

BELIEVERS INTERNATIONAL

December, 2000

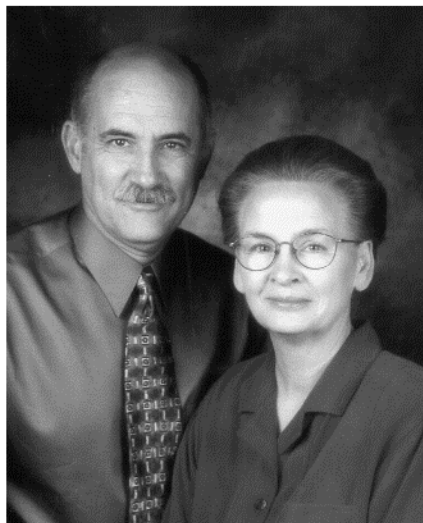
NEWS

In I Corinthians 4:17, Paul told the church at Corinth that he was sending to them a young preacher named Timothy, "... who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church." Paul knew that the people were bound to have questions they would like to ask him concerning the manner in which they, as Christians, should deal with everyday issues. So he told the Corinthians that Timothy knew him well enough to be able to tell them the way he personally dealt with these matters.

"What would Paul do in this situation?" was likely a common refrain in the households of first-century Christians. And it is not unexpected that believers today have similar questions regarding the manner in which Brother Branham personally dealt with some of the

social situations that we are faced with every day.

Routinely, we receive phone calls and mail regarding such issues as



George & Rebekah Smith

holiday celebrations, discipline of children, medicinal treatments, apparel, and even grooming practices. Being a part of Brother Branham's family, sometimes we are able to draw upon our personal experiences for answers. But as willing as we are to do this, we also realize that it is a serious responsibility that requires prayerful consideration, lest we give an answer that could be misleading in the slightest way.

This time of the year we can always count on receiving numerous inquiries regarding Christmas trees and gift giving. It has been several years since we have published anything on this subject, so we thought we would briefly do so once again, and add a few more of our most frequently asked questions, along with our thoughts on the subject, as well. We trust this will be a blessing to you.

How did Brother Branham celebrate Christmas with his family?

First and most importantly, Dad always tried to be at home during the Christmas season, and for us kids, that alone was cause enough for a celebration! I have wonderful memories of going to the woods to find the perfect tree, and when we got home, Mom and Dad would put the lights on it themselves. Then they'd turn us kids loose to hang the ornaments.

We never paid any attention to the "Santa Claus" stuff. Even when the kids at school talked about what Santa Claus was going to bring them, or had brought them, we thought they were being silly! We knew what Christmas was really about. And we always felt that the gifts we had received and the special time we had spent together as a family was greater than anything the other kids could even imagine, because ours was real.

Our gifts were not elaborate, but we would each have several under the tree. (We knew that Dad had a hard time keeping secrets, so we'd try to charm him into giving us hints as to what was in the brightly wrapped packages.) Even at the Tabernacle there would be a gift bag of candy and fruit presented to every child on the Sunday nearest Christmas.

There was always a very special Christmas dinner of turkey and cornbread stuffing (with Mom making a small bowl of the special oyster stuffing that Dad – and nobody else! – loved). Then we'd go to Grandma Branham's house where there would be lots of cousins, aunts, uncles, noise, and more food.

We never had any occasion to feel that we had missed out on the celebration of Christmas.

In December of 1965, the last few days we were to have with Dad, we were in Tucson and Mother decided that since we were leaving for Jeffersonville on the 18th, we would not have a tree that year. But on the 15th, just three days before the trip, Dad surprised us all by bringing home a tree and putting it up in the living room of our small apartment. It was not even a real tree, but an aluminum one with multicolored lights. Dad said that he didn't think it was fair for the "kiddies" (ages 19, 15, and 10) not to have a Christmas tree.

At the time I can remember thinking that it was quite possibly the ugliest tree I had ever seen. But I was 19, and looking only with my natural eyes. Then I became a parent myself, and realized what an act of love that little aluminum object represented, and since then it has remained in my heart as the most beautiful Christmas tree of all.

...continued on next page

How did Brother Branham feel about Halloween? Did he allow his children to dress up and go trick-or-treating?

Although we did not have Halloween decorations or attend Halloween parties, as young children we were permitted to dress up and go door-to-door gathering candy in our immediate neighborhood. We would dress as cowboys, Indian princesses, or even Bible and other historic characters, but never as witches, goblins, ghosts, demons, or other ghoulish figures.

