

BELIEVERS INTERNATIONAL

APRIL, 2001



He had the appearance that one usually associates with Old Testament patriarchs and prophets – thin, to the point of gauntness; a flowing white beard and deep-set eyes. His clothing would have been considered shabby by anyone’s standards, but somehow it didn’t distract from the distinguished air that was evident both in his countenance and his demeanor.

He was somewhat of a mystery man. The details of his early life were known only to a few close acquaintances. Clues we’ve been given allude to great accomplishments and celebrity, both as a circus star (an acrobat) and as an actor. But he purposely distanced himself from that part of his life. His beard afforded him the anonymity he sought.

We do not know how old he was when he dedicated his life to God’s service, or when he became affiliated with the Pentecostal people. When Brother Branham met him for the first time, in 1935, he was 55 years old and an itinerant preacher whose pulpit was the street corners of America. Their meeting took place in Louisville, Kentucky, at a convention sponsored by an organization called The School of the Prophets. The older evangelist and the young pastor took an immediate liking to one another, and Brother Ryan was invited to the little house on Mechanic Street in Jeffersonville, where Brother Branham and his wife, Hope, lived with their new baby boy, Billy Paul.

One evening as they were talking, Brother Ryan began

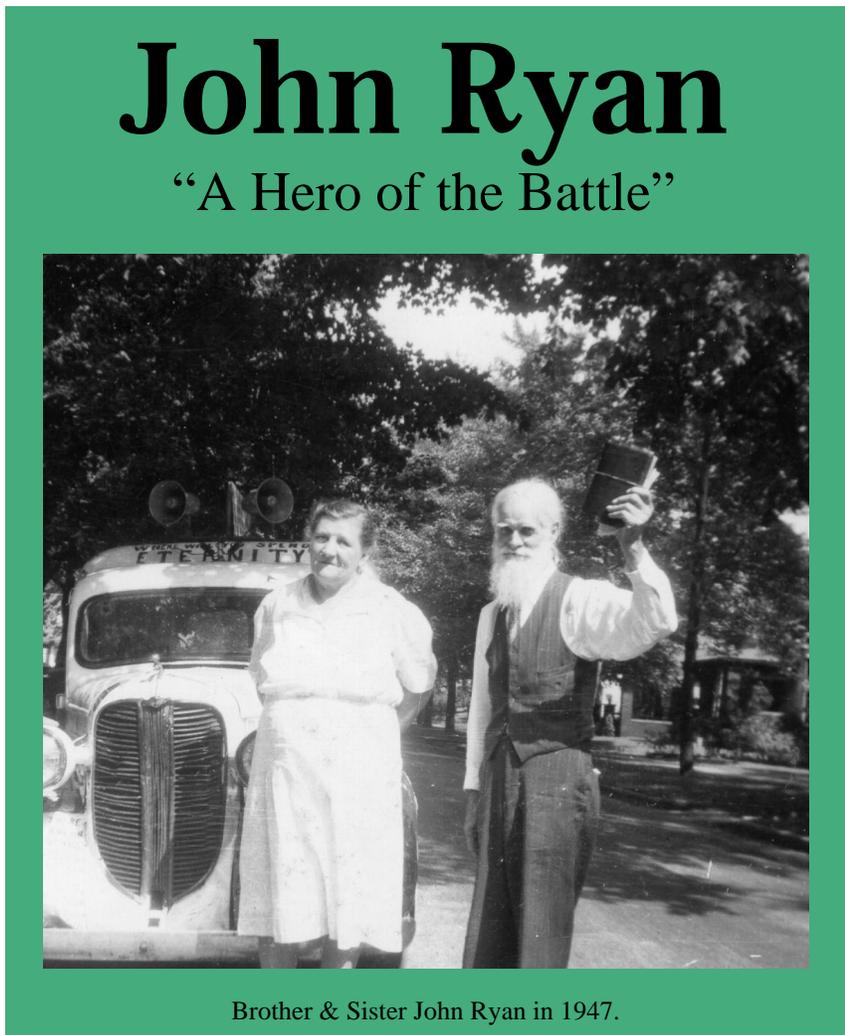
to speak in an unknown tongue – one of the first occasions for Brother Branham to hear that gift in operation. He felt drawn to this demonstration of the Spirit, but at that time he still had many questions on his heart concerning the Pentecostal movement, and whether or not he should affiliate himself with such people. Brother Ryan counseled him, “Brother Billy, you’re just a lad now; there’s a lot of youth to you yet. But someday that’s going to settle down, and Almighty God is going to use you to stir the nations.”

Brother Branham was to remember this striking statement as being the first real encouragement he ever received from another minister regarding his own unique life and ministry.

