A Biographer Answers Critics of William Branham

My name is Owen Jorgensen. Some of you may know me as the author of *Supernatural: The Life of William Branham*. It took me twenty-five years to research and write that biography, so you know I've spent a lot of time thinking about Brother Branham's life. Here are some thoughts that might be helpful to those who might be questioning his ministry.

Brian Tracy, a famous motivational speaker, says of human nature: "Your beliefs act as a set of filters that screen out information that is inconsistent with them. You do not necessarily believe what you see, but rather you see what you already believe. You reject information that contradicts what you have already decided to believe, whether or not your beliefs, your prejudices, are based on fact or fantasy."

I agree. It takes effort to be honest and objective. The easy path for people is to filter out any facts that contradict their theories and then they will always feel they are right. I think this is one reason people reject the Message of the Hour.

One could go many directions with explaining William Branham's extraordinary life, including how he fits into dozens of scriptures. But here I would like to present one very basic idea. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "We know you are a teacher sent from God because no man could do these things unless God was with him." If that was true for Jesus, why wouldn't it be true for someone else who did similar miracles in Jesus' name?

Consider for a moment William Branham's miraculous gift of discernment. I will pick one particular case for this example because it happened to Minnie Peterson, who is a personal friend of mine. She was a stranger to Brother Branham when she stood before him in a prayer line in 1955. He told her seven things… (1) You are standing here for someone else; (2) It's your half-sister (3) who is ill with rheumatic fever; (4) And your daughter is sick (5) with a fever; (6) And your son is sick; (7) And your teeth need healing. (You can hear what Brother Branham said to Minnie on the sermon "Doctor Moses" 55-0114, E-55; at www.Branham.org)

Minnie Peterson told me that every one of those things was true. "But wait," the critic might say, "Branham was wrong when he started off by saying 'you are standing here for someone else,' because she wanted prayer for her own teeth." No, his discernment was correct. Minnie told me that her teeth had been hurting her earlier in the week, and she had prayed about it earlier in the week… but when she stood in the prayer line, she wasn't thinking about her teeth because she was so worried about her nine-year-old half-sister, who had suddenly become paralyzed with a high fever.

That's my first point... the critics don't know all the facts. No one knows *all* the facts. Some of the critics in Jesus' day said he couldn't be the Messiah because he came from Nazareth, and the Scripture said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. They made their judgment based on incomplete information.

But my second point is stronger. What are the odds of a man telling a stranger seven facts about her, and that man being correct on all seven? The statistical odds are so astronomical as to be practically zero. Brother Branham had never seen Minnie before, or heard of her. How did he know she had a

sister, let alone a half-sister? How did he know she had children? And how did he know she had prayed about her teeth earlier that week? But this did happen. He knew.

This, then, is the first important question a skeptic should ask about William Branham's unusual ministry—how did he do it? How did he know those 7 facts about Minnie Peterson's life? This is a serious question that calls for an honest query. What possible explanations could there be for such a fantastic thing to happen? Here are the choices as I see them…

Theory#1: He made a lucky guess.

My response: Once or twice, maybe, but he displayed this accurate discernment tens of thousands of times. So, the 'lucky guess' theory is statistically impossible.

Theory #2: He could read minds.

My response: Scientists have done many double-blind experiments trying to find out if there is such a thing as extra-sensory perception, and all such experiments have failed to prove ESP exists. Exactly how would mind reading work anyway—I mean, what would be the science behind it? No, Brother Branham couldn't read minds. No one can.

Theory #3: It was all a scam. He planted people.
My response: Over 17 years Brother Branham prayed for upward to 100,000 people personally all around the world; and in all that time no one ever came forward and said they were paid to lie, or anything like that. No, it was not a scam. He discerned people with prayer cards; he discerned people without prayer cards. Many times he would tell strangers their names and addresses. He had a number of different campaign managers over the years. None of them cried foul. There were no tricks involved. Remember that in the 1950's microphones were the size of hotdogs and the smallest speakers were the size of baseballs. You couldn't hide a speaker in your ear like you can today. As far as I can tell, that rules out the natural possibilities, leaving us with only supernatural theories to consider.

Theory #4: Perhaps he got his discernment directly from Satan.

My response: Brother Branham used his gift of discernment to raise the faith of people high enough to accept Jesus Christ as their healer. He gave all the credit to Jesus Christ. This is not something Satan would sanction. When Jesus was on earth, the demons that he came near cried out, asking him to leave them alone. There is no example in the Bible of a demon-inspired person using a gift of discernment in conjunction with divine healing. None. In contrast, Jesus definitely had the gift of discernment and the gift of divine healing. Therefore it would be an error to attribute Brother Branham's gift to Satanic forces, when there is no Bible references to support such a claim.

