

Great Healing Revivalists - How God's Power Came.

by Andrew Strom.

Smith Wigglesworth, John G. Lake, Maria Woodworth- Etter, John Alexander Dowie and others, plus the ENIGMA OF WILLIAM BRANHAM...

The Greek words for "BE FILLED with the Holy Spirit" (Eph 5:18), should be translated, "BE BEING FILLED with the Holy Spirit". In other words, we are to be constantly seeking God so that we will become more and more full of His Holy Spirit. Some people believe that we Christians only receive one infilling of God's Spirit in our lifetime. Such people may be sincere, but they are **SINCERELY WRONG**. This article is about men and women of God who were not satisfied with an initial token of God's grace or presence in their lives. They were hungry for more, and in their desperation for greater and greater depths in God, they smashed through every barrier and overthrew every obstacle to experience an ever-greater measure of God's holy presence and glory,- and to gain an anointing the like of which has rarely been seen since the days of the apostles.

It was **MORE OF JESUS** that they were hungering after, and He did not disappoint them, though the road was often narrow and winding. It was a path that few cared to travel. But it was simply not enough to be Spirit-baptized and speaking in tongues. They had to be **ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH**, - baptized with the Holy Spirit **AND WITH FIRE**. And they had to see God glorified in their day, in the most profound way possible. They could not bear to live any longer, the way things were. Where was the power, where was the glory of apostolic days? They took it upon themselves, and were almost driven onward by God - to find out. And so, with fastings and prayer, with agonizing travail and wrestlings such as Jacob had with God, with ridding their lives not only of their sins, but of their fleshly, soulish "WAYS" also - the ways of man's strength and man's power,- they battled on, right into the very throne-room of God. And by the time they got there they were truly broken and humbled men and women, true possessors of 'clean hands and a pure heart'. And He met them there in the most profound way. Tell me, friend, do you hunger and thirst after more of God? Is it your one desire to love Him with **ALL** your heart and **ALL** your mind and **ALL** your soul and **ALL** your strength? And do you desire to see Him glorified on the earth to the highest possible degree? "And you shall seek me, and find me, **WHEN YOU SHALL SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART**" (Jer 29:13).

SMITH WIGGLESWORTH

Smith Wigglesworth was without doubt one of the most anointed men of God that has lived in recent times. He was known as the Apostle of Faith, and if anyone deserved to be described as "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost", it was him. He lived and walked continually in the presence of God. And the miracles that accompanied his ministry were of the sort that have seldom been seen since the days of the apostles. People born blind and deaf, cripples - twisted and deformed by disease, others on death's door with cancer or sickness of every kind,- all were healed by the mighty power of God. Even the dead were raised.

Born in 1859 into poverty, Smith Wigglesworth was converted by the Methodists at eight years of age. Even then, he was hungry for God and hungry for souls. He was in the choir of the local Episcopal church. "When most of the boys in the choir were twelve years of age they had to be confirmed by the bishop. I was not twelve, but between nine and ten, when the bishop laid his hands on me. I can remember that as he imposed his hands I had a similar experience to the one I had forty years later when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. My whole body was filled with the consciousness of God's presence, a consciousness that remained with me for days. After the confirmation service all the other boys were swearing and quarreling, and I wondered what had made the difference between them and me." (Stanley Frodsham, 'Smith Wigglesworth, Apostle of Faith', pg 13. -Most of the following quotes are also taken from this excellent book).

Later, Wigglesworth was fully-immersed in water by the Baptists. But please remember that all of his early years of ministry and seeking God came well before the 'Azusa Street' Revival and the early Pentecostal movement. Smith had a hunger after God, and he experienced many breakthroughs into new levels of anointing even well before he experienced the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. He was already renowned for his healing ministry, and had seen God move in great power, even well before the new Pentecostal experience was being talked about. Unlike us today, who basically begin with Baptism in the Spirit as our first real anointing, for Smith this was the culmination of years of seeking and hungering after God, and so it was much closer to a real New Testament endowment of "power from on high".

Smith Wigglesworth: "I had the grounding in Bible teaching among the Plymouth Brethren. I marched under the blood and fire banner of the Salvation Army, learning to win souls in the open air. I received the second blessing of sanctification and a clean heart under the teaching of Reader Harris and the Pentecostal League. I claimed the gift of the Holy Spirit by faith as I waited ten days before the Lord. But in Sunderland, in 1907, I knelt before God and had an Acts 2:4 experience..." (Pg 119). He described this experience as follows: "She [Mrs Boddy, a minister's wife] laid her hands on me and then had to go out of the room. The fire fell. It was a wonderful time as I was there with God alone. He bathed me in power. I was conscience of the cleansing of the precious blood, and I cried out: 'Clean! Clean! Clean!' I was filled with the joy of the consciousness of the cleansing. I was given a vision in which I saw the Lord Jesus Christ. I beheld the empty cross, and I saw Him exalted at the right hand of God the Father. I could speak no longer in English, but I began to praise Him in other tongues as the Spirit of God gave me utterance. I knew then, although I might have received anointings previously, that now, at last, I had received the real Baptism in the Holy Spirit as they received on the day of Pentecost." (Pg 44).

After this experience, there was no stopping Smith Wigglesworth. He was a flame for God, and the fire fell wherever he went. He said: "I believe God's ministers are to be flames of fire. Nothing less than flames. Nothing less than mighty instruments, with burning messages, with hearts full of love. They must have a **DEPTH OF CONSECRATION**, that God has taken full charge of the body, and it exists only that it may manifest the Glory of God. A Baptism into death in which the person is purified and

energized..." He was certainly possessor of an audacity, a daring, a boldness the like of which has rarely been seen in Christendom in modern times. It was not uncommon for him to announce in his meetings: "Every sermon that Christ preached was prefaced by a model miracle. We are going to follow His example. The first person in this large audience that stands up, whatever his or her sickness, I'll pray for that one and God will deliver him or her." And the first person to stand, even if they were the most deformed cripple, would be healed!

On another typical occasion, a man came forward for prayer for stomach pain, and, commanding the pain to be gone, Wigglesworth punched the man in the stomach so hard that he was sent half-way across the room (completely healed)! This kind of thing happened more than once. Wigglesworth believed in COMMANDING the sick to be healed in Jesus' name. His was an aggressive, holy faith. He was a "violent" man, taking ground from the devil by force. And yet he was also a man of great compassion, as well as of great authority. The devil certainly felt it when Smith Wigglesworth hit town!

A number of people were also raised literally from the dead under Smith's ministry. Here is his own account of one occasion: "My friend said, 'She is dead.' He was scared. I have never seen a man so frightened in my life. 'What shall I do?' he asked. You may think that what I did was absurd, but I reached over into the bed and pulled her out. I carried her across the room, stood her against the wall and held her up, as she was absolutely dead. I looked into her face and said, 'In the name of Jesus I rebuke this death.' From the crown of her head to the soles of her feet her whole body began to tremble. 'In the name of Jesus, I command you to walk,' I said. I repeated, 'In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, walk!' and she walked." (Pg 59). Not only was this woman raised from the dead, but she was instantly healed from a terrible illness also. She began to testify to people of her death experience and restoration. It has been recorded that Smith Wigglesworth raised 23 people from the dead in total, over the years of his ministry.

One time when Smith was waiting at a bus-stop, a woman was having trouble getting her small dog, which had followed her, to go home. First she tried sweet-talking it, and asking it to please go home. But after awhile of trying this to no avail, the woman suddenly stamped her foot and said severely: 'Go home at once!' The dog immediately took off home, with its tail between its legs. 'That's how you have to treat the devil', said Wigglesworth, loudly enough for all those waiting at the bus-stop to hear. And this was his attitude toward the devil, every moment of every waking day. He literally travelled the world in the 1920's and 1930's, and thousands were saved and healed everywhere he went. Often he would arrive in a place almost unknown and unheralded, but within days there would be thousands thronging to hear, the power of God demonstrated in his meetings was so great. God was truly glorified everywhere he went.

He was a man who walked and lived in the very presence of God. And yet, in many ways he was a very natural, down-to-earth man. And neither was he afraid of issuing the odd stern rebuke. His object was to be in constant, unbroken communion with the Father. He had spent hours and days fervently seeking God in his early years, but later, "Although his life was a combination of incessant prayer and praise, and every word and work was an act of worship, he was not given to protracted periods of fasting and prayer." (Pg 122). Instead, he had learned the secret of being in continuous, intimate communion with God (sometimes withdrawing quietly into himself for this purpose), even when he was in a crowd of people. He walked by faith, and he was "in the Spirit" at all times. This was one vital secret to his success. He said, "There are two sides to this Baptism: The first is, you possess the Spirit; The second is that the Spirit possesses you." (See 'The Life of Smith Wigglesworth' by Jack Hywel-Davies). He had counted the cost, and everything was God's. He was a man who truly understood GODLY AUTHORITY, and he WALKED in it by faith. He said, "'Be filled with the Spirit,' i.e., be CRAMMED with the Spirit, so filled that there will be no room left for anything else." That was the way he lived. Full of audacity, full of daring, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

On one occasion, he recalled, "I was travelling to Cardiff in South Wales. I had been much in prayer on the journey. The carriage was full of people whom I knew to be unsaved, but as there was so much talking and joking I could not get in a word for my Master. As the train was nearing the station, I thought I would wash my hands... and as I returned to the carriage, a man jumped up and said, 'Sir, you convince me of sin,' and fell on his knees there and then. Soon the whole carriage of people were crying out the same way. They said, 'Who are you? What are you? You convince us all of sin'..." (Stanley Frodsham, 'Smith Wigglesworth, Apostle of Faith', pg 80). This episode reminds me very much of another bold, forthright and anointed evangelist - Charles G. Finney, who had found after a mighty Baptism of the Holy Spirit some years before, that even passing comments that he made pierced people to the heart with conviction of sin. He had gone on to become one of the greatest Revivalists of all time. (He died in 1875).

Smith Wigglesworth placed great emphasis on purity and holiness, like all true Revivalists. He said, "You must every day make higher ground. You must deny yourself to make progress with God. You must refuse everything that is not pure and holy. God wants you pure in heart. He wants you to have an intense desire after holiness... Two things will get you to leap out of yourselves into the promises of God today. One is purity, and the other is FAITH, which is kindled more and more BY PURITY." (Pg 125). This one statement contains what is probably the key secret to Smith Wigglesworth's outstanding success in God. And it is obviously a key that is well worth remembering for us also. Another point to remember is that Smith was very aware of the dangers of money, and guarded himself carefully against the possibility of covetousness entering in. He was truly beyond reproach in this area also.

It is my belief that Smith Wigglesworth was a kind of direct "forerunner" of the kind of ministries that are about to arise in our day. I believe that the coming apostolic ministries, who will be bearers of true Revival in these last days, will combine the daring, miracle-working faith of a Smith Wigglesworth with the deeply convicting 'repentance' preaching of a Charles Finney. And they will move under a mighty anointing that combines the best of both of these types of ministries. What glorious days these will be! Smith Wigglesworth himself died in 1946 at the ripe old age of 87, a flame of God to the very end. May he be an example to us all.

