

BELIEVERS INTERNATIONAL

FEBRUARY, 2001



Good Things Ahead

Soon it will be javalina season in Arizona, and hunters will be on the trail of the wild, pig-like (though not related) game animals that live in the southern desert regions of the state. Some of the best hunting is in the vicinity of Wilcox, about 90 miles or so from Tucson. And that is where we plan to be during the last week of February and the first of March, hunting, but with a camera.

This year we would like to make available at least one part of a three part series of videos on the sites in Arizona that are of significance in the ministry of Brother Branham. Part One features the den room in Tucson, and Pima Canyon (a secluded spot just north of the den, where the Lord spoke to Brother Branham concerning marriage and divorce). In Part Two, we climb the trail in Sabino Canyon to Eagle Rock, and then on to the spot where Brother Branham was given the King's Sword. Part Three is of the hunting area near Wilcox, called Sunset Mountain, where Brother Branham was caught up in the constellation of Angels and told to return to Jeffersonville for the opening of the Seven Seals.

If you are a subscriber to The Compendium, you can look forward to receiving new material in April, August, and December. To date, there are a total of 61 subject summaries that have been completed, and this year we will add Prayer, Pentecost, and Ministry to your library. The Volume 5 binder is now available. An order form and a list of subjects can be found at our website: www.onlybelieve.com

In April we have scheduled a trip to Venezuela, which will include an expedition down the Orinoco River (a tributary of the Amazon) by canoe into the jungles of Colombia where there are many groups of new believers. Those of you with Internet access will be able to follow our progress daily (for at least a part of the way), as we post photos and stories on our website.

Also to be published later this year is a book that Rebekah has written titled My Father, My Father. It is a collection of stories and photos that provide a glimpse into the prophet's family life. We've decided to print an excerpt from the book in this newsletter, and although this is a story that you may have heard many times before, this time you will be reading it from the perspective of a nine-year-old! It begins on the next page.

MISSION FIELD REPORT

In January there was a very strong (7.5) earthquake in the Central American country of El Salvador. We have been in close communication with the pastors in that area, and at this date we have been able to verify the following:

- Miraculously, only 3 believers were slightly injured, and there were no deaths directly attributed to the earthquake.
- Of the 25 churches in the country, one was heavily damaged. It will cost \$1000 to repair.
- Twenty families had their homes completely destroyed. These were not elaborate houses, just basic shelter. It will cost an average of \$1,200 to re-construct each house.

The US news services reported that the government of El Salvador was giving \$200 to each homeowner who lost his home due to the quake. When I asked about that, the brothers there told me that the real story was a bit different. The government is actually handing out the equivalent of \$25 to each homeowner. They really need our help at this time.

All funds that we receive for the believers of El Salvador will be forwarded to a pastor in the capital city that we have known and worked with on other occasions. He will be in charge of purchasing materials and supervising the construction of the homes.

Please call us for a shipping address if you have good, clean used clothing for Mexico. Brother Murillo reports that there is a real need, especially in the mountain areas, at this time. We suggest that you do not send accessories such as purses and belts, or household items – just the necessities, so to speak. This will make it easier on the brethren who distribute the clothing, often packing items by horseback into remote regions of the country. Phone: (423)474-6565 or email: editor@onlybelieve.com.

George

The Lord directed her path, and it took her through enemy territory at a time when she was already at death's door. Then she waited, and became an overcomer that you will never be able to forget.

I don't know who saw her first. There were five adults in the yard at the time, and it could have been any one of them. Or it could have been my mother or grandmother, who were both in the kitchen, where an open window above the sink provided them with a clear view of the driveway. They would have been watchful, since I was playing outside.

I remember someone calling out, "Would you look at that!" A small animal had turned in at our gravel driveway, and was making its way past the big stone gateposts that set our house apart from others along the street. Its progress seemed strangely slow. Then we noticed that it was dragging an injured leg, and the matted fur on its left side was covered in blood.

"Well my, my," Dad said. "It's a possum."

He and the men he had been talking with quickly got up from where they were sitting, in lawn chairs beneath the maple tree, and stood watching it. They were just a few feet from the driveway, but the possum seemed oblivious to both their presence and mine. I was standing on the steps that led from the drive onto the side porch. Closer and closer it came, and it appeared to have no intention of stopping before it reached the house.

