

THE HEALING REVIVAL AND THE LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT

1. After World War II, events in the Pentecostal movement resulted in two related developments: The Latter Rain movement and the Charismatic movement. Setting the stage for these movements was a post-war healing revival, the peak of which occurred from about 1946-1958.

BACKGROUND OF THE HEALING REVIVAL

1. Through the history of Christianity, there have been various revivals of divine healing. The New Testament clearly teaches that healing is one of the spiritual gifts that God has given to the Church: and it instructs the church to pray for the healing of those who are sick.

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Jas 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Jas 5:16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

2. The Gospel contains many accounts of people who were healed in the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the Book of Acts contains many accounts of people who were healed through the prayers of the apostles and the early church. In history, whenever people have proclaimed and believed the healing message of the Scriptures, God has performed miracles of healing.

3. Even before the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the twentieth century, there were significant healings revivals in the nineteenth century, both in Europe and in America. In the late 1800s many preachers and teachers in the Holiness movement proclaimed the message of divine healing. They taught that Christians could receive healing by praying to the Lord in faith.
4. Most of these leaders also began to teach that healing is part of the Atonement. That is, just as Christ purchased our justification and sanctification by His death, burial and resurrection, so He purchased our healing. He came to reverse all the consequences of our sins, including sickness and disease. They appealed to the scriptural statement that says, “With His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24) They noted that Matthew 8:16-17 clearly applies the Atonement passage in Isaiah 53 to physical healing.

Mat 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

Mat 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

5. A number of Holiness evangelists, both men and women, became noted for their message of healing. While most taught a balanced view of healing that respected the sovereignty of God and acknowledged that healing did not always come instantly or as people desired, a few went to extremes in their teaching. Some insisted that healing would always come instantaneously if a person had sufficient faith. As they believed to be an instantaneous experience. Other held that if someone had enough faith to be saved then he had enough faith to be healed. The upshot of this kind of teaching was that if a person did not receive his healing then his salvation was also questionable. Some rejected all use of medicine and doctors’, saying it was contrary to faith.
6. One of the most famous healing preachers was John Alexander Dowie, whose ministry reached its apex from 1894-1905. From Australia, he immigrated to the United States and attracted a national following. He later founded his own denomination, The Christian Catholic Church in his own town, Zion, Illinois.
7. Many early Pentecostal leader received inspiration from Dowie. Before the Pentecostal movement began in 1901, Charles Parham visited Dowie’s operation and learned from his methods. In 1906, Parham brought the

Pentecostal message to Zion and converted many Dowie's followers to the new movement. The parents of Gordon Lindsay, who was to figure prominently in the post-war healing revival, were also followers of Dowie.

8. Parham preached healing before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost came. Afterwards, he continued to emphasize healing, and some of his early breakthroughs came as a result of dramatic healings. Some well-known Holiness healing preachers entered the Pentecostal movement., including well known healing campaigners in the early Pentecostal movement were Smith Wigglesworth (England) Aimee Semple McPherson, Charles Price, who received the Holy Ghost under McPherson.
9. In short, healing was a prominent theme among the later Holiness preachers and among the early Pentecostals, because of their focus on divine healing.

WILLIAM BRANHAM

1. Known as the father and the pacesetter of post-war healing revival was William Branham (1909-1965). As a young person, Branham received a personal healing and became an independent Baptist Preacher. Later he received the Holy Ghost and became a Pentecostal. He also accepted water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and adopted a nontrinitarian, Oneness view of the Godhead. He preached for both Trinitarian and Oneness churches, but he remained independent.
2. Branham stated that he had received visitations from God at ages three and seven. Then, in 1946 he testified that an angel visited him and announced that God would give him a gift of divine healing. He said this angel guided him from that time forward. Branham's followers displayed a 1950 photograph of Branham preaching in Houston. Above his head is something that appears to be a halo or flash of light.
3. Branham began his healing campaigns in 1946, and the results were amazing. In his hayday, he filled the world's largest auditoriums and stadiums. Perhaps

the most outstanding miracle occurred in 1951. William Upshaw, a U.S. congressman from California who had been crippled for many years, was healed in one of Branham's campaigns. This notable event catapulted Branham to international fame.