JOHN G. LAKE

John G. Lake was known as God's "Apostle to Africa". Born in Canada in 1870, his family soon relocated to the United States, where he grew up. His healing and preaching ministry spanned the years 1898 (when he saw his wife instantly healed under the ministry of John Alexander Dowie) until his death in 1935. In 1908, God sent him to Africa, where his anointed miracle ministry resulted in what has been described as "the most extensive and powerful missionary movement in all Africa." As Gordon Lindsay wrote, "during that time he spent five history-making years in South Africa, engaged in a ministry which in some respects rivalled that of the Early Church." Upon his return to America, Lake established a ministry in Spokane, Washington which resulted in no less than 100,000 astounding miracles of healing within the space of five or six years. He then established a similar work in Portland, Oregon, which also attracted widespread attention.

Like Smith Wigglesworth, John G. Lake had already experienced mighty breakthroughs, powerful anointings and a real calling from God for many years before Azusa Street and the Pentecostal Revival. The following is a condensed account of the spiritual hunger and preparation that Lake was taken through by God, near the beginning of the most anointed period of his ministry. (Taken from the book, 'John G. Lake - Apostle to Africa', compiled by Gordon Lindsay, and told in Lake's own words):

"Eight years passed after God revealed Jesus the Healer to me. I had been practicing the ministry of healing. During that eight years every answer to prayer, every miraculous touch of God, every response of my own soul to the Spirit had created within me a more intense longing for an intimacy and a consciousness of God, like I felt the disciples of Jesus and the primitive church had possessed... Shortly after my entrance into the ministry of healing, while attending a service where the necessity for the Baptism of the Spirit was presented, as I knelt in prayer and reconsecration to God, an anointing of the Spirit came upon me. Waves of Holy Glory passed through my being, and I was lifted into a new realm of God's presence and power. After this, answers to prayer were frequent and miracles of healing occurred from time to time. I felt myself on the borderland of a great spiritual realm, but was unable to enter in fully, so my nature was not satisfied with the attainment..." (Pg 16).

"Hundreds, and hundreds of people were healed by the power of God during these ten years. But at the end of that ten years, I believe I was the hungriest man for God that ever lived. There was such a hunger for God that as I left my offices in Chicago, and walked down the street, my soul would break out, and I would cry, 'Oh God!' I have had people stop and look at me, and wonder. It was the yearning passion of my soul, asking for God in a greater measure than I knew. But my friends would say, 'Mr. Lake, you have a beautiful Baptism of the Holy Ghost.' Yes, it was nice as far as it went, but it was not answering the cry of my heart. I was growing up into a larger understanding of God, and my own soul's need. My soul was demanding a greater entrance into God, His love, Presence, and Power. And then one day an old man strolled into my office, sat down, and in the next half hour, he revealed more of the knowledge of God to my soul than I had ever known before. When he left I said, '... God, if that is what the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues does, I am going to possess it.' Oh the wonder of God, that was then revealed to my heart!..."

"Finally I was led to set aside certain hours of the day that I dedicated to God, as times of meditation, and prayer. Thus a number of months passed, until one morning as I knelt praying, the Spirit of the Lord spoke within my spirit, and said, "Be patient until autumn." My heart rejoiced in this encouragement and I continued my practice of meditation and prayer as formerly. It became easy for me to detach myself from the course of life, so that while my hands and mind were engaged in the common affairs of every day, my spirit maintained its attitude of communion with God... I said, 'God, if you will baptize me in the Holy Spirit, and give me the power of God, nothing shall be permitted to stand before me and a hundred-fold obedience.'

"I prayed for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for nine months, and if a man ever prayed honestly, and sincerely in the faith, I did. Finally one day I was ready to throw up my hands, and quit. I said, 'Lord, it may be for others, but it is not for me. You just cannot give it to me.' I did not blame God. One night a gentleman by the name of Pierce said, 'Mr. Lake, I have been wishing for a long time you would come over, and we would spend a night in prayer together. We have been praying for the Baptism for a whole year and there is not one of us baptized yet. Brother, I do not believe that you are either, so we can pray for one another.' I was so hungry to pray, so I went with all intentions of praying for the rest, but I had not been praying five minutes until the light of God began to shine around me, I found myself in a center of an arc of light ten feet in diameter, the whitest light in all the universe. So white! Oh how it spoke of purity. The remembrance of that whiteness, that wonderful whiteness, has been the ideal that has stood before my soul, of the purity of the nature of God ever since.

"Then a Voice began to talk to me out of that light. There was no form. And the Voice began to remind me of this incident, and that incident of disobedience to my parents, from a child; of my obstinacy, and dozens of instances when God brought me up to the line of absolutely putting my body, soul, and spirit upon the altar forever. I had my body upon the altar for ten years, and I had been a minister of the Gospel. But when the Lord comes, He opens to the soul the depths that have never been touched in your life. Do you know that after I was baptized in the Holy Ghost, things opened up in the depths of my nature that had remained untouched in all my life, and that which was shadowy, distant, and hazy became real. God got up close and let His light shine into me.

"Shortly after this experience, one afternoon a brother minister called, and invited me to accompany him to visit a lady who was sick. Arriving at the home we found the lady in a wheel chair. All her joints were set with inflammatory rheumatism. She had been in the condition for ten years... While my friend was conversing with her, preparing her to be prayed with, that she might be healed, I sat in a deep chair on the opposite side of a large room. My soul was crying out to God in a yearning too deep for words, when suddenly it seemed to me, that I had passed under a shower of warm tropical rain, which was not falling upon me, but through me. My spirit, and soul and body under this influence soothed into such a deep still calm, as I had never known. My brain, which had always been so active, became perfectly still. An awe of the presence of God settled over me. I knew it was God.

"Some moments passed; I do not know how many. The Spirit said, 'I have heard your prayers, I have seen your tears. You are now Baptized in the Holy Spirit.' Then currents of power began to rush through my being from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. The shocks of power increased in rapidity, and voltage. As these currents of power would pass through me, they

seemed to come upon my head, rush through my body, and through my feet into the floor... Even at this late date, the awe of that hour rests upon my soul. My experience has truly been as Jesus said that He shall be within you 'a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.' That never-ceasing fountain has flowed through my spirit, soul, and body day, and night, bringing salvation, and healing, and the Baptism of the Spirit in the power of God to multitudes.

"Shortly after my Baptism in the Holy Spirit, a working of the Spirit commenced in me, that seemed to have for its purpose the revelation of the nature of Jesus Christ to me and in me. Through this tuition and remolding of the Spirit a great tenderness for mankind was to awaken in my soul. I saw mankind through new eyes. They seemed to me as wandering sheep, having strayed far, in the midst of confusion, groping and wandering hither and thither. They had no definite aim and did not seem to understand what the difficulty was or how to return to God. The desire to proclaim the message of Christ, and demonstrate His power to save and bless, grew in my soul until my life was swayed by this overwhelming passion." (Pg 16-20).

"I found that my life began to manifest in the varied range of the gifts of the Spirit. I spoke in tongues by the power of God, and God flowed through me with a new force. Healings were of a more powerful order. Oh, God lived in me; God manifested in me; God spoke through me. My spirit was energized. I had a new comprehension of God's will, a new discernment of spirit, and a new revelation of God in me.

"Then a new wonder manifested. My nature became so sensitized, that I could lay hands on any man, or woman, and tell what organ was diseased, and to what extent, and all about it. I tested it. I went into hospitals where physicians could not diagnose a case, touched a patient, and instantly I knew the organ that was diseased, its extent, condition, and location. And one day it passed away. A child plays with a toy, and his joy is so wonderful, he sometimes forgets to eat."

Before obeying the call into full-time ministry, Lake felt the need to dispose of his very successful business interests. He sold everything, giving the money to God's work, and embarked on full-time ministry with a heart full of the fire of God. Soon afterward, when he was ministering in a city in Northern Illinois, God spoke to him clearly and distinctly: "Go to Indianapolis. Prepare for winter campaign. Get a large hall. In the Spring you will go to Africa."

John G. Lake continues: "One morning when I came down to breakfast, I found my appetite had disappeared. I could not eat. I went about my work as usual. At dinner I had no desire to eat, and no more in the evening. This went on till the third day. But toward the evening of the third day, an overwhelming desire to pray took possession of me. I wanted only to be alone to pray. Prayer flowed from my soul like a stream. I could not cease praying. As soon as it was possible to get to a place of seclusion, I would kneel to pour out my heart to God for hours. Whatever I was doing, that stream of prayer continued flowing from my soul ... On the night of the sixth day of this fast, that the Lord had laid on me, while in the act of washing my hands, the Spirit said, 'How long have you been praying to cast out demons?' and I replied, 'Lord a long time.' And the Spirit said, 'From henceforth, thou shalt cast out demons.' I arose and praised God." (Pg 21). An opportunity to test this newly-given anointing to cast out demons came the following Sunday, when a violently insane man was brought to Lake, who commanded the demon to come out of him in Jesus' name. The man was instantly delivered, and two days later was released from the institution that he had been confined in.

In April 1908, Lake and his family left for South Africa. Though they had no visible means of support, they were miraculously provided for every step of the way. And thus began a tremendous Revival, with mighty healings, miracles and deliverances, which was to profoundly impact the African continent for years to come, even long after Lake was gone. In 1913, following the tragic death of his wife, Lake returned to America, but by this time the torch had also been passed on to Elias Letwaba and others in Africa, and the work went on there, in great power. Lake continued his ministry in North America until his death in 1935, and like Smith Wigglesworth, he fought an outstanding fight and ran a great race, right to the very end.

W.V. GRANT, SR.

A number of great healing evangelists have been led by God to "fast and pray" for quite long periods in order to break through into greater realms of anointing and communion with God. W.V. Grant Sr, who was a mightily used and anointed man of God from earlier this century, was one such evangelist. Before coming into his full ministry anointing, he was one who spent all his spare time with Jesus in the secret place. This man constantly sought God, and fasted on the weekends. He read many books of God's servants in the past and studied his Bible day and night. He would pray for a couple of days until he got answers. He would not leave his prayer room until he got an answer from God. This and Christian work was virtually his lifestyle for fourteen years.

He had already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit fourteen years earlier, and he spoke in tongues. "Yet, I felt like I had a bow without an arrow, a car without a battery, or a boat without a paddle. I read how Peter did it, but I could not do it. I had the highway map. I was on the right road, but on the wrong side." (W.V. Grant, 'Searching for the Supernatural', pg 6). "I prayed around the altar. I fasted three days at a time. I testified about a supernatural God. I told people that I had the Holy Ghost. I spoke in tongues to prove it. All the time my heart was crying out, Where are all the miracles the Bible tells us about?" (Pg 2).