Brother Ryan and his wife became regular visitors to Jeffersonville, and he often preached at the Branham Tabernacle and stayed with Brother Branham and his

family. He was in Jeffersonville when the Ohio River flooded in 1937 and he helped with the rescue operations. Never one to miss an opportunity to tell others about Lord, he also preached while standing in the back of a boat, as he went up and down the river.

For income, the Ryans depended solely on the alms of the people. Occasionally there would be a small offering, if he was offered a pulpit for a service or two, but their living was meager and their home in Dowagiac, Michigan, extremely humble. Brother Branham expressed many times how he greatly admired Sister Ryan for the way she faithfully stood by her



Brother & Sister John Ryan in 1947.

...continued on last page

“First... a little worship.”

In the Scriptures we are commanded: “Pray without ceasing.” (I THESSALONIANS 5:17). But what is prayer all about? Is the purpose of prayer to bring God down to men, so that we may relay information and requests?

No, of course not. Being God, He already knows all things!

The purpose of prayer is to take men up to God, so that we may lose sight of earthly things and have fellowship with Him in Heavenly Places. “You sway out into somewhere else, way beyond, and on, and on, and on, until you come into His Presence.” THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS 52-0716

When we approach Him in prayer, He hears more than the words that we speak. He hears our intentions, and the motive of our hearts as well. David, who certainly knew how to reach the Heart of God in prayer, prayed “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”(PSALMS 19:14)

He had the right approach, and his prayer pleased God.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He invited them to listen to Him, and learn: “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name...”

“The Scripture says here in Luke that He prayed earnestly. [LUKE 22:44] Brother, Sister, if Jesus had to pray earnestly, how much more have we got to pray earnestly. If Christ, the God of Heaven made flesh, had to pray earnestly, then how much more are we, sinners saved by grace, to pray earnestly?” DESPERATIONS 63-0901e

Today, through the ministry of God’s prophet, we are once again instructed on the importance of seeking a deeper fellowship with the Father through prayer. Here are the components that he taught us are essential to prayer:

“Prayer is not a perhaps. Prayer is a sincere thing! Prayer is talking to God. Prayer is not to go down, shut your eyes, and think about your washing, or your work you’re doing, say, “Lord, help me and John. Heal Miss Jones,” and so forth. That’s not prayer. That’s repeating some words.

Prayer is to come into an atmosphere where you realize that you’re in the presence of God, and you’re moving to Him in the deepest of sincerity. First, you show a little worship: ‘Oh Jehovah, how I love You.’ Do you see it? Then, after the worship of prayer, then you come with a sincere heart, asking.”

THE SUPERNATURAL 56-0129

First: A little worship.

This belongs only to God, and we must remember it first. David said, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name!” (PSALMS 100:4) Learn more about worship by reading Brother Branham’s prayer on the following page.

Second: Be real, not put-on.

“Oh, you pray and make every comma just perfect, and every period just perfect. Oh, you pray so beautiful. You can’t talk to God like that! You’re listening to what you’re saying and punctuating your prayer. Oh, may God help you to turn loose once and pray! Stop saying prayers.” PRIDE 55-0807a

Third: Be faithful, not fearful.

“Get the fear away. Don’t be scared that God is not going to answer prayer. God always answers prayer. The work is already finished. He’s obligated; He must do it. He has got to do it to keep His Word. Notice, now, it’s a finished work.” HEAR YE HIM 56-1215

Does prayer make a difference? We are given a promise: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” (JAMES 4:8) If we fulfill the conditions – don’t say a prayer, pray! – then He will fulfill the promise. And it is only when God and man come together in fellowship and harmony through prayer that an ‘abiding relationship’ will take place. “In other words, you’re like Aaron’s rod that’s pulled up to the Shekinah Glory by the golden pot of manna where you can eat it any time, and your soul is refreshed and blooming and yielding. Abiding. ‘If ye abide in

me, my words abide in you, then ask what you will, it’ll be given to you.” THE SUPERNATURAL 56-0129

Holy and Gracious God, who gave us the greatest Gift that this world has ever known of – the Lord Jesus Christ – we humbly come to Thee in thanksgiving, and expressing from our innermost being the deep adorations of our heart to Thee for this marvelous Gift. We have nothing to give in return. And it was very little that You asked, just, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will take your burdens and your sins, and set you free.” Oh, what an exchange! No one could do that but Thee, our Father. And we thank Thee that Thou has did that for us.

GOD’S WRAPPED GIFT 60-1225

Clip out the prayer (above) and these thoughts on prayer (below) to keep in your home, workplace, or wallet as reminders from the Message on the importance of prayer in your daily life.

You that have been truly baptized into the Holy Spirit, and you have the Token to display, you have a right to every redemptive blessing that God promised. Everything that He promised is yours. Hold your Token over your unwavering faith as you pray, and over his Word.