I do not feel that there can be a real comparison between the limited Halloween activities that we were allowed to participate in as children, and the darker, yet often most subtly-presented, evil celebration that we see now. And every year they seem to become bigger and bigger. I recently read that Halloween has become the second largest celebration of the year in terms of dollars spent, and a great deal of that growth can be attributed to the influence of Hollywood.

A new kind of 'witch' is being presented to the general public, and she is no longer a hideous crone, but a beautiful, smart, and very powerful woman. And, she is so popular that we are now experiencing what could be called a celebration of the witch.

Take a minute to peruse the entertainment section of the newspaper and you will see just how many new movie and television productions there are based on a theme of witchcraft. These characters are then translated into toys, costumes, books, dolls, video games, music, and other entertainment materials that are often aimed at our children. You may already have purchased these products without actually knowing the background of the toy.

The increased popularity of witchcraft themes can be attributed totally to the growing influence of such New Age philosophies as Wicca and Scientology. Wicca (a name which you can expect to hear more and more frequently) is a very polished form of witchcraft based on nature-worship and the religions of ancient, tribal Europe, which reverences the rhythms and cycles of the earth. It is their belief that truth and divinity consists only of that which we are able to produce within ourselves (and is therefore answerable to no higher Being), and it also offers its adherents power and control over other people through the casting of spells. Interestingly, it was first brought to the USA in 1962 by a well-known British witch who was instrumental in the production of a television comedy titled "Bewitched," which ran from 1964 through 1972, and still runs around the world in syndication. The better-known Scientology (the religion of choice among Hollywood's 'beautiful people,') makes itself attractive by promising a new life – an eternal life – through reincarnation.

There is really nothing 'new' about these New Age doctrines. Satan is just trying to up-date his package in order to make it more attractive to Laodiceans whose sole devotion is to 'self.' It is not threatening to the true believers that are anchored in the Word. But it is always needful to be aware of the subtle wiles of the enemy, so that we can thwart any attempt he might make to attack our minds, or the minds of our children.

As far as social activities, what were you allowed to do on Sundays?

Sundays were definitely a day of rest in our home. Dad did not like to do unnecessary buying, even such goods as gasoline for the car (unless we were traveling). When at home, he would always fill up the tank on Saturday.

We did eat at restaurants on Sunday, but unless it was an emergency, he would avoid grocery shopping, and other shopping as well. The same went for hunting. He would often go into the woods, but he would not take his gun.

Between the morning and evening services, he liked for the house to be quiet, and preferred that we refrain from loud and boisterous activities. The one exception to that was singing. We could play the piano and sing as loud as we wanted to! On more than one occasion, he rebuked Billy Paul for playing baseball on Sunday. If we had friends over to visit, we would listen to records, or play games.

Were the girls in the family allowed to participate in sports?

If you are referring to very active, spectator sports, the answer is "no," after we reached a certain age. Undoubtedly many girls may be shocked, or even upset at reading this, but I would like to tell you exactly what happen to me:

In the summer of 1963 (I was 17 years old) Dad put up a badminton net in the back yard of our home in Jeffersonville. One afternoon, my good friend, Betty Collins Phillips, and I were in the middle of a game when three friends (two boys and one girl) stopped by and joined us. We continued playing for a short time, then I heard a tapping at the bedroom window. It was Dad, and he motioned for me to come inside. When I did, here is what he said to me:

"I put up the net so that you, Betty, and your other girlfriends could play and have a good time. But you are too old now to be playing this game in the presence of boys. If the boys want to play, you can sit and watch, but you should not be jumping around like that in front of them. You're a young lady now."

Even though we were very modestly dressed, his objections were nearly the same as they would have been had we been swimming! Except in this instance, our dress was modest, but our actions were not. It sounds hopelessly old-fashioned, doesn't it? But let's face it: We are the ones who have slowly redefined the meaning of the word 'modesty,' not Brother Branham, and not the Lord.

For an activity that we could do in mixed company, Dad would encourage us to go hiking.

Did Brother Branham vote in political elections, as he stated in "What Shall I Do With Jesus Called Christ" 63-1124 concerning the election that placed Kennedy in the White House?

When Howard Branham ran for a county office in the '50s, Brother Branham did register so that he could vote for his brother. But, to the very best of our knowledge, Brother Branham never went into a voting booth to cast a vote in a national election, including the presidential race of 1960. He did make it clear that his choice for President was Richard Nixon, and he may have participated in some of the polling activities or numerous 'mock elections' that were taking place at that time. He also watched the presidential debate on television.