"I was a director over 13 churches... I saw people saved, filled with the Holy Ghost with other tongues. I saw a few people healed. I preached that we had the Pentecostal power. But where were the results we saw in the early church after Pentecost?... I read about 200 books written by Godly men. I read every word in the Pentecostal Evangel for years... After I fasted three days I still felt empty. That longing surely can be satisfied in some way? Who was putting that longing and searching in my soul?" (Pg 3).

"What was I waiting for? Nothing else mattered to me. I wanted to see His Glory. I wanted to see His Miracles. I wanted to see the dead raised. I wanted to see the devils cast out. I wanted to see the deaf, blind, and the mute made whole. Did not God say in the last days the lame man would leap as a hart, the tongue of the dumb would sing, and the eyes of the blind would be opened? (Isaiah 35:5)... John said in Luke 3:16, 'He shall Baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with FIRE'... It was fourteen years after I received the Holy Ghost and tongues before I received the Holy Ghost and power." (Pg 13).

"If God has called you into a full time ministry of healing the sick and casting out devils He usually gives you time to give yourselves to fasting and prayer... Then one night to my surprise the Lord appeared to me and told me to go on a seven day fast,

which I was willing to do. After the fast was over the Lord appeared to me. I heard the angels singing a song I had never heard. I wrote it down. It was beautiful! It was like heaven. Then an angel just above my head spoke these words, 'In My name shall ye cast out devils, ye shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' As I began to eat I felt something like an electric current run out at the ends of my fingers and down to the bottom of my feet. The fire of God was all through my body!" (W.V. Grant Sr, 'Must I Fast for Forty Days', pg's 20, 36, 37):-

"But on the last day just about break of day, the Holy Spirit began to speak to me. Mark 16:17-18 - 'These signs shall follow them that believe. In My name shall ye cast out devils, they shall take up serpents, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover'... I got up, and walked, and my feet were burning like they were connected to a high voltage wire. The Holy Spirit, and Fire was running all through my whole body from my head to my toes. It seemed like all my strength had been drained out of me, and the strength of Christ had taken its place. For several years since, devils have been cast out, and people healed.

"I had the Holy Spirit for years, but it seemed that now, I was not only filled, but baptized with zeal, compassion, and with the divine nature of Jesus, with virtue, and with the fire... If you feel like the Lord has called you into a special ministry of casting out devils, then remember this: There are many more things which are just as necessary as fasting. Fasting within itself will not be sufficient... But when I was called to fast, it was just as real as being called to preach. I was conscious of the fast, that it was the Lord's doing and not my own... It takes a longer fast for one man to be brought to the place where he is yielded to the Lord enough to receive certain gifts in his life than it does for other men. It took a certain amount of days for me to fast and to become so yielded to the Lord; it seemed that all my strength left my body, and the Lord's strength came into its place! Then I felt the virtue and divine nature, and the fire of the Holy Ghost dwelling in my body, which gave me power to meet devils and to cast them out.

"But I still have to be led by the Lord when and how to do it. It is not myself that doeth the works but the Father that dwelleth in me. God will not trust you with a ministry if you do not know the leading of the Spirit. I have talked personally to several evangelists whom God has called into a supernatural ministry. None of them went on forty day fasts without any food. Since God has given other people ministries of deliverance without a long fast you can take courage and believe for a ministry without fasting forty days..."

EVER-GROWING FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In Acts 2:1-4, we read of the tremendous initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon 120 of Jesus' followers at Pentecost. However, soon afterward we also read of the gathering of believers in Jerusalem (now numbering in the thousands), where they prayed for boldness and SIGNS AND WONDERS, that God might be truly glorified (Acts 4:29-30). And we read that, "When they had prayed, the place was SHAKEN where they were assembled together. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (v 31). There had already been one mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but now they received another, just when they needed it most, and now more than ever, SIGNS, MIRACLES AND WONDERS followed them wherever they went.

Jesus said to His disciples: "HEAL THE SICK, CLEANSE THE LEPERS, RAISE THE DEAD, CAST OUT DEVILS: freely you have received, freely give" (Mt 10:7-8). And He also told them, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY" (Lk 10:19). "He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE shall he do." (Jn 14:12).

As the Scriptures and also Revival history clearly show, a man or woman of God must often spend years in a "wilderness" of obscurity before they truly come into their ministry. This will often be a place of barrenness, "WAITING" and preparation where they must overcome and endure - all the while being molded and trained by God - if they are ever to reach their godly potential in anointing and empowerment from 'on high'. While others concentrate on their careers, or busy themselves with building tidy little ministries along the usual predictable lines (which often need little of God to succeed), these men and women are called away into the secret place with God, from whence they will emerge broken but fired with an unshakeable resolve, humbled but never cast down. There have always been many called, but few chosen. As the apostle Paul wrote: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I PRESS toward the mark for the PRIZE of the HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS." (Philipp 3:13-14). God often prepares such vessels for many years, largely hidden from view, before unleashing them upon the world. And then suddenly they appear, as if from nowhere, to bring glory to their God, to rout the devil in His name, and to raise His standard in the earth once again. From such 'mighty men and women of valour', true Revivals are born.

MARIA WOODWORTH-ETTER

Born in 1844, Maria Woodworth-Etter lived in Lisbon, Ohio. God called her to preach at a time when people did not believe that women should preach. In fact, at this time women were not even allowed to vote. She saw the death of her little children one by one until she decided to obey Jesus Christ and go and preach the Gospel. It has been recorded that she had one of the most powerful ministries and anointings - with astounding healings, miracles and wonders - that has ever been documented in the history of the church.

Reports state that she would come into a town after sleeping in a tent, and within days there would be approximately 20,000 people in her meetings. At times, God would give people working in the fields in a fifty-mile radius around her meetings visions of heaven and hell, and they would fall to the ground under tremendous conviction. It was like a "blanket" anointing that would come down upon the whole area. It has been reported that for whole blocks around her meetings, people would be falling to the ground and repenting.

The following extracts are taken from the book, 'A Diary of Signs and Times' by Maria Woodworth-Etter:

"At one time I was praying for the salvation of sinners, and the Saviour appeared on the cross by me, and talked with me; I laid my hand on his mangled body, and looked up in his smiling face. Another time I was meditating upon the love of God in giving his only Son to die for sinners, and of the beautiful home he was preparing for those who love him, and I seemed to float away, and was set down in the Beautiful City. Oh, the glorious sight that met my view can never be expressed by mortal tongue!" (Pg 25).

"In all my sickness and trouble the ministers and people came from the different churches in the town and had a prayer-meeting in my room. They prayed in the churches for my recovery. I was willing to die and leave my little girl and boy, feeling that God would care for them, but the work God was calling me to do loomed up before me. All these years God had been preparing me - for I was not willing. I felt like a worm in his sight. I promised God that if he would restore my health, and prepare me, and show me the work, I would try to do it; I began to get better immediately.

"I was very timid, and bound as with chains in a man-fearing spirit. When I arose to testify I trembled like a leaf, and began to make excuses - O God, send someone else! Then the Lord in a vision caused me to see the bottomless pit open in all its horror and woe. There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. It was surrounded by a great multitude of people who seemed unconscious of their danger, and without a moments warning they would tumble into this awful place. I was above the people on a narrow plank-walk, which wound up toward heaven; and I was exhorting and pleading with the people to come upon the plank and escape that awful place. Several started. There was a beautiful bright light above me, and I was encouraging them to follow that light and they would go straight to heaven.

"In all these trials God was preparing me and opening the way for the great battle against the enemy of souls and now the great desire of my heart was to work for Jesus. I longed to win a star for the Savior's crown. Sometimes when the Spirit of God was striving and calling so plainly, I would yield and say, 'Yes, Lord; I will go.' The glory of God came upon me like a cloud, and I seemed to be carried away hundreds of miles and set down in a field of wheat, where the sheaves were falling all around me. I was filled with zeal and power, and felt as if I could stand before the whole world and plead with dying sinners. It seemed to me that I must leave all and go at once. Then Satan would come in like a flood and say, 'You would look nice preaching, being a gazing-stock for the people to make sport of. You know you could not do it.' Then I would think of my weakness and say, 'No; of course I cannot do it.' Then I would be in darkness and despair. I wanted to run away from God, or I wished I could die; but when I began to look at the matter in this way, that God knew all about me, and was able and willing to qualify me for the work, I asked Him to qualify me for the work. I ASKED HIM TO QUALIFY ME.

"I want the reader to understand, that at this time I had a good experience, a pure heart, was full of the love of God, but was not qualified for God's work. I knew that I was but a worm. God would have to take a worm to thresh a mountain. Then I asked God to give me the power he gave the Gallilean fishermen - to anoint me for service. I came like a child asking for bread. I looked for it... God did not disappoint me. The power of the Holy ghost came down like a cloud. It was brighter than the sun. I was covered and, wrapped in it. I was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and Fire, and power, which has never left me. There was liquid fire, and the angels were all around me in fire and glory."

"I thought I would go through a course of study and prepare for the work, thinking the Lord would make my husband and people willing in some way to let me go out and work. But I could not get my mind fixed on my study. Everything seemed empty and vacant, and I was restless and uneasy... The dear Saviour stood by me one night in a vision and talked face to face with me, and asked what I was doing on earth. I felt condemned, and said, 'Lord, I am going to work in thy vineyard.' The Lord said, 'When?' and I answered, 'When I get prepared for the work.' Then the Lord said to me, 'Don't you know that while you are getting ready, souls are perishing? Go now, and I will be with you.'

"I told Him that I could not talk to the people; I did not know what to say, and they would not listen to me. Jesus said, 'You can tell the people what the Lord has done for your soul; tell of the glory of God and the love of Jesus. Tell sinners to repent and prepare for death and the judgment, and I will be with you.' Still I made one excuse after another, and Jesus would answer, 'Go, and I will be with you'... Then Jesus said again, 'Go, and I will be with you.' I cried, 'Lord, I will go. Where shall I go?' And Jesus said, 'Go here, go there, wherever souls are perishing.' Praise the Lord for his wonderful goodness in revealing his word and will in such a wonderful way, to such a poor weak worm of the dust. I saw more in that vision than I could have learned in years of hard study. Praise His Holy Name. I saw that I must not depend on anything that I could do, but to look to Him for strength and wisdom." (Pg. 26-29).

JAMES DUNN

James Dunn was another mightily-anointed evangelist from earlier this century. It has been reported that he had an anointing of similar power to the famous William Branham, incredible though this may seem. Dunn had been desperately seeking more of God and his giftings for some time, when the Holy Spirit told him to pray to be FILLED WITH JESUS and he would also receive the gifts. Jesus spoke to him: 'Don't pray for the gifts. Pray to be more like Me.'