4. Branham had an unusual ability to discern people's illnesses. He would call them out of the audience, reveal details about them, inspire their faith, and pray for their healing. Many people were healed.
5. Branham assembled a management team of three men. Jack Moore, Gordon Linsay (AG), and W.J.E. Ern Baxter (Independent). Moore was a UPC pastor from Shreveport, Louisiana, who was so impressed with Branham that he devoted himself to managing Branham's campaigns.
6. Branham's central message was healing and prosperity. During the time of his greatest popularity he did not place great emphasis on doctrine. For instance, he believed that everyone needed to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, including those already baptized with Trinitarian formula. Instead, during this time he conducted most of his ministry among Trinitarians.
7. For Branham's first three meetings, **Nathaniel Urshan**, a UPCI evangelist and later general superintendent, preached the opening message, after which Branham conducted his healing ministry. When Urshan proclaimed baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, Branham asked him not to do so, and Urshan ended his association with the campaign.
8. Branham's ministry began to decline in the mid 1950s. He encountered severe financial difficulties, and when the Charismatic movement began, he had difficulty adapting to it. He was from a country background with limited education, while most Charismatic's were urban middle-class people from mainline denominations, and Branham was not very successful in attracting them.
9. In his later ministry, he began to emphasize doctrine, including several unusual, distorted beliefs. His following narrowed to those who embraced these

views. In particular, he taught what is known as the “*serpent seed doctrine*.” This doctrine asserts the original sin of the human race was sexual. In the Garden of Eden, Eve committed sin and became spiritually polluted by having a sexual relationship with the devil. By having relations with her after this time, Adam likewise became polluted. In this way the whole human race came under sin and perpetuates sin to future generations.

10. Branham further maintained that Eve conceived a child by the devil, namely Cain. Cain and his descendants were therefore predestined to damnation. Thus even today some people are literally children of the devil and cannot be saved. They will be annihilated in the end of time.
11. Of course, nothing in Scripture teaches or implies anything like the serpent seed doctrine. However, Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church (The Moonies) promote essentially the same view today.
12. Branham understood the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3 to be representative of ages in church history. He interpreted each church’s “angel” (which literally means “messenger” in Greek) to be God’s special prophet to the respective age. For example, he identified Martin Luther as the messenger or prophet for the age of Reformation. He concluded that his day was the last church age, the age of Laodicea, and he was the prophet for that age. On his grave is a pyramid that lists the seven ages and seven prophets, and it identifies Branham as the end-time prophet.
13. Those who accepted Branham’s message would constitute the bride of Christ in the end time and would go up in the Rapture. Organized religion was the mark of the beast, although people in various denominations could be saved. He said their salvation was suffering through the Tribulation. Branham predicted that the Millennium would begin by 1977.
14. Branham identified himself as the coming of Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (See Malachi 4:5). He also understood himself to be the angel of Revelation 10 and one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11.

15. Based on his prophetic role, Branham advocated what he called the spoken word ministry. According to this view, when he preached under the anointing of God, God actually inspired him to speak authoritative words. Thus, even today, his followers study his books and tapes, believing that they are the special message of God for this age. One of their major methods of evangelism is to distribute his messages in transcribed and taped form.
16. Branham died on December 24, 1965, as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident some days earlier. His followers expected that he would soon rise from the dead, like the two witnesses in Revelation 11, so they embalmed and refrigerated his body and delayed his funeral for one month. Some even believed him to be born of a virgin or to be God incarnate. Even after the memorial service on January 26, 1966, Branham's followers delayed his burial until after Easter in hopes that he would rise on that day like Jesus. Finally their hopes dashed, they buried him on April 11, 1966.
17. Many Pentecostal observers have concluded that Branham was a man whom God used greatly to inspire faith in people to receive divine miracles, particularly in the early half of his ministry. He was not conceited; he lived simply, and exhibited a real concern for people and their needs. Unfortunately, over a period of time he developed and exaggerated opinion of his role. This exalted view of self, his theological inexperience, and his independent spirit led him into false and destructive doctrines and seriously damaged his effectiveness and legacy.

ORAL ROBERTS

1. The second major figure in the post-World War II healing revival was Oral Roberts (born 1918). Roberts was originally a member of the Pentecostal Holiness Church. At age seventeen he was healed of tuberculosis and stuttering. In 1947, one year after Branham, he began a healing ministry. Roberts met Branham on a number of occasions, ministered with him, and was influenced by him to some degree. Oral Roberts soon became the foremost healing evangelist in America.