THE TOKEN 64-0208

Read the Bible every day. Pray every day. Don’t make any decisions too harshly or too quickly, without first considering God about it.

THE PROPHET ELISHA 54-0723

May God help you to turn loose once and pray! Stop saying prayers.

PRIDE 55-0807A

Devils tremble when the weakest of saints go to their knees. What a power and a privilege has been given to the Church of the living God!

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY,
TODAY AND FOREVER 55-0116E

The way the Christian ought to do today, is to keep yourself prayed up, under a spiritual atmosphere, never seeing the bad side, looking to the good side. You are children of God, expecting His blessings.

IS THERE ANYTHING TOO HARD
FOR THE LORD? 60-0328

Pray like you’ve never prayed before. Pray like you were dying, like it’s your last minute.

GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE 63-0605

John Ryan, continued...

husband, even through times of hunger and desperate need. She always spoke of Brother John (which, because of her heavy Swedish accent, she pronounced as “Yan”) with the greatest respect. “Brother Bill,” she would say, “Yan is a man of God. Where God leads him, God will take care of me.”

Despite his frail appearance, Brother Ryan was very athletic, no doubt a testament to his early circus training. Sometimes he would ride a bicycle for hundreds of miles to attend one of Brother Branham’s meetings, but most often, he and his wife would hitchhike, sometimes from coast to coast. He delighted in relating how that on those occasions when they simply couldn’t seem to get a ride, he would go a short distance away and pray while Sister Ryan stood by the side of the road to wait for a car to stop. When it did, she would call out to him, “Yan, we have one!” and he would run to join her. They would have to jump into the car quickly, before the surprised driver could change his mind!

Brother John Ryan spent much time in prayer and fasting. Often he would lie on his face in prayer for days before one of Brother Branham’s campaigns, seeking the Lord on behalf of the people that would be attending, that their hearts might

be prepared, and for His Presence in the service. Even though his mode of transportation often required some ingenuity, he somehow managed to attend a majority of the meetings. His joyous singing and preaching in the streets near where the services were held was a familiar sight – and one that Brother Branham always looked forward to seeing.

One day in 1955, as several days of services drew to an end, the sponsoring ministers joined Brother Branham at one end of the platform and began to express to him their elation at the success of the meeting. “Would you like to know to what you can contribute the great success of this meeting?” he asked them. Then stepping to one side, he pulled back one of the stage curtains. There on the floor was Brother Ryan, in prayer. “He has been praying non-stop for days, brothers, and that is why these meetings were a success. That shows you what just one man’s prayer before God can do.”

Brother John Ryan and his wife went to be with the Lord in 1955 within a few months of one other. When Brother Branham heard of his passing, he expressed this wish: “I want to be standing near when I see him crowned, immortal.” □

Selling Religion

SIGN OF THE TIMES

A recent report by the Book Industry Study Group, a New York trade organization, shows that the retail sales of religious material have reached an all-time high, a projected \$2.25 billion this year alone! “Give me that old-time religion – and put it on my Visa card,” is the expression being used to describe this boom in sales that has grown an unprecedented 33 percent over the past five years.

It of this merchandizing is no longer taking place just in the tradition religious retailing stores. Secular retailers, such as Barnes & Noble, Kmart, and Amazon.com are also experiencing a year-around (not just seasonal) increase in sales of faith-based goods. Catalog sales have soared as well. For example: In 1995, Zondervan Publishing House, the world’s largest Bible publisher, sold about 90 percent of its books through Christian retailers and about 10 percent on the mass market. This past year, even though the Christian market experienced an over-all rise of 20 percent, more than 50 percent of Zondervan’s products now go to mainstream stores such as Wal-Mart and Kmart.

This trend has been ecumenical. Members of all faiths are shopping more. On the Web, Muslims can buy everything from hijab (women’s traditional covering) to the Koran on CD-ROM at www.Islamicity.com. There has been a tremendous increase in demand for anything Jewish, and literally everything is available – from baseball caps with Hebrew lettering to gourmet foods. Basically, if it’s religious, it sells.

Retailers and market analysts are at a loss to explain this unexpected turn of events. However, there is actually a very simple explanation, and it can be found in II Thessalonians 2:3-4. Religion must increase worldwide! And this religious spirit that we are now seeing as it gains momentum among the people will, undoubtedly, become a religious frenzy as the day approaches when Rome will step forward and ‘sell’ its deception to the entire world, in the name of unity and peace. “Notice what this fellow will do now. This fellow, he will set in the temple of God (that is, the church) revealing himself to be god.” God Of This Evil Age 65-0801m A false god, to bridge the disunity among the religions of the world.

It’s more than marketing, it’s Scripture. □

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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