"I pastored the Pentecostal Holiness church there for two years before this ministry came to me. I had been fasting, and praying, and I had been reminding God. I believe God wants us to remind Him about the promises He has made to us, to call his attention to them. So I was reminding God that when I was employed in a responsible position for the government, we gave our men the best tools on earth possible to work with, so that they could do their job right. I told God that if we as mere human beings could give good tools to our laborers, how much better tools could He give us to work for the Kingdom of Christ. I continued praying in that way, and begging God for the gifts. Just imagine! I would cry: the tears rolling down my face. I would fast until the preachers in Princeton remarked that my clothes hung on me like a sack, because I had lost so much weight. They thought that the clothes had belonged to someone else. I don't know how many pounds I did lose. I was way down in weight.

"One day I was just in a big way of praying; tears streaming down my face as I was alone before God. I was asking Him again to give me the gifts of the Spirit. A voice spoke to me and said, 'Just a minute.' And I stopped, and a voice spoke again, and said, 'DON'T BEG FOR THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, PRAY TO BE MORE LIKE ME.' I said, 'Why Jesus, I had never thought of it in that manner, what do you mean, pray to be more like you?' And the voice said to me, 'THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT WILL OPERATE IN YOUR LIFE, IF YOU ARE FULL OF JESUS.' So I began to pray that I would be just exactly like Jesus.

"It wasn't long after that my wife saw a golden ball floating down the hall, and it floated into the door, and just as she woke me up, it disappeared. Shortly after that, one night I was in a state of prayer, my wife was asleep, it was about 11:00 o'clock. I said, 'God, I am ready to die if it takes that, to have a better ministry of Jesus Christ! I am not able to do the job properly!'" (W.V. Grant Sr, 'Gifts of the Spirit in the Home', Pg. 24-25: 'Experience of Rev. James Dunn of Princeton, West Virginia').

"Then one night while I was lying in bed and my wife was asleep, something happened. I was meditating on the glories and graciousness of God, and upon the things I needed from Him, and all at once, the Great Presence of God began to flood into the room. He came in such a super-natural way that the room was filled with His Glory. A great feeling of ecstasy and glory swept over me, and saturated my very body, mind, and soul. I began to get afraid, because when you get that close to God, something happens to you. I began to draw back from this Wonderful Force, and when I did it left. Then I realized I had made a mistake in drawing back. The next few days, I began to pray as I had never prayed. In about 3 or 4 nights I was lying in the bed again and I was meditating and praising the Lord, and asking Him for help and power in my life. All at once, this great feeling began to come into the room again.

"The very room and atmosphere lighted up. There didn't seem to be any room for me there any longer, because God so completely filled the place. As I lay there, I lost all movement of my body other than my eyes. The Great Force of God moved down across my bed, and overshadowed me, and I felt the strangest, and most wonderful feeling. From my very fingertips, it began to move into my hands, and up my arms. I felt as if I were holding 220 volts in each hand, and it began to surge back and forth through my body. Then and there in that room, while this was taking place the old me was leaving, and the new me was coming in.

"From that night on my life was different. Many remarked how completely my ministry had changed. I had a positive message - a message, that had fire in it. God talked to me, and told me that if I would preach the message of deliverance, He would heal the sick. He would give me the Power to cast out devils. As I listened to this COMMISSION from the Lord, His power surged through me, and my arm happened to touch my wife's body, and it almost caused her to jump completely out of the bed. That night God began doing things. He revealed to me the people's conditions and diseases through the mighty Spirit of discernment. I found I was a different individual. God showed me things that I thought were impossible for a person to see or understand. He would show me the individual that was suffering, what they had, and He would direct me to them. After I had prayed for them, they would be healed of every disease.

"Now this particular period is the three different times that angels appeared unto me to do the Lord's bidding. When I was in a revival, after I had gone on the evangelistic field, after my call into this particular type of ministry... I was taken up by the Lord into a high place, and I looked out across a deep blue, beautiful sea of water. I saw two great eagles flying toward me in the distance, and as they approached closer, I marveled at their size. Finally they got close to me and they were flying so fast, I said, 'My, I didn't think anything could fly that fast. Why those aren't eagles, those are angels of God. They got close to me, and began to dive like two great airplanes, one after the other. They just folded their wings, and dived down, down, down toward that blue sea. Oh, it was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. They dived into this sea to catch fish there. A voice spoke to me, and said these were the angels that would go with me into the world, into all portions of the world, to gather the fish (or to gather men), that he would make me a fisher of men, and angels would help me; they would protect me, and keep the evil one from me; they would help me win the souls of men for Jesus Christ's Kingdom. Many times in our meetings across the nation people have seen these angels beside me.'" (James Dunn, Sign Gift Ministry' by W.V. Grant Sr).

James Dunn was one of those men of God (a little different from Smith Wigglesworth) who believed in the absolute necessity of regular FASTING for the continued effectiveness of his ministry: "Fasting keeps the spirit strong and tends to keep the spirit, and give it control over the body. When a person fasts, and brings their body into travail before God, their spirit becomes stronger, and in harmony with God. So I find that in fasting, it gives me greater power to pray with people, or for people's diseases. It gives me greater power with God to preach the word, and the revivals are a greater success. I feel that if a man should ever quit fasting, he is losing out in his ministry, and in his life for God. 'When you are weak then you are strong.' This is a separated life. God showed me at the very beginning of this ministry, that it was a separated life, that I must spend many hours fasting, praying, meditating, and staying before the Lord." (James Dunn, Sign Gift Ministry' by W.V. Grant Sr).

THOSE THAT HAD THE FULLNESS AND FELL IN THEIR WALKS

It is time now to look at some of the anointed men of God who won many battles against Satan, only to be defeated by him in the very end. It is from the lives of these men that we can learn some of the most important lessons related to this form of ministry.

JOHN ALEXANDER DOWIE

John Alexander Dowie was born in Scotland in 1847, but spent much of his early life in Australia. He was a fighter in the true sense, boldly battling the sin and compromise he found all around him - even as a young minister in Australia. In later years, particularly after his move to Chicago in the United States, he became probably the most renowned pioneer of Divine Healing worldwide, and by the turn of the century had become known to millions around the world. In his early years of outstanding success in Chicago, where the power of God was being constantly demonstrated, and hundreds were being healed of every affliction, it seemed as if the devil was summoning every demon from hell to attack and somehow bring him down. He was arrested over 100 times on trumped-up charges, ceaselessly attacked by the most prominent media men in the city, and he even suffered street-riots and attempts upon his life. (-On one notable occasion, when he had been suddenly warned by a voice from

God to leave his office, he narrowly averted being blown to pieces by a powerful bomb that had been planted there). Eventually, he won through, with credibility intact (in fact, greatly enhanced despite all the controversy), and became God's most effective champion of Divine Healing in America up to that point.

Tragically however, when the early years of constant battle were done, and a time of relative peace and prosperity settled in upon him, this daring fighter who had brought healing to America, ended up being deluded by the devil into dressing in High-Priestly robes and thinking that he was Elijah the prophet. After this, the end could not be far off, and John Alexander Dowie died in comparative ignominy several years later, an ill and broken man - a shadow of his former self - having lost his ministry and literally everything he owned. How one of God's greatest fighters could come to such a tragic end, is something that should be an object lesson to us all.

The quotations used here are almost all taken from the book, 'John Alexander Dowie - A life story of Trials, Tragedies and Triumphs' by Gordon Lindsay:

As with many men of God who are being prepared for a mighty ministry, God had used the early years of Dowie's Christian walk as a "toughening-up" or training period. Dowie's many struggles and pitfalls, plus the harsh spiritual 'wilderness' and obscurity of Australia, were used to mold and break him, bringing a great hunger and seeking after God. As Gordon Lindsay wrote in the Introduction to his book on Dowie, "when any man is chosen of God to be used in an unusual manner, God permits him to go through a training period, which sometimes includes trials and tribulations of the most severe nature." He said that when Dowie first set foot on American soil at the age of 41, he was almost completely unknown, but that when the healing anointing that he had received from God was recognized, and God's perfect timing came, John Alexander Dowie rose to international prominence with astonishing abruptness, as one of God's great leaders of that period. Lindsay wrote of the decline of Dowie that, "it was at that moment when he began to engage in secular activities, and departed from the simplicity of his earlier days, that his decline began."

John Alexander Dowie is described as, "a reformer who, fighting against the greatest of odds, single-handedly challenged the apostasy of his time, and succeeded in bringing to the attention of the Church visible, if not to its acceptance, the message of the Gospel of healing - a message of deliverance for the whole man, body, soul and spirit... Against overwhelming opposition, a hostile press, bitterly opposed clergymen, antagonistic city officials, unscrupulous lawyers... he fought for and maintained the right to pray for the sick. Despite the fiercest persecution, numerous illegal arrests - as many as one hundred in a year - he outwitted and foiled his enemies, and succeeded in bringing to the attention of the world, the great truth that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Pg 3-4). And all through this period, numerous documented, outstanding miracles of healing were taking place under his ministry.

Please remember how NEW all this was at the time. Today, the things that Dowie fought for are taken for granted throughout the Christian world, but in those days there were basically NO SUCH THINGS as healing ministries or healing evangelists. Dowie was a pioneer, an instrument of God who paved the way for what was to follow, just like many Christian Reformers down through the ages.

However, the days of needing to constantly battle gradually drew to an end, and because of his newfound success and the relative prosperity of his ministry, Dowie eventually made the tragic mistake of relaxing his guard. As Gordon Lindsay noted, "Middle age is a dangerous period and not a few succumb to the temptation at that time of life to spiritually relax (something quite different to physical relaxation). The great difference between Dr. Dowie and others was that he had become a world leader whose actions were watched by the eyes of multitudes." (Pg 195).

"In the days of adversity, John Alexander Dowie learned to lean heavily upon God. When every other resource failed him, he abandoned his life to the mercy and graciousness of God. But AFTER SUCCESS HAD COME, when thousands of people ALMOST IDOLIZED HIM, he apparently did not feel so strongly that same need. He allowed himself to become so very busy... A fateful mistake! How many sorrows would John Alexander Dowie have saved himself had he taken the time to get the mind of God on decisions which were so all important? How many fatal mistakes men of God have made because THEY DID NOT PAUSE TO TAKE COUNSEL WITH THE LORD WHEN THEY HAD SOME VITAL DECISION TO MAKE?" (Pg 194).

As Paul Billheimer wrote, "The sands of time are strewn with the wrecks of the broken lives of many, who were once mightily used of God, but who suffered shipwreck upon the rocks of SPIRITUAL PRIDE."

