter Rain and Promise Keepers

This page is also counter-cult and it directly challenges the Latter Rain theology and relates it to the Toronto blessing. This page explains why Latter Rain is seen as heretical and often not Christian.

<http://neptune.on.ca/~jyonge/lattrain.htm>

#### **Related Sites**

#### The Laughing Phenomenon: Its History and Possible Effects on the Church

This is Part 1 of a four part essay by Ed Tarkowski on a counter-cult page entitled Deception in the Church. The author argues that the current Toronto and Brownsville revival movements (see links to our pages below) can be traced to errant ways of the Latter Rain movement.

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/Laugh1.html>

#### Profile of the Toronto Blessing

This is the profile of the Toronto Blessing from a new religious movements profile page at the University of Virginia.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/nrms/tbless.html>

#### Profile of the Brownsville/Pensacola revival

This is a profile of the Brownsville/Pensacola revival from a new religious movements page at the University of Virginia.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/nrms/Brownsv.html>

#### Background to the "Holy Laughter" Movement

This link addresses the Latter Rain revival specifically while also referring other related topics such as William Branham, Azusa street, Pentecostalism, etc.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/4948/vine3is5.html>

#### Pensacola: "The New Order of the Latter Rain" Recycled?

This is a 2 page essay by a college student concerning the related Brownsville movement in Pensacola.

<http://www.pentecostal-issues.org/journal/brownsville/latrain.htm>

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