Sister Branham was never a registered voter. □

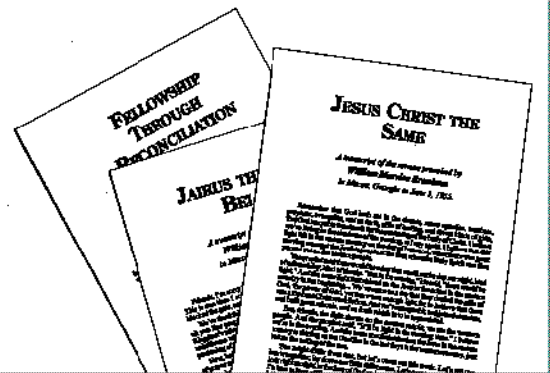
TRANSCRIPTS – over 500 this month!

For the past several years, we have been providing a service that we rarely mention, and therefore many do not yet know that it is available. If you need a transcript of a message that is not yet in print, or is currently out of print, for the price of \$1.00 each, we can provide one for you in booklet form, with a self-cover.

These transcripts are from the same database that we use when compiling a search for *The Compendium*, and therefore are in a constant state of up-grade. Slowly we are grammarizing (to use Brother Branham's terminology) each message in order to make it easier to read by not including the repeats of a stutter, or printing the phonetic or incorrect spelling of certain words (such as 'cause for *because*, or *borned* for *born*, to name just a couple).

This past year we have been asked repeatedly if it would be possible to provide book covers for the transcripts, identical to the cover of "The Messiah" transcript, which we published last December. This is something we are considering, but it would cause a slight increase in the price.

If you are interested in receiving transcripts, you can find details and an order form on our web site at www.onlybelieve.com



This is a testimony you will want to share with your teenager!

My Miracle

BY NAOMI PETERSON

On September 9th, my two sisters, Hannah and Esther, and I decided to take a hiking and camping trip into the Grand Canyon. We were joined by two of our friends from church, making a total of five in our band of adventurers, all of us experienced hikers.

When we arrived at the Canyon's edge (a seven-hour drive from our home in Tucson) we were expecting to get a camping permit which would allow us to take one of the popular tourist trails to the bottom of the Canyon, where we would camp for the night and then hike out the following day. But access to the Canyon is very restricted, and unfortunately all the permits for the preferred trails had already been taken by the time we arrived. Only one trail still had permits available, Tenor Trail, and the park rangers told us that it definitely was not a 'tourist attraction.' We were told that it was an un-maintained trail, and unlike many of the other trails, they might not be possible to perform a rescue operation, should one be needed. Neither did it offer any water supply until you reached the river at the bottom of the Canyon, and even that water was unfit for drinking without the proper water filters. Well, we had water filters, plus we were so dead-set on hiking that driving home without conquering the Canyon was simply not an option for us. We decided that Tenor Trail actually sounded like our kind of hike!

We started out Friday morning for what we thought would be a fairly difficult eight-mile hike to the bottom (a distance we felt we could handle comfortably). The trail got tougher and tougher each mile. Parts of it seemed to be no more than sheep or deer paths, with just enough room to put one foot in front of the other. The temperature was in the mid-80's, and with the weight we were carrying in our packs, (an average of 35 to 40 pounds each) by noon we were exhausted. Soon each step became a balancing act,

with each of us having our share of stumbles and falls. At one point in the afternoon, I fell against a poisonous cactus, and one of the needles pierced deeply into my arm. It began to swell almost immediately.

By the time we arrived at our destination at the bottom of the Canyon that evening (after an arduous 10-mile descent), we literally collapsed. And of course, in all of our minds there was the reality that the next day we would have to hike out the same way we came in, but it would be at least three times harder on the up-hill climb! The water in the river was moving so swiftly and there was so much sediment (due to recent rains in the area) that we could not get our filters to work properly. Finally we were able to devise a make-shift filtration system and slowly process what we hoped would be enough water to get us out of the Canyon the next day – if we conserved carefully. None of us really slept well that night, and I was beginning to feel sick.

The next day we tried to get an early start, to beat the sun, but by the time everything was packed the sun was not far off. We were all so tired. Not long after we started, I began feeling very weak, so much so that I didn't think I could make it any further. With everyone's encouragement, I kept on for a few more miles, but even then I was beginning to wonder whether or not I would be able to make it out alive. There were times when I honestly felt that my mind was slipping from me, and I was not able to think rationally. We stopped and my sister, Hannah, took everything heavy out of my backpack and put it into hers. Soon we were climbing for thirty minutes, then resting for fifteen minutes. I was praying constantly for the strength to put one foot in front of the other. I was dizzy and slightly delusional, but the whole group was also fatigued so we tried to encourage one another to just keep going.