In his early days in Chicago, certain people had approached Dowie with what they claimed as a "direct revelation from God" that Dowie was, in fact, 'Elijah the Restorer', the great end-times prophet. For their trouble, Dowie immediately rebuked them soundly and dismissed them from his presence, warning them never to mention such things to him again. However, the suggestion that had been planted that day kept ringing in his ears. "According to his own testimony, he tried to rid himself of it, but could not. A voice seemed to say, 'Elijah must come, and who but you is doing the work of Elijah?' Time passed. Then one day there came flooding into his consciousness a strange and intense conviction that he was indeed Elijah - the one spoken of by the prophets who was to come and restore all things. The impression came with such overwhelming power, that his entire personality became absorbed with it." (Pg 188). In June 1901, Dowie took the fateful step of publicly announcing that he was indeed Elijah the Restorer. (A claim which was immediately challenged and denounced by religious leaders all over the world).

By this time, Dowie was also heavily involved with land development. Having purchased over 6000 acres of land near Chicago, construction was already underway on what would become 'Zion City', an entire large town to be occupied by Dowie's followers, and to be run according to "Christian principles". Sadly, no-one seemed to remember that the New Testament never advocates separating ourselves from the world in this way, but rather of living IN the world, but not being OF it. Initially, Zion City was a resounding success, both financially and in every other respect. But eventually it was to lead Dowie to financial ruin, and there can be no doubt that it contributed greatly to his overall decline. One of his great dreams was to build 'Zion Cities' all over

the world - no doubt part of his supposed mission of the "Restoration of all things" - from which he and his followers would begin to exercise rulership in the earth. What fateful days these were.

For many years John's wife had been content, along with John, to live almost in poverty, trusting God. However, it has been reported that "when prosperity came to the Dowie family, she lost her simplicity of life: she bought gowns in Paris and indulged in extravagances..." (Pg 200). All of this would have been unthinkable to them only a few years earlier. "But with the prosperity that came to him in America, eventually the simplicity of his life was altered. He came to the conclusion, and apparently Mrs. Dowie abetted his proposals, that it would be to his advantage to build a costly executive mansion in which he could entertain important personages. This large edifice when finished was elaborately appointed with expensive furnishings." (Pg 201-202).

In the end, it seemed almost as though the very things that Dowie and his wife had stood against all their lives, were the very strategies that Satan now used against them, to destroy them. And to help the tragedy along, - "at the crucial time of Dr. Dowie's life when he needed help so desperately, it does not appear that his wife was a spiritual reservoir of strength that he could fall back on." (Pg 201). At times, especially during this latter period, there were those who tried to warn him of the dangers of what he was doing. But he refused to listen. Even when his daughter died tragically as a result of a fire in 1902, he hardly paused to reflect on his headlong forward momentum.

The last days of John Dowie were not particularly good. He had fought a great fight for many years in his early period, but he was defeated in the latter part of his life. As is so often the case with great Revivals or great men of God who fall from the path, the harm that they can do and the ridicule that they can bring upon the Gospel in the end, can almost undo much of the good that originally came from them. How delighted the devil must have been, not only to deceive and sideline this great man of God, but also to use him to bring ridicule upon the very truths that he had originally proclaimed so effectively. God could not afford to have John Alexander Dowie continuing in this state for much longer. He had to take him home. Dowie died still believing he was Elijah, an ill and broken man, crippled in a wheel chair. His ministry was gone, Zion City was almost bankrupt, and he had lost everything that he once thought of as his own. "How have the mighty fallen!" He died on March 9, 1907.

THE ENIGMA OF WILLIAM BRANHAM

William Branham was another evangelist this century who was mightily used of God for a number of years. In fact, there can be little doubt that he was endowed with power to a degree that has rarely been seen since the days of the apostles. And there is still a great deal of controversy surrounding his life, death and teachings. To some of his most ardent followers (who are still around today), he seemed to assume almost semi-divine status, - a damaging and tragic fallacy that has frightened many sound Christians away from studying his life. On the other hand, even in his heyday some believers were sceptical and suspicious of the tremendous power and unusual signs and miracles that accompanied his ministry. There can be little doubt that Branham went astray in his ministry in the latter part of his life. (The fact that God took him home early, and that the cause of death was a car-crash in which his body became horribly tangled in the wreck, though he lingered on for a few more days - bears this out). However, it is my belief, and the belief of many who have studied his life, that in his early years he was one of the most anointed men of God that has ever lived in modern times.

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

Branham obeyed these strictures, but he had still not been truly converted. When he was about twenty years of age, the death of his brother Edward caused him to again turn his thoughts toward God's call upon his life. However, he carried on the way he was going (essentially running away from God) for a couple of years. Finally, he ended up seriously ill - at death's door, in hospital. And suddenly God visited him again: "Closer the wind came, louder and louder... I heard that same voice that said, 'Never drink or smoke.' And the leaves I heard were the same that blew in that tree that day. 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!'... When this vision had passed, I found that I felt better." (Pg 40-41).

However, Branham was not completely healed at this time. But he was now filled with a great hunger after God. "I started out to seek and find God. I went from church to church trying to find some place where there was an old-fashioned altar call. The sad part was I could find none... One night I became so hungry for God and a real experience that I went out to the old shed back of the house and tried to pray... All at once there came a light in the shed and it formed a cross, and the voice from the cross spoke to me in a language I could not understand... as I prayed it appeared again. Then it seemed to me that there had been a thousand pounds lifted from my soul..."

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

He told me to do." (Pg 41-42). Branham began tent meetings in his home town of Jeffersonville, and for a 24-year-old who was just starting out, these were astonishingly successful, with up to 3000 people being attracted to the meetings at one time, and scores of conversions.

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

It was in this same year of 1933 that a number of significant visions were given to William Branham. In June 1933 he was given a series of seven visions relating to world events that lay immediately ahead (and he told his congregation of these visions at the time). In the first of these he saw the Italian dictator Mussolini successfully invading Ethiopia, but eventually coming to a terrible demise - murdered and spat upon by his own people. In the second he saw America being drawn into a world war against Germany, which would be headed up by an Austrian. The war would overthrow this leader, and he would come to a mysterious end. The third vision showed the three 'isms' in the world - Fascism, Nazism and Communism, and that the first two would come to nothing, but that Communism would flourish. He was told, "Watch Russia. She will become a great world power." In the fourth vision he was shown some of the tremendous advances in Science that would come after the Second World War.

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

In the sixth vision there arose in the United States a beautiful woman, clothed in splendour and royal robes - a woman given great power, and beautiful - yet cruel, cunning and deceitful. She dominated the land with her authority. Branham felt that she represented either an actual person, or else a particular organization (perhaps the Catholic church?) However, surely there is also the possibility that she represents a great "Jezebelic" spirit that utterly dominates the landscape? In the seventh and final vision, he witnessed a great explosion that rent the entire land and left America a smouldering, chaotic ruin, with no humanity in sight. This final vision then faded away. (This last one reminds me of another Branham vision/prophesy, which he referred to often in later years, that showed that the day would come when the entire state of California west of the San Andreas Fault, would be wiped out and sent into the Pacific Ocean by a massive earthquake).

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

After the baptisms, a church was built for Branham to pastor in Jeffersonville. The next few years were a fruitful time in his life and ministry, during which he married a lovely Christian wife and they had two children. However, several years later Branham came to a crossroads and made a serious error of judgement that was to have serious repercussions for his family and ministry. After attending a Pentecostal convention for the first time (up until then he had been an independent Baptist), Branham was invited by these Pentecostals to become a travelling evangelist for them, and he felt that this was definitely a call from God. However, he allowed himself to be persuaded by friends that the Pentecostals were "trash" (they were known as 'holy rollers' at the time - the lowest of the low), and he drew back from joining with them.

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

For a number of years after this, Branham continued to preach and also work at various jobs. He remarried, and when a new visitation of the angel of God came in 1946, he was working as an Indiana state game warden. This was to be the beginning of his international miracle ministry: "I must tell you of the angel and the coming of the Gift. I shall never forget the time, May 7, 1946, a very beautiful season of the year in Indiana, where I was still working as a game warden. I had come home for lunch... and while walking around the house under a maple tree, it seemed that the whole top of the tree let loose. It seemed that something came down through that tree like a great rushing wind... My wife came from the house frightened, and asked me what was wrong. Trying to get hold of myself, I sat down and told her that after all these twenty odd years of being conscious of this strange feeling, the time had come when I had to find out what it was all about. The crisis had come!

"That afternoon I went away to a secret place to pray and read the Bible. I became deep in prayer; it seemed that my whole soul would tear from me. I cried before God...I laid my face to the ground...I looked up to God and cried, 'If you will forgive me

for the way that I have done, I'll try to do better... I'm sorry that I've been so neglectful all these years in doing the work you wanted me to do... Will you speak to me someday, God? If you don't help me, I can't go on'... Then along in the night, about the eleventh hour, I had quit praying and was sitting up when I noticed a light flickering in the room... the light was spreading out on the floor, becoming wider... as I looked up, there hung that great star. However, it did not have five points like a star, but looked more like a ball of fire or light shining down upon the floor. Just then I heard someone walking across the floor...

"Now, coming through the light, I saw the feet of a man coming toward me, as naturally as you would walk to me. He appeared to be a man who, in human weight, would weigh about two hundred pounds, clothed in a white robe. He had a smooth face, no beard, dark hair down to his shoulders, of rather dark-complexion, with a very pleasant countenance, and coming closer, his eyes caught with mine. Seeing how fearful I was, he began to speak. '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. IF YOU WILL BE SINCERE, AND CAN GET THE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE YOU, NOTHING SHALL STAND BEFORE YOUR PRAYER, NOT EVEN CANCER.'" (Pg 76-77).

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

This angelic visitation marked the beginning of Branham's incredible international miracle ministry, and also led directly to the great American Healing Revival of 1947 through 1955, in which many well-known ministries were raised up, and thousands upon thousands of people were saved and healed. As Branham himself said, "The great things which have taken place during these months are too innumerable to ever be recorded, but God has confirmed the angel's words time after time. Deaf, dumb, blind, all manners of diseases have been healed, and thousands of testimonies are on record to date. I do not have any power of my own to do this... God always has something or someone to work through, and I am only an instrument used by Him." (Pg 78).

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

Over the following months and years, Branham travelled widely in the USA, and also to Europe and South Africa, etc. Thousands came from far and wide to hear him preach and to witness the many outstanding healings, miracles and 'words of knowledge' that accompanied his ministry. Often, he would call out the name, city of origin and background information of people in the audience whom he had never met, who had come to hear his preaching or to be healed. Of all the thousands of such 'words of knowledge' that he gave, none was ever known to be wrong or inaccurate. His gift was reportedly "exactly 100%". The deaf were healed, the blind received their sight, and even the dead were raised. There were also a number of meetings where Branham was photographed with bright 'haloes' or strange lights around him. It became standard for Branham to have the angel of God standing beside him as he ministered, and he would often wait for the angel to arrive before he began. It was also commonplace for Branham to see specific miracles enacted before his eyes in vision form several days before they actually occurred, so that when he found himself in the precise circumstance pictured in the vision, he would know exactly what to do. Astounding! And everywhere he went, God was glorified in the most profound way.