At nine years old, I didn't know much about possums, beyond the fact that the woods that lay between our house and the river were full of them. Sometimes at night we would see them on the Utica Pike, a well-traveled roadway which intersected our street at the end of the block and separated us from the woods. Many of them were killed by cars. But I'd never seen one during the day, let alone in our yard.

To reach our house, the possum had crossed the busy Pike, and come 300 feet or so down Ewing Lane. Ours was the fifth house from the corner, and the only one that was fenced. Not only that, but somehow it had managed to slip unobserved past Tippy, the neighbor's watchful black spaniel. He normally protested every intrusion by man, beast, or machine into his domain, which included the 50-foot stretch of roadway in front of the May's house, a space that the possum had just traversed.

I never could stand to see an animal suffer, or be mistreated. Even though Mother had strict rules that prohibited animals in the house, I could usually talk her into allowing the injured ones to spend a few days in my 'hospital' – a box in the basement. I had 'doctored' dogs and ducks, birds and rabbits. Then there was the time I brought home a cat... but that's another story. That part of my nature must have come from Dad, who also brought home his share of suffering and unwanted creatures, much to Mother's chagrin! One time his 'patient' was an injured alligator that was about two feet long, and he even tried to bring home two orphaned lion cubs from South Africa.

I could see that every step the possum made was agonizing, and I must have started towards it, because Dad's voice warned me to stay where I was. This was not a puppy or a helpless bird that I could 'doctor,' but a wild animal, with very sharp teeth and powerful jaws. Dad reached for a

wide leaf rake that was leaning against the tree, and started towards the poor thing.

Most people consider the opossum (or possum, as it is more commonly called) to be an ugly, dumb, rat-like animal. And granted, it's pointy nose and smooth, rope-like tail do give the impression that it is nothing more than a large rat. But it is no relation to rats, or any other North American animal. The opossum belongs to a unique order of mammals that are known as marsupials, which means their young develop in a pouch on the mother's belly. The kangaroos of Australia are the best known of all marsupials, but the possum is the only marsupial that lives in North America.

Another distinctive trait of the possum is its ability to play dead when confronted by danger, which is where we get the term "playing possum." It slows its breathing and lies very still, for hours if necessary. They are able to create such a convincing portrayal of death – including a putrid odor – that attackers will usually abandon them for fresher prey.

When Dad was near enough to reach towards the possum with the rake, it immediately stopped and rolled onto its side, as though it was dead. He gently held the rake over it as he leaned forward for a closer examination. "It's a mother, with a pouch full of babies," he announced.

Babies! I couldn't wait to see them, and once again I started towards the possum. And once again I was told to say where I was. Dad lifted the rake, and stepped back. After a moment or two, the mother managed to get to her feet, and again started towards the house. She turned as she approached the porch steps and followed along the house's foundation wall for a few feet, till she came to a somewhat sheltered spot behind a small cedar shrub. At a shallow depression in the dirt, she finally lay down. A few moments later, her pouch opened and her babies began to emerge.

When a baby possum is born, it is the size of a kidney bean – tiny, blind, and hairless. But they grow very quickly, and at two and a half months, they are big enough to ride on their mother's back. These little babies could not have been more than a few weeks old. They were a little over an inch long, still hairless, but their eyes were opened. They were squirmy, and it was hard to count them and keep our distance, but Dad finally figured out that there were nine of them.

The mother never moved, but we could hear her making low noises that sounded like groans to me. "Water," I thought, "she needs water."

I ran into the house and down the basement stairs. Mother kept an accumulation of jars and small containers on a shelf in the laundry area. I unscrewed the lid from an empty mayonnaise jar and rushed back outside. Everyone was standing together talking about the possum and not paying any attention to me, or so I thought. I filled the lid from the hose and getting on my hands and knees I reached around the shrub and began pushing it towards the possum. "Rebekah Ann, get away from that animal right this minute! It probably has rabies." Mother had come onto the porch and was watching my every move. I backed away slowly, wanting the possum to know that I wasn't abandoning her

by choice. Staying an acceptable distance away, I used a stick to push the lid closer to her pointed nose, but she couldn't lift her head to drink. I didn't know what to do, then Dad saw my dilemma and had a great idea: he directed a soft rain of water over her from the garden hose.