There was very little shade along the trail, and when we finally did find a shady spot we decided to take an hour's rest. I immediately passed out. The others thought I had just fallen asleep, but in fact I was unconscious and only came to an hour later when my sister, after some difficulty, was able to rouse me. We started moving again, and finally, at a point we later learned was 1.8 miles from

the top, we took another break, and once again I lost consciousness. Soon I began having convulsions.

My sister and one of our friends left their backpacks and, with prayers on their lips hurried out of the Canyon for help. Hannah and our other friend stayed with me.

As soon as Esther reached the rim and was able to notify the authorities of our situation, a rescue effort was put into motion. She then notified our parents, and they in turn called others who began praying for us. Looking back, we can now see that when the saints began to pray, my condition began to improve. I was conscious, but hallucinating and saying strange things. Even though the temperature was very warm, I was cold, so Hannah put me in a sleeping bag.

It was a couple of hours before the helicopter arrived and I was airlifted out of the Canyon. It was only by God's grace that they found a landing spot so close by. I was taken to the hospital where they began treating me with IV's, for dehydration, and they ran several tests. Through it all, I was in such good spirits and joking that the doctor felt I would be all right, so they released me, even though my whole body was shaking uncontrollably. (Later we would find out that it was too early to have been released.)

The shaking did not stop the next day, and it continued on for some time. My parents took me to a neurosurgeon, who felt that the constant shaking, which resembled a severe case of Parkinson's disease, was abnormal for the circumstances. Further testing revealed that in addition to the extreme dehydration, I also had sustained a heat stroke and a brain stroke. The latter had probably been aggravated by the poison from the cactus, which caused me to have a high fever, in addition to the heat I was experiencing from both the temperature and the exertion of the climb. Because they could not tell what had happened in my brain when I lost consciousness, they felt that the shaking could possibly be permanent.

I went to church in my condition on Wednesday night to be prayed for, and the love and compassion I felt from the saints was overwhelming. Brother Green, our pastor, and some other brothers in the church prayed for me, but still the shaking continued. I was able to walk, but unable to feed myself. My head, arms, hands and parts of my back were in constant motion, even when I slept. It was extremely tiring.

On Sunday morning, I was standing in the vestibule of the church after service, and I felt to ask Brother Green to pray for me one more time. He and Brother Linhart laid hands on me, and instantly I was healed. The shaking simply stopped, immediately, on the spot! Can you imagine how my parents, who had already gone outside, felt when they saw me and my entire body was back to normal, all in a matter of seconds?

By God's grace, my testimony is that I have been totally restored, and I can't thank God enough or give Him enough praise. □

Naomi is 17 years old and lives in Tucson, Arizona, where she attends Tucson Tabernacle.

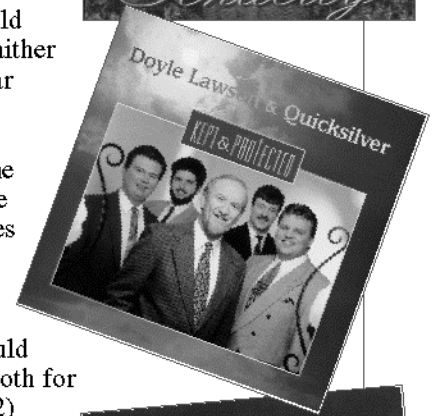
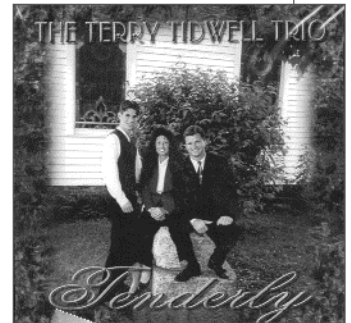


CLARIFICATION

The photos that accompanied the music article in the last issue of *Believers News* created some concern among several of our readers! "Are these the only 'approved artists' that you consider worthy to listen to?" some wrote to ask. Others wanted to know how we could include artists like Gloria Gaither and Annie Herring, who wear make-up and have cut hair.

Our choice of artists was merely a representation of the many styles of music that are available. The only guidelines we know for judging the correctness of a given song, artist, or style, are the following: 1) The artist should not be using his or her gift both for the world and in the pulpit. 2) The beat should not be rock 'n' roll. 3) The lyrics should be Scriptural, and leave no doubt in the listeners ear as to whom is being worshiped. 4) The presentation should not have sensual undertones.

Whether your taste leans towards Bluegrass or Classical, we feel that these standards still apply. □



Believers International News is published by Believers International, Inc., an non-profit Christian ministry dedicated to the furtherance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Message of His prophet, William Marrion Branham.

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