There can be no doubt that Branham was the initial pioneer and the key leader of the great Healing Revival of 1947 through 1955. During this Revival, literally dozens of healing ministries were raised up all over America, some well-known and others less prominent, but all of them inspired by the example of Branham and others. Thousands were saved and healed, not just in America, but in many other nations also. And the mighty 1954 Argentina Revival under Tommy Hicks (with meetings of up to 400,000 people) also had strong links with this Revival. Even amongst the better-known evangelists who came into prominence at that time (such as Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne, A.A. Allen, Jack Coe, etc), William Branham was acknowledged as something special - something extraordinary. "The younger deliverance evangelists viewed him as a man set apart, like Moses. 'He was number one,' said Richard Hall, 'of the common run of evangelists that we have now, put twenty of them at one end and William Branham on the other; he would outweigh them all.'" (Winkie Pratney, 'Revival', pg 220-221).

Later in the 1950's, when a number of healing evangelists were drifting into showmanship, hype, 'prosperity' doctrines and begging for money, Branham would have none of it. He was unchanged in his attitude toward these kinds of excesses right to the very end. One observer wrote of him in 1959: "On my last visit I mentioned how 'car conscious' American preachers are, almost judging a man's success by the car he drives. At this particular conference, where Brother Branham was the principal speaker, they all came up in their nice cars, the picture of elegance, but Brother Branham drove up in a truck. He doesn't seem to worry about these things..." (D. Harrell Jr, 'ALL Things are Possible', pg 162).

However, there were crucial weaknesses in the practices and ministry of William Branham, which tragically began to manifest themselves in the mid-1950's. In 1955, largely through his own carelessness and lack of good management, Branham fell into financial difficulty. He had always been nonchalant, almost naive, toward all business matters. "He sometimes missed scheduled

meetings and was totally unconcerned about business details. Some of his business associates came to feel that he was culpably irresponsible. At any rate, Branham came to write: 'For nine years, the Lord met every need without my having to pull for money. Then, in 1955, in each of three of my greatest meetings, the income fell far short of expenses and others stepped in to make up large deficits'... Branham's difficulties became more complicated in 1956 when the Internal Revenue Service filed a tax evasion suit against him... The unsophisticated Branham, apparently little interested in personal wealth, had made no systematic effort to account for the thousands of dollars that flowed through his ministry.' (Ibid, pg 39-40). For the remainder of his life, Branham worked under the burden of a \$40,000.00 debt to the IRS. (Which was an enormous amount of money in those days).

It is obvious that God was little able to financially bless Branham's ministry any longer, due to the careless and dubious state of his financial management. This had clearly become a "legal gateway" through which the devil could now disrupt and tie-down Branham's ministry. And one of the most devastating results of this was that when most of the other prominent healing evangelists were called into large, mobile tent ministries (which God used very effectively at that time), Branham was unable to make this jump, due seemingly to the parlous state of his finances. Thus, his ministry immediately began to lose momentum, and it seemed that he was no longer on the 'cutting edge' of what God was doing.

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

As early as 1957, Branham had received a dream in which he was ministering in a 'white disk' above a pyramid. A voice from heaven proclaimed that no other man could stand in the disk "unless he die or be killed", and that Branham was "the only one who can and will stand there." Branham apparently considered this dream to be of 'spiritual significance'. (Ibid, pg 41). By the 1960's, he had clearly become convinced that he was the end-times "Elijah" and the true "Messenger of the Covenant". And the adoring followers in his tight little circle were certainly not going to contradict him. A number of writers believe that it was when Branham took a 'teaching' ministry upon himself that he fell into error. It is clear that he had been anointed and commissioned by God to have a prophetic / evangelistic ministry, but never one of teaching. And as soon as he got into this area of teaching doctrine, he began to trespass into realms to which God had never called him, thus opening himself up to ever-increasing deception. It has been reported that towards the end, some of his teachings almost bordered on the occult. However, the original sign-giftings that God had given him never left him, right up until the time of his death in 1965.

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

"It's dangerous to intrude into a ministry office to which you are not called. In the Old Testament, if people intruded in to a holy place that was reserved for those who held certain offices, they instantly fell dead. Under grace, people in disobedience can last for a while, but sooner or later, those who intrude into ministry offices to which they are not called will be judged. It is dangerous to intrude into another man's office." (K. Hagin, 'He Gave Gifts unto Men', pg 164-170).

A full TWO YEARS before Branham died, Kenneth Hagin, who was renowned for his accurate prophetic ministry at that time, was given a prophecy about Branham which he took to Gordon Lindsay. The prophecy read: "'At the end of 1965, He who now stands in the forefront of the healing ministry as a prophet will be taken out of the way. He'll make a false step and Satan shall destroy his life, but his spirit will be saved, and his works will follow him. Ere 1966 shall come, he shall be gone.'

"I took that prophecy to brother Lindsay, because it's scriptural to have other spiritual men judge prophecy. I never made it public. Prophets make a mistake by publicly broadcasting some of these things." God later told Hagin: "I had to permit him to be removed, because of the damage he was causing in the body of Christ..."

"... Then brother Lindsay related something else to me that had happened regarding this same prophet. He said to me, 'This past year, I was praying with my wife and sister Schrader about the work of the ministry. (Sister Schrader was a prophetess who has since gone on to be with the Lord.) We were praying about different projects in our ministry. Right in the middle of the prayer, Sister Schrader blurted out, 'Go warn Brother [Branham]... he's going to die.' Brother Lindsay said, 'I was busy, and I let that get by me, and I didn't go warn him like I was supposed to. Then later, my wife and I and Sister Schrader were again praying about ministry projects. Again Sister Schrader blurted out right in the middle of prayer, 'Go warn Brother [Branham]... he's going to die. He's walking in the way of Dowie.' After his morning meeting, Brother Lindsay said, 'I talked to him as the Lord had instructed me, but I saw that he wouldn't listen...' (K. Hagin, 'He Gave Gifts unto Men', pg 164-170). Please remember that Dowie had also got into error, proclaiming that he was the end-times "Elijah".

Gordon Lindsay's wife also confirmed the account given by Kenneth Hagin: "One day Kenneth Hagin came into our offices. He handed Gordon a piece of paper on which was written a prophecy he said the Lord had given him. The prophecy stated that the leader of the deliverance movement was soon to be taken in death, because he was getting into error and the Lord was having to remove him from the scene for that reason. Gordon took the prophecy and placed it in his desk. After Brother Hagin left I asked, 'What do you think about this? Is this Branham?' Gordon answered gravely, 'Yes, it is Branham. He is getting into error. He thinks he is Elijah. He thinks he is the messenger of the covenant. The sad thing is that unscrupulous men around him are putting

words into his mouth, and due to his limited background he is taking them up." (Mrs Gordon Lindsay, 'My Diary Secrets', Sixth Edition, pg 152).

Two years later, when driving to Tucson, Arizona, William Branham was involved in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. His wife was badly injured in the smash, and Branham's body was horribly tangled in the wreck. He lingered on for a few days in hospital, though his head became terribly swollen and a tube was placed in his throat to assist his breathing. William Branham died on Christmas Eve, 1965, just before the turn of the year, exactly as the prophecy had predicted. Once more - "How have the mighty fallen". Satan had again succeeded in 'taking out' one of God's great servants. And there can be little doubt that God's full purposes for Branham's life and ministry remained at least partially unfilled. There was talk amongst a few of Branham's followers that he might rise from the dead after several days, but it is clear that only a relatively small number believed this. (Such Branham-followers can still be found around the world today, some of whom adore him with a fervour bordering almost on idolatry - a sad and tragic epitaph to a once-mighty man of God).

THE LESSONS WE MUST LEARN

Some people believe that the coming move of God will be so powerful and so awesome that it will be almost impossible for the ministries involved in it to fall into error or into sin. I simply cannot go along with this. History clearly demonstrates that the greater the power, the greater the potential for subtle pride and error to enter in. This is why God has taken so long in preparing His future (now hidden) ministries for the coming move. Please remember that Satan himself was once one of the most splendid and powerful creatures in all of Heaven - an 'anointed Cherubim' of the highest order, who walked in the very presence of God. The Creator Himself said of him: "You were the ANOINTED CHERUB who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were PERFECT in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Ez 28:14-15). "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Is 14:12). If such a creature as this - walking in the very presence of God - can fall from grace, then so can we, even at the height of a powerful God-given ministry.

It is important also to realize the strength and the cunning of our adversary. The devil has had literally thousands of years to study mankind, and to learn how to manipulate human beings in the most effective way. He has seen Revivals come and Revivals go. He has caused great men of God to fall, and others to stumble or to not fulfill their potential. He is a past master at the arts of spiritual war, and he plays HARD, with no conscience and no mercy. He has had thousands of years to perfect his techniques for causing good men to fall, of setting snares that sometimes take months and years to bear fruit, but eventually lure men to the demise of their lives or their ministries. He has seen it all. And yet, by the power of God it is still possible to beat him, and to beat him well. But we must not be ignorant of his wiles or devices to trap us. And we must learn well the lessons that history has to teach us.

SPIRITUAL PRIDE

Spiritual pride is the major, but often very subtle underlying root of much deception, and the fall of many once-promising ministries. A friend from America who has studied this subject recently told me that over the past 21 years, he has personally known of at least a dozen anointed men of God who have lost their anointings and ministries. He says that a number have even ended up dead or in prison. "To whom much is given, much is expected." To repeat Paul Billheimer's words: "THE SANDS OF TIME ARE STREWN WITH THE WRECKS OF THE BROKEN LIVES OF MANY, WHO WERE ONCE MIGHTILY USED OF GOD, BUT WHO SUFFERED SHIPWRECK UPON THE ROCKS OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE." As the Scriptures declare, "PRIDE goeth before the downfall" (Prov 16:18). If Satan cannot destroy us from without, then he will destroy us from within.

It is usually through our THOUGHTS - through our MIND - that such attacks come, with temptations to pride disguised as our own thoughts and feelings, etc. The devil will happily take a long-term approach with such attacks, slowly building on what he has been feeding into our mind until he can sway us into making bad decisions and judgements - blinded by subtle pride in that one crucial area. His object is to get us to 'BELIEVE THE LIE', and in that process this prideful deception travels from our mind down into our heart, where it is much harder to dislodge. Like a seed, it will then grow, and begin to manifest itself in our lives, until eventually, if it has not been dealt with, God may be forced to remove us from the ministry He has called us into. We are told in the Bible that we are to have the "mind of Christ", and that we are to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5).

We are to be full of His Spirit, so that we may have A MIND CONTROLLED, a MIND DIRECTED, and a MIND FIXED ON GOD. I have found personally that such 'roots' or strongholds of pride, or anything else in our lives, can be dealt with very effectively by RENOUNCING them, from the very depths of our heart and soul, in Jesus' name, and casting them away from ourselves as hated things. (This applies to bad habits and any other form of 'stronghold' also). "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor 10:4). We do not have to let the devil dominate any area of our lives in this way.