Theory #5: Brother Branham was one of the false prophets Jesus warned us against in Matthew 24:24… "beware of false prophets who will do great signs and wonders and will deceive many."

My Response: What Jesus said is true… beware, because false prophets are out there and they are busy deceiving. But notice, Jesus didn't tell us what those great signs and wonders would be. Why would those "signs and wonders" be "discernment and healing"—which are the same things Jesus did when he walked the earth? Why would "discernment and healing" be good 2000 years ago, but bad now? It wouldn't, of course. Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus Christ is same today as he was yesterday. So Brother Branham does not fit the false prophets of Matthew 24:24. Besides, if you read on to verse 27, it takes you right into the prophecy of the "coming of the Son of Man," which is Jesus in his prophetic form, coming in the end time as openly visible as lightning. William Branham's ministry was open to the world—and still is.
Nevertheless, some Christians say it was his doctrine that made him a false prophet. I suppose by this they mean his doctrine came from Satan.

My response: What did William Branham teach that would harm someone's soul? Answer: Nothing he taught would hurt anyone. He taught that people should repent and get baptized in Jesus name, and then God would give them the Holy Spirit, which is eternal life. (Hmm… that's the same thing Peter preached in Acts 2:38.) Brother Branham taught that we should love one another; and forgive each other; and do good things for everyone we can. (Are there any complaints about that?) Yes, he said some things that offended some people. So did Elijah, and Elisha, and John the Baptist; and so did Jesus, for that matter. Brother Branham is in good company there.

"Wait a minute," the critic says. "William Branham taught against the Holy Trinity. That right there is enough to make him a false prophet."

My response: That's not exactly true. Brother Branham believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but not as "one god in three persons" the way it is so often taught. (Look, even those people who believe the "one god in three persons" doctrine, even they admit that it doesn't make any sense.) Brother Branham taught that God the Father is a spirit (the Holy Spirit) and we can't know a spirit. So God became flesh and dwelt among us for a while. That was Jesus Christ, who we call the Son of God. (That is exactly what John chapter 1 says. No false doctrine there.) After Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected, he returned to the Father, and then He sent back His Spirit to indwell His children. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—just like the New Testament teaches. Besides, where in the Bible does it say you have to believe in "the Trinity" to be saved? It doesn't say that. The New Testament says you have to believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. And surprise… that's what Brother Branham taught also.

Theory #6: His gift was from God, but William Branham went wrong when he taught doctrine. If he had just prayed for the sick, he would have been all right.

My response: Have you thought that idea through? Are you saying that God was shortsighted and picked the wrong man to give such a monumental supernatural gift to? Or are you saying that God purposely gave William Branham this great supernatural gift knowing he would end up teaching wrong? What would be the purpose in that? Neither of these responses matches the omnipotent, omniscient God of the Bible. What you really might be saying is, "He didn't teach what I believe, so he must be a wrong." (Re-read Brian Tracy's comment about human nature.) Well, if we we're all correct in our doctrine, God

wouldn't have needed to send a prophet at all, would he? But Jesus said, "Elijah shall first come and restore all things," so apparently Elijah must show up sometime, somewhere, and do some restoring. If you were God, how would you vindicate such a modern day Elijah?
Theory #7: William Branham's amazing gift of discernment came from God for the purpose of vindicating him as a true servant of God.

My response: This is the only theory that matches all the facts: physical, spiritual and biblical. That's why I believe it this way. Brother Branham never said he had the spirit of Elijah—but he did point out many of the scriptures this end time Elijah would fulfill—and guess what, Brother Branham's life matched all those scriptures. I'll tell you at least one thing he obviously restored—he restored visible proof that Jesus Christ is real. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; even greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father." No one has fulfilled this scripture more fully than humble little William Branham.
For those who are skeptical, before you reject William Branham's ministry, give some serious consideration to this question: How did he do it? Don't skip this question. You need to settle on a honest, sensible answer. If you come to the same conclusion I came to, then your next question should be: What does this mean to me?
One of my favorite spots in researching Brother Branham's life was when I heard him say to a woman who was sitting in the audience during one of his 1957 meetings in Edmonton, Canada. "Here, there hangs that Light over a woman. She's suffering with high blood pressure. Stand to your feet. Her name is Mrs. Fishbrook. You're from this city. You live on 125th Street. The number of your house is 13104. That's exactly right. If that's right, raise your hand. All right, go home. You're healed, lady. Jesus Christ makes you well." (God Projecting His Love, 57-0806, E-52)

Now, what are the statistical odds of William Branham guessing that?

Owen Jorgensen, 2014
Author of
Supernatural: The Life of William Branham
www.supernaturalchristianbooks.com