2. The main emphasis of Robert's ministry has been health, prosperity, and hope. In 1955, when television was first becoming widespread in America, he began a national weekly television program; thus he was one of the earliest religious figures to use television.
3. Oral Roberts was one of the catalysts of the Charismatic movement, for he attracted many people from mainline churches and introduced them to Pentecostal concepts. He was a key influence in the formation of the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship in 1951. At the century's end, he was still one of the leading figures in the Charismatic movement.

char·is·mat·ic

adj.

1. Of, relating to, or characterized by charisma:
2. Of, relating to, or being a type of Christianity that emphasizes personal religious experience and divinely inspired powers, as of healing, prophecy, and the gift of tongues.

Adj. 1. **charismatic** - possessing an extraordinary ability to attract; "a charismatic leader"; "a magnetic personality"
[magnetic](#)

charisma [kə'rizmə], **charism** ['kærizəm]

n

1. a special personal quality or power of an individual making him capable of influencing or inspiring large numbers of people
 2. a quality inherent in a thing which inspires great enthusiasm and devotion
 3. (Christianity / Ecclesiastical Terms) *Christianity* a divinely bestowed power or talent
4. Between 1947 and 1968, Roberts conducted over 300 crusades and personally prayed for millions of people. In the 1950s, his radio program was on more than 500 stations, His Sunday morning television program was the number-one syndicated religious program in America for three years, his monthly magazine reached a circulation of one million, and 674 newspapers carried his monthly column. In the 1970s his prime-time television show reached an estimated 64 million viewers. In 1965, Roberts founded Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. By 1988, it was worth 250 million dollars and had an enrollment of 4,600 students.

5. He ran into financial problems and on one occasion, he announced that he had seen a 900-foot vision of Jesus telling him to complete the work. He even stated that God would “take him home” if he did not raise the remaining eight million dollars that he needed. Critics responded that this claim in effect made God a hostage taker. At the last moment, the owner of a race track in Florida gave Roberts a sizable donation from gambling income that enabled him to reach his goal.
6. However, Roberts had to close the City of Faith because it could not sustain itself financially.

OTHER HEALING EVANGELISTS

1. Kathryn Kuhlman (1907-76) : Became the world’s most widely known female evangelist. She never openly identified with the Pentecostal movement, and she did not allow public speaking in tongues in her services. In this regard, no one knows exactly where she stood in her theology or experience. She established a large church in Denver.
2. Kuhlman was dramatic in ministry and flamboyant in lifestyle. Her biographer and personal friend noted, “She loved expensive clothes, precious jewels, luxury hotels, and first class travel.
3. Others: A.A. Allen another healing revivalist who started with the AG (1950).

DOCTRINES OF THE LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT

(Although it was not primarily doctrinal in nature, it was Spirit without letter to guide it, which gave way to improper use of the Gifts of the Spirit.)

1. **Spiritual Gifts**, including the bestowal of gifts upon each other: Pentecostals have always advocated the gifts of the Spirit, but the Latter Rain people urged individuals to seek various gifts, sometimes even naming the gifts they would receive or attempting to transfer gifts to one other.

2. **Lying on of hands**, including its use to bestow spiritual gifts.
3. **Prophecy, particularly personal prophecy**: Many people made important decisions on the basis of personal prophecies. Some promoted new teachings on the basis of direct revelations.
4. **Identification of modern-day apostles and prophets**: The concept in itself was not objectionable, but the problems came when they attempted to identify who was and who was not an apostle or a prophet. Further problems developed when self-designated apostles and prophets sought to assert spiritual authority over others and give authoritative pronouncements.
5. **Fellowship with all professing Christians**: The Latter Rain people minimized doctrinal teachings and standards of holiness, which were quite important to the entire Pentecostal movement at that time. In essence, they sought active fellowship with anyone who confessed Christianity. Issues such as Oneness-Trinitarian controversy, the initial evidence doctrine, and many lifestyle choices were not important to them.
6. **The Kingdom Now Doctrine**: The kingdom of God would be visibly established on the earth, characterized by a supernatural life in this world. They felt they would achieve such a place of spirituality that they would become visible identified as sons of God by many miracles and victories in the Spiritual warfare.
7. **The Complete Autonomy of the local church**: They felt that local churches should not submit to organizational decisions regarding doctrine, lifestyle, and fellowship. Essentially, each church should operate independently in theology and government.
8. **In Conclusion**: The Classical Pentecostals were correct to withdraw from the New Order of the Latter Rain. While in many ways it was a sincere manifestation of spiritual hunger and while in some cases it brought revival, most often it resulted in confusion, division, doctrinal compromise, and neglect of holiness lifestyle, theology, and unscriptural excesses.