Obviously, those who are involved in powerful ministries are particularly susceptible to pride entering in, because of the amazing things that they see happening every day in their ministries, and the temptation to begin taking some of the glory for themselves, or to start to think that they are something 'special' - forgetting that every gift they have is from God. Such pride can be incredibly subtle, and the devil delights in placing such ministries under as much 'pressure' of this kind as he possibly can. However, it is important to remember that God will not allow us to be tempted more than we can bear. (1 Cor 10:13).

It is significant to note that William Branham was apparently still a truly humble man in many ways right up until the time of his death, and yet the devil managed to introduce subtle pride into his mind and heart in a couple of crucial areas. He presumed to become a teacher when this was obviously not his calling, and he eventually came to believe inflated "Elijah"-type revelations about himself and his 'special' position, proclaiming these to his followers. As the apostle Paul wrote, we are not to think of

ourselves "more highly than we ought to think" (Rom 12:3). Speaking of the fall of Lucifer, God said, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour." (Ez 28:17).

It is also important to remember that it is often when we have won our greatest victories in God, that we are most susceptible to attacks from the enemy. As Paul wrote, "let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor 10:12). We see this particularly in the life of John Alexander Dowie. It was when he had won through into a period of comparative success and prosperity in his ministry that he apparently relaxed his guard, and became deceived into "BELIEVING THE LIE" that the devil was trying to sell him.

It is clear from the Scriptures that in the Last Days, there ARE to be ministries who will go forth in the 'spirit and power of Elijah'. However, as Gordon Lindsay wrote in his biography of Dowie, "HAD HE BEEN THE VERY ELIJAH, WHAT AN UNFORTUNATE MISTAKE WAS MADE, IN PROCLAIMING HIMSELF AS SUCH! John the Baptist was satisfied in declaring himself 'a voice crying in the wilderness'. When they asked John if he were Elijah, he said he was not. Yet Christ later said that he was! (Matt. 11:14) Jesus commended the humility of John who said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease', and declared that none born of women was greater than he." (G. Lindsay, 'John Alexander Dowie', pg 190). It is often when such DECLARATIONS of being a 'last-days apostle' or an Elijah are made, that things begin to go off the rails. The devil's first priority is to get us to 'BELIEVE A LIE' (usually some inflated or prideful view of ourselves, or some excuse why a certain sin is 'OK for me') or even to publicly declare an EXAGGERATED TRUTH, and then to ACT ON IT. After this, as the deception grows and our blindness in that area deepens, surely only disaster can result.

However, one of the alarming things about such deception is that THE GIFTS, THE POWER AND THE CALLING OF GOD already operating in one's ministry up to that point will usually continue to operate just as powerfully, often right until death. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom 11:29). In other words, God will usually not take away such giftings, even if a ministry falls into deception. And so, they will continue to exercise such power, often thinking that "all is well" and ignoring all warnings, until it is too late. A fatal, but oh-so-common mistake. And history is littered with the shattered remains of such ministries, who refused to heed God's writing on the wall until it was too late.

FINANCES

You will notice that with both Dowie and Branham, errors of judgement in the financial area certainly helped to precipitate their downfall. With Dowie, his problem was becoming too caught up in financial dealings and the 'cares of this world' (almost certainly as a result of his "Elijah the Restorer" revelation). And there can be no doubt today, that God will deal harshly with anyone who uses their anointing and giftings as a means to wealth and luxury living. As G.H. Montgomery wrote of the decline of the Healing Revival, and of a number of evangelists at that time: "Men who preach the meek and lowly Nazarene to a lost and dying world, and yet live in palatial homes built on money contributed by God's poor people, cannot call themselves followers of Jesus."

With Branham, it was the opposite problem, as he obviously couldn't care less about his finances, and perhaps presumed that "God will take care of it - I don't need to arrange or give heed to anything". Again, a fatal form of presumption. I have no doubt that God quietly warned Branham many times about his finances and lack of accounting or basic organization, but in the end it took a disaster to make him sit up and take notice - and by then it was too late, and his ministry was deeply mired in a financial pit from which it never truly recovered.

I have met a number of men and women of God in recent years who are also "anti-organization" to the point where if they were in a Revival ministry, they could very easily suffer the same financial fate as that of Branham. Their theory is that essentially, "God will do it all", and many of them see any form of organization almost as a sin. But my question is this: If God doesn't want humans involved in such ministry-related organization, then why did he invent the giftings of 'HELPERS' and "ADMINISTRATORS"? (1 Cor 12:28, RSV. The King James refers to these as 'helps' and "governments", and they are found in every translation in the list of spiritual giftings for the church). It is also important to remember that the Early Church appointed seven men to administrate the funds collected by the apostles for use amongst the poor, etc. (Acts 6:1-7).

Obviously, such organization does not have to be too similar to today's churches, but it does need to be streamlined, efficient, and above all - transparently honest, open and above-board. The last thing we need is shifty financial dealings bringing reproach upon God's people. The early Salvation Army, which was a true Revival movement for at least its first 40 years, had just such an operation. Obviously, the whole movement was modelled on a mobilized army, with a central command post in London (from whence General William Booth ruled with a rod of iron!), and supply lines reaching out into every corner of the world. Like the early church, these people cared for the poor, as well as for God's ministries, and thousands of people were clothed, fed and housed (as well as thousands more saved) right around the world. The early Salvation Army was one of the most long-lived anointed Revival movements that the church has ever seen, and there can be no doubt that this was greatly helped by the effectiveness and godliness of their organization. Revival literally followed them wherever they went. It is very clear then, from this and other examples, that ORGANIZATION DOES NOT HAVE TO BE OUR ENEMY. In fact, under God, it can become one of our most helpful friends.

MARRIAGE

We have already mentioned how that in Dowie's latter years, when he was in desperate need of some balanced spiritual input into his life from people who were close to him, it seems that his wife was of little help (in fact, probably quite the reverse). This illustrates just how important a strong and godly marriage is for God's servants, especially those who are being continually bombarded by the devil because their ministry against him is so effective. Those who are married, and who underestimate the importance of their marriage to their ministry are extremely unwise. The devil will be searching for any chink in their armour, and if there are weaknesses in their marriage, he will exploit these to the full. It is interesting to note that in a survey of the reasons why

many divorced women in the U.S. left their husbands, a large proportion of them answered that it was because of "NEGLECT". Their husbands had got so busy with their work, etc, that they had neglected their wives. And sadly, this is true of many Christian ministries also. A tragic and fateful state of affairs.

More than ever, I believe that in these Last Days, God desires to employ ministries in which there is a deep love and an obvious spiritual partnership between husband and wife. And this gives those of us who are married the added advantage of having someone to "watch our back". Remember, Paul wrote concerning the qualifications for eldership or leadership in the church, that a man must be "the husband of one wife... He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?" (1 Tim 3:2-5). Our family life is far more important to God than many of us realize, and it gives real insight into whether or not we are truly suited to being in ministry at all.

DELUDED INTO SIN

As stated earlier, spiritual pride has been the underlying root cause of the fall of many ministries. The fatal presumption that "all must be well" (despite whatever sin or deception they're involved in) just because the anointing is still there, and the miracles are still happening, is oh-so-common. And it is clearly this subtle pride which gives the devil a 'legal doorway' through which he can begin to deceive them in other areas also. You would be amazed at the excuses that such deceived individuals come up with as to why a certain sin is "OK for them", even though it is certainly NOT OK for everyone else. The devil managed to delude and defeat a number of prominent ministries involved in the American Healing Revival. He got to some of them with love of money, ease and comfort, others through selfish ambition and envy, and some even became drunkards. And yet many of them were still performing miracles right to the end. But eventually, they lost everything. Speaking of the decline of the Healing Revival, Gordon Lindsay observed that many ministers had stopped "fasting and waiting before God." He said that many of the ministries had declined, "largely because of a lack of humility and because of a tendency to self-exaltation." He was reportedly sickened by the increasing emphasis on money. "Lindsay later concluded that even at the height of the revival many of the evangelists 'hadn't prayed through, they hadn't touched God for their ministry, they just put up their banner.'" (D. Harrell Jr, 'ALL Things are Possible', pg 139).

One of the most common of the devil's lures down through history, of course, has been sexual sin (sometimes of a perverted nature, but usually simple adultery). Please remember that the devil will be literally throwing everything at such ministries (though usually in a disguised or subtle way). They are hurting him, and he will not just stand idly by. He will search and probe for that one chink in their armour. This is why in the past God has often spent years training and preparing such ministries in obscurity, before giving them their anointing and their commission. He had to test them - to see whether or not they could survive the attacks of the enemy, and the temptations to pride, etc. He had to feel confident that He could entrust them with His anointing. And even then, He knew that some of them would let Him down.

In his book, "Set the Trumpet to thy Mouth", David Wilkerson uncovered some very interesting facts about the reasons why pastors and other ministries in America were falling into adultery. A survey had been done, and it became obvious what the number one strategy of the devil was. In the vast majority of cases, these men had developed a close 'spiritual' relationship with a woman other than their wife, and this is who they ended up committing adultery with. They would often pray or discuss the Bible with this spiritual woman, until eventually they became close and intimate, and would be sharing things with her that they should have been sharing with their wife. How 'spiritual' it all was! Wouldn't it be wonderful to be married to a woman like this! (Not that they ever tried to share with their own wife in this way). What subtle and cunning deception. And Satan has had vast success in 'taking out' many promising ministries just through this one technique alone. Then there's the old, "I'm allowed more than one wife at a time" deception. (Despite what the Bible says in 1Tim 3:2, etc). As I said before, it's amazing what the devil can get us humans to believe at times.

Almost every deception plays on secret desires or strongholds deep within us. Part of us wants to believe that the deception is true. This is why we must be so searingly and brutally honest with ourselves in RENOUNCING such deceptions and strongholds, if we are ever going to be truly free of them. ('Self-pity' is another subtle yet deadly one - the true cause of much depression. Many people quite enjoy having the 'blues' or feeling sorry for themselves, and this can be a most debilitating stronghold in one's life. Don't make a "pet" of it - RENOUNCE IT!)

Another thing I also want to briefly touch on here is the danger of "ENVY" entering into one's ministry. This too can be a very subtle yet immensely destructive evil. (The Pharisees had Jesus killed due to 'envy', after all - Mk 15:10). If you ever find yourself feeling like attacking or murmuring against a leader who operates in more power or is better-known than you, just check your motives very carefully to see that envy or selfish ambition is not one of the causes of your antagonism. You would be amazed at the number of team ministries, etc, that have been destroyed through this kind of envy of the leadership (whether coming from without, or even worse - from within the group). Who knows what motivated Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus? (Remembering that Judas was one of the Twelve HAND-PICKED disciples). For some time now, I have wondered whether or not the Antichrist that is to arise at the very end of the age could be one of God's genuine end-time apostles - gone astray. Does not the Bible call him the 'son of perdition', just like Judas? And will he not move in powerful signs, wonders and miracles, just like the genuine Last Days apostles? A frightening thought! (However, God's people will discern the truth when the time comes). The pattern of the devil's own fall seemed to be: Spiritual Pride, Envy (& selfish ambition), then Rebellion. And of course, this same pattern is now constantly found amongst fallen humans also (even Christian ones, sadly).

