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Our Response To 'Here I Stand'.

Many of you have contacted our office with questions concerning the recent publication entitled, "Here I Stand" issued by The Voice of God Recordings, Inc. (VOG). Although this document is not worthy of a response, many have requested our thoughts and clarification on the subject matter. Below are some previously unknown facts and very important details which should help in understanding these issues from a spiritual perspective.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, the scripture states: *"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice".* (Philippians 1:15-18)

On December 5th, 2001 Brother Ed Byskal received a letter from Brother Joseph Branham, the contents of which, we learned two days later, had already been printed and sent out in a rather elaborate document titled, "Here I Stand". It was indeed disturbing to realize that this document was printed BEFORE there was any contact with Brother Byskal. No phone call, letter, or any attempt was made to communicate with him. Some of the harshest statements are incorrect, inaccurate half-truths, gathered from sources whose motives are not in the Spirit of the Message or the Prophet Messenger, Brother Branham.

We are deeply saddened to say that the document "Here I Stand" is NOT in the spirit of Brother Branham, and the entire contents are clearly intended for the sole purpose of control over the distribution of the Message. What is the motive behind this document? It certainly could not be for the mass spreading of the message. For more than 12 years PRIOR to the existence of VOG, there were God-called ministers of the Word that had sacrificially labored to provide the Prophet's message to multitudes throughout the entire world. They preached, sent message tapes, translated, and propagated the end time message by every possible means! Was this all "stolen food" as referred to in the publication, "Here I Stand"? How utterly unscriptural!

There is ONE issue that is fundamental to all others addressed in the "Here I Stand" document. The entire subject of "Franchise" and all other related issues depend upon how this question is answered.

Is the Message spoken by a vindicated Prophet the Word of God?

This can only be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No".

If the answer is “No”, then the subject of Franchise is completely irrelevant.

If the answer is “Yes”, then we conclude that the Prophet’s words are the Word of God. The crux of the entire matter rests here. There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that even remotely suggests that God gave His Word into the hand of a man or group of men to have the “sole rights” to control distribution to the world. And to imply that THIS is what Brother Branham was referring to when he used the word “Franchise” is to subvert the very essence of his words in the most blatant manner.

We will show clearly that Brother Branham was dealing with a serious problem he was experiencing at that time - the dreadfully poor quality of recording and the shameful manner in which the tapes were being handled.

The Bible clearly declares to whom God has committed his Word - a group of men separated by the Holy Ghost to the ministry of the Word. *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”* (Ephesians 4:11-13)

*“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”.* (11 Timothy 2:2)

It is impossible for Brother Branham to institute a Franchise that is contrary to the Bible. Then what was Brother Branham referring to? The answer is simple. If you read what he said, without any ulterior motive, it is obvious that the subject came up because of the dreadfully poor quality of the tapes. Because this problem existed, others were making their own tapes. This is abundantly evident in the following phrases, all taken out of Church Order.

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&#8226; Question: “many are writing the office and blaming you for the action on the tapes”.

&#8226; “And now, there has been complaints all along on the making of the tapes”.

&#8226; “They’re writing to the office and blaming you.”

&#8226; “Frankly, I’ve had many letters on it, and want to know why they can’t get their tapes.”

&#8226; “Now, you know your contract with the one who has the franchise, as I understood... The tapes, I want nothing to do with them myself, if anybody can use the tapes for furthering the Gospel, “Amen.””

&#8226; “But it seemingly here lately, there’s been a great complaint about not getting their tapes. People has called me up from across the country. And then another, being, retracted tapes. They’ll be playing one thing one minute, and play back on another another thing, and then you can’t even understand what they are.”

&#8226; “Now, these people paying for these tapes should get a genuine tape. I don’t care what they have to do to get it; we want to see our customers and our brothers (which they are our customers and our brothers), so forth, they must have an “A-number-one” tape.”

&#8226; “And someone’s called me