No one in the little group that had witnessed these strange proceedings seemed to know what to do next. Brother Banks Wood, our neighbor and close friend, was there. He had been helping Dad with some yard work that morning, but when Leo Mercier and Gene Goad, the office managers, arrived, the four of them had sat down to talk for a while. The milkman, who had just made our bi-weekly delivery, joined them just moments before the possum was spotted, and then he decided to hang around, as fascinated as the rest of us.

A few minutes later, Sister Wood, Brother Bank's wife, came from next door to see what the commotion was all about. She was the neighborhood authority on the subject of animal care. She had tanks full of guppies, and several parakeets that she'd taught to say, "You'd better be good, Jesus is coming!" And once she had a flying squirrel that she allowed to sail from curtain to curtain around her house.

"What do you think, Sister Wood?" Dad now asked.

She leaned in for a closer look. "That leg is too far gone, Brother Bill. The maggots and flies have taken over. I don't think the veterinarian would be able to help, even if you could get her into a sack and to his office." She shook her head, and then I heard the words I was dreading: "Killing her and those babies would be the merciful thing to do."

I held my breath, then I saw Dad slowly shake his head. Her suggestion didn't set well with him. He told her, "Sister Wood, I was just telling the brothers here what an shining example of real motherhood this possum has shown us. Even though she is dying, she'll fight to protect her young ones with her last breath. We'll honor Mrs. Possum by trying to make her as comfortable as we can, and we'll just leave it at that for a while."

After that, everything got back to normal pretty quickly. Our visitors went home, and Dad had several appointments that kept him busy till suppertime. I stayed on the porch reading a book, so that I could keep an eye on the possum family, but nothing much happened. Occasionally she made a feeble movement, as though to check on the babies, but for most of the day they stayed in her pouch and out of sight. The comfortable July morning turned into a sweltering afternoon, and the space beside the little cedar was fully exposed to the sun. The only thing I knew to do was spray her occasionally with water from the hose, as Dad had done.



My biggest fear was that Sister Wood would come by when I wasn't there. Without someone to stop her, I was afraid she might take it upon herself to help the possums by 'putting an end to their suffering.' So, I stood guard.

My Grandma Broy was still at the house that evening, and she stayed with us children while Mother and Dad took a drive after supper, to relax. She had been staying with us quite a bit lately, helping Mother take care of my brand new baby brother and four-year-old sister. She would also stay with us on the few occasions when Mother would travel with Dad to a meeting. Everybody who knew her called her Ma, and I loved her dearly. At night, after she put Sarah to bed, she and I would sit on the porch and I would comb her hair. It had become a summertime ritual that I looked forward to.

That night, as I combed and braided her long, gray strands of hair, Mrs. Possum and her babies lay just a few feet away. It made me think of something that had happened the summer before, when Ma was staying with us and Mother and Dad were away: We had just finished our hair ritual one evening when a taxi pulled up in the driveway and stopped next to the porch. The driver got out and called, "Ma, I've got Fletcher in the back of the cab. I found him passed-out in the street, and didn't know what to do with him."

Fletcher was my uncle, Mother's older brother. He was a kind and tenderhearted person, but he was also an alcoholic. Sometimes there would be days, or even weeks, when he would disappear on a drinking binge, and his family would not even know if he were alive or dead. I had never seen him (or anyone else, for that matter) drunk, and I felt frightened as the driver helped Ma get him out of the taxi and up and steps. They deposited him on the floor, in front of the glider. "Go on to bed now, Sweetheart," she told me. "Everything will be fine, but you don't need to be out here."

I went as far as the other side of the screened door that led into the kitchen, and from there I watched to see what she would do.

Ma thanked the driver, and he left, then she shook Uncle Fletcher to try and rouse him. He mumbled something that sounded like "Sorry, Ma."

"Fletcher," she told him, "I've got too much respect for Brother Bill to allow you to come into his home. But you're mine, and I won't turn you away. You can sleep on the porch till morning."

She took off her apron, folded it, and put it under his head. Then she sat down on the glider. Uncle Fletcher was at her feet, lying on his back. He began snore loudly, and I could tell from 10 feet away that he was smelly. I was thinking that this was one of the ugliest things I had ever seen in my life.

Then Ma leaned down towards him, her long gray braid falling forward to touch his shoulder. With her hand, she reached out and tenderly stroked his own dirty and tangled hair away from his forehead. "Mama loves you darlin'" she whispered, as she patted his cheek, and she began to hum softly. It sounded like a lullaby.

I felt as though something had reached inside my chest and squeezed my heart. I knew I was witnessing something powerful. It was a lesson in motherhood, and I knew I would never forget that image as long as I lived.

Now I wondered. Is that what Mrs. Possum is feeling for her babies, as she struggles for her life and theirs? She too was a good mother; Dad had said so. Would the Lord honor that, and spare her, for her babies' sake?

European Tour

August 2 – 17

If you are 18 or older and single, now is the time for you to see Europe in the company of Christian friends. Traveling by bus, train, and boat, we will visit England, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and Belgium.

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I could hardly sleep that night, wondering what the situation would be in the morning. The kitchen door was already open when I went out to check on her, sometime soon after sunrise. Dad was on the porch, looking down at the little suffering family. “Is she alive?” I asked.

“Yes, she is,” he told me, “but she’s worse off than she was yesterday. I nudged her with my foot a while ago, and there was no response. But she is still breathing.”

Together, we looked down at the possums for a minute or so. We could see some movement as the babies stirred inside her slightly opened pouch. “Go climb in bed with Mommy and sleep a little longer,” Dad said, then he turned and went into his den room, through the doorway on the porch.

But I couldn’t sleep any more. I knew that something would have to be done soon, but I couldn’t stand the thought of the possums being killed. I scooted down against the wall, next to the kitchen door, and waited.

When Dad came out of his den and onto the porch, he didn’t see me, and I did not make my presence known. I knew that something was going to happen, because Dad wasn’t the same when he walked out of the den as he had been when he went in a short time before. Somehow you could just tell. Was it the way that he held his shoulders, or the tilt of his head? I don’t really know.

He walked down the steps and went to stand directly in front of the spot where Mrs. Possum and her babies lay. He lifted his face towards the sky and raised his hands. There were tears on his cheeks.

I confess that I didn’t even hear all of what he prayed. What I did hear was, “She came to be prayed for, and like a lady, she’s been waiting her turn....” That was it! I knew there was something special about her, just as I knew at that instant that she was healed.

As he finished praying, I stood up and walked over to see what was happening at his feet. Mrs. Possum was standing! Her first steps were tentative, but then Dad stepped aside, she passed by him on strong and steady legs. Her fur was still matted and dirty, but obviously the flesh and bone underneath had been completely restored.

When she got to the end of the driveway, she paused between the two gateposts and made a half turn to look back at us. It was such an obvious “Thank you” that I could almost hear the words being spoken. Then she turned to the left and headed back to her home in the woods. We never saw her again. □

Thank you for your encouragement!

We appreciate the letters and emails that we received regarding the story of grammarized transcripts that appeared in the December Believers News. This has always been an important issue to us, and your enthusiastic response has reaffirmed our belief that there is a need today for the Message in this format.

As a teenager, I was involved in the editing of the book *An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages*, one of several people who read the text aloud to Brother Branham and made notations of the corrections he wished to be made. Over and over again he would say, “It has to read right when you put it on paper!” It was important to him then, and that is the primary reason that even after nearly thirty-six years, it still remains an important issue to us. However we also recognize the fact that today there is an even greater need among the Message believers for a verbatim text as well, and we encourage and support that most vital work.

Grammarize is a unique word that was created by Brother Branham, and we feel that it is a perfect description of what he wanted to take place when his words were put into print. Prayerfully, and with great care given to Brother Branham’s way of speaking, we strive for readability. We know that there is no one else that speaks like our prophet, and when his words go onto paper they must retain all the unique syntax that is his and his alone. Grammarizing will not be a hindrance for those who like to read the text as they listen to the taped message.

We also want to thank those of you who took the time to personally express your concern or disagreement with our efforts. We know that you will keep us mindful of the seriousness and responsibility of the task that we have undertaken.

Rebekah

Believers International News is published by Believers International, Inc., a 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.

All Things Are possible, Only Believe.

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