For God's true ministries, the secret to surviving the coming Last Days period is basically the same as it's ever been. They must have a deep hatred of sin, a genuine fear of God, a searing honesty with themselves, and a heart after God's own heart - just

as His servant David did. Only then can they truly be sure of "enduring to the end". This is why God has spent so long preparing and 'breaking' these ministries, before sending them forth to lead His people out of bondage and into His glorious light once again.

GOD NEEDS LEADERS!

While I have no doubt that the coming move of God will be even more incredible than the great Healing Revival, and that the outpouring of His Spirit will be far greater than anything that has ever been seen before, I do believe that many of the same dangers and the same principles will apply, just as they always have. We must learn the lessons from history, or we are bound to repeat them.

One thing I do want to emphasise here, is that just like every previous move of God, this one will need LEADERS anointed and raised up by God, to advance and establish His Revival. Some people believe in a kind of "leaderless" Revival, where God "does everything" and human leadership is almost obsolete. But from everything God has been saying about the coming move, I would have to be frank and say that such people are deluding themselves. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN, AND THERE NEVER WILL BE A "LEADERLESS" REFORMATION-REVIVAL. Tell me this: Would there have ever been a Book-of-Acts Revival without anointed apostles to lead it? And would the Jews have escaped Egypt without anointed Moses to lead them? Would they have ever taken the promised land without a Joshua? And could they have defeated the Philistines without anointed David or a Gideon? The answer is: NO - NEVER! God has always been, and still is, utterly committed to USING MANKIND as His instruments and leaders of Reformation and Revival in the earth. In fact, it would be fair to say that for God NOT to use such human leadership, would be to GO AGAINST THE ENTIRE BASIC NATURE OF HIS DEALINGS WITH MANKIND. As with every Reformation-Revival, God simply must have His leaders.

I can well understand why a number of Christians today have become disillusioned and disenchanted with much of today's church leadership. But I cannot understand why they would want to do away with the whole concept of "leadership" altogether. The fact is, God may very well want to use THEM as leaders in the coming Revival. But I have found that a number of them hate the idea of leadership and authority so much that it is doubtful if they would ever heed God's call. (I have to ask:- Couldn't this just be a form of subtle 'Rebellion'? What is the true motivation behind such a dislike of godly authority?) This whole thing has been of great concern to me for a number of years now. It is my belief (backed by much that God has been saying right around the world) that He has been secretly preparing a company of future Revival leaders for many years now (hidden, as always) - the Joshuas and Davids who will suddenly arise in God's perfect timing to lead His people into Revival. If some of these men and women do not heed God's call, then we are in big trouble, surely? But on the other hand, perhaps this is just another example of the truth of the old saying, "Many are called, but few are chosen"? (I urge you to pray and think about these things).

What God has clearly spoken to me is:- "NO LEADERS - NO REVIVAL". And He has also said that "WHEN THE NEW APOSTLES ARISE, REVIVAL WILL BEGIN." Just like the early church, it will be the new apostles who will carry the genuine Revival anointing in these Last Days, and it will be when they arise that Revival will truly start. (This has been so with every true Reformation-Revival). These will be men of enormous godly authority and power. They will certainly not abuse such authority, but neither will they be afraid to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" where necessary. And these powerful ministries, along with the many prophets and evangelists who are also about to arise, will go forth under a mighty anointing - an army 'terrible, with banners' - "destroying the works of the devil" in Jesus' name. Many of these leaders may seem rather 'rough' by outward appearance (just like the ex-fishermen and tax collectors of the Book of Acts), but they will walk in total heart-purity before God. And I also believe that though they may not be 'apostles' as such, God is going to use CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS in a tremendous way in the coming Revival as well (often in a way that may even put the adults to shame). What glorious days these will be.

SMITH WIGGLESWORTH'S VISION

The following account is of a particularly powerful vision given to Smith Wigglesworth during the early part of World War II, when he was being visited by a young Lester Sumrall (the well-known healing-deliverance evangelist and founder of the charitable organization 'Feed the Hungry'). This account of Wigglesworth's vision comes from pg 168-169 of Lester Sumrall's 1995 book, 'Pioneers of Faith':

"... Shutting his eyes again, he said, 'I see the greatest revival in the history of mankind coming to Planet earth, maybe as never before. And I see every form of disease healed. I see whole hospitals emptied with no one there. Even the doctors are running down the streets shouting.'

"He told me that there would be untold numbers of uncountable multitudes that would be saved. No man will say 'so many, so many,' because nobody will be able to count those who come to Jesus. No disease will be able to stand before God's people... 'It will be a worldwide situation, not local,' he said, 'a worldwide thrust of God's power and God's anointing upon mankind.'

"Then he opened his eyes and looked at me and said, 'I will not see it, but you shall see it. The Lord says that I must go on to my reward, but that you will see the mighty works that He will do upon the earth in the last days.'

"... The idea that I would get to see this revival was almost overwhelming. And in the last decade or so, I believe we have seen this revival begin to sweep the earth. We have seen amazing moves of God in Africa... Recently, I was in China and met with the underground church. I was told there are at least forty-five million Full Gospel Christians in China. I discovered a depth of prayer and integrity there that I have not felt anywhere else in the world... So I believe we are seeing Wigglesworth's prophecy begin to be fulfilled. We are seeing the first stages of it."

The interesting thing (in light of Wigglesworth's prophecy that he would see at least the beginning of this end-time Revival) is that Lester Sumrall died on April 28, 1996. I find it uncanny the way God has been pointing to the significance of the year 1996 and also 1997. You may remember the prophecy of William Branham's that I mentioned in another article, where he prophesied that the church would go into a 'wilderness' period for forty years. As I said, this prophecy was reportedly given in Chicago on January 16, 1956 - at the tail end of the Healing Revival. And of course, forty years on from 1956 brings us to 1996. Interesting,

isn't it? (Please see my 'Signs in the Heavens' article for more on all this. God really does seem to be pointing to the significance of these two years). Who knows what the near future may bring?

Something else I want to mention is that a well-known international preacher reportedly prophesied this year that two prominent Christian leaders must die before the great Revival will come. This lines up very well with what God has been showing myself and others, about key leaders of the 'Old Guard' needing to pass on before God's new leadership can truly emerge to lead His church into Reformation and Revival. (This is an important principle in God's economy, as is seen in the life of David, etc). It is my belief that if any one leader has 'dominated' the era that we have seen in the church over the past fifty years or so, it is Billy Graham. Much could be said about this, but suffice it to say that it would not surprise me to see God take him home in the near future, to give entry to His new leadership - who will 'dominate' the new era in the church. (Billy Graham has been ill for some time now, after all). Space forbids any further discussion of all this, but please do remember to look out for the fulfillment of the above prophecies.

It is my belief that we now live on the verge of the most momentous days in the history of the church. The glory of God is about to come down. And no longer will God's people be a laughing-stock, both of men and of devils. Clearly, the time is soon coming when God's 'mighty men and women of valour' must again come to the fore, as in days of old. I believe that God is again looking in our day for men and women who will risk everything for Him, who have died to sin and to self, who cannot abide fleshly showmanship or hype, and who desire only to serve God with a purity of spirit rather than an excess of soul-power.

Surely Watchman Nee's words are tragically true, not only of many Christians today, but sadly of many leaders also: "The corrupted old man in the believer has died but his soul remains the power behind his walk. On the one hand the sinful nature has been drastically touched but on the other hand the self life still persists and therefore cannot escape being soulish... To depend upon the soul life to carry out the wish of the spirit is to use natural (or human) force to accomplish supernatural (or divine) goodness. This is simply trying to fulfill God's demand with self-strength... Few are those disposed honestly to acknowledge their weakness and incapability and to lean utterly upon God. Who will confess his uselessness if he has not been humbled by the grace of God? Man takes pride in his prowess... He does not understand that however good to the human outlook his efforts may appear to be, they can never please God... He fails miserably to be spiritual and continues to abide in the soul." (Watchman Nee, 'The Spiritual Man', Vol.1-3).

It is in the barren 'wilderness' of brokenness and despair, that God chooses to deal with such soulish self-power in His servants. And it is only when this 'self' has been utterly put to the sword that God can afford to entrust these servants with His miracle-working power. Only when they desire nothing but His glory, can He grant them the weapons of a mighty warfare. As a prophecy that was given several years ago in America stated: "I have used many swords in years past; and some were made of polluted metals. I used them because they were the only weapons available to Me. But for this last Great Revival, I must have swords of the purest metals which have been through the hottest fires so that they will not break in My Hand..."

It is my belief that our Almighty God is now looking for men and women whom He can entrust with such an anointing. He is looking for a people who will truly "love not their lives unto the death", who know the dangers but who are willing to risk all (even in light of the failure of some in the past), to see God glorified and His standard raised in the earth in our day. We are still surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses - men and women who fought a glorious fight and ran a peerless race. And God is now looking for men and women of this same ilk, who hunger and thirst after Him, who press forward into the deep things of God, and who have willingly paid the price and spent much time alone with Him. Like Elisha, who would not let go of Elijah until he had received a double portion of that great prophet's anointing, they will never let go of God until He blesses them with a similar endowment.

Charles Finney said, "PRAY MOST for the Holy Spirit of God, and WRESTLE MOST with God for His blessing... If you have the Holy Spirit of God, you must expect to feel great distress in view of the condition of the church, and of the world." It is only through such fervent, agonizing, WRESTLING prayer that we can break through into these greater realms in God. And then, how Satan will oppose us! (And most likely, the church leaders also). As the apostle Paul wrote: "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of OUR TROUBLE which came to us in Asia: that we were BURDENED BEYOND MEASURE, ABOVE STRENGTH, SO THAT WE DESPAIRED EVEN OF LIFE." (2 Cor 1:8).

As David, king of Israel declared, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Ps 42:2). And it was clearly the apostle Paul's great desire, "That I may KNOW HIM [JESUS], and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philipp 3:10). Again, Charles Finney declared: "Revival comes from heaven when heroic souls enter the conflict determined to win or die... The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE." Some years ago, God shared with me the secret of becoming part of the new move of God. It is simply this:- "WHO DARES WINS". As I said before, I believe that God is currently searching for such men and women, "tried as by fire", who will lead His people into the coming great war. And "DARING" will be one of the most important qualifications. Tell me, friend, will you be one of these?... "But TARRY YE in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH" (Lk 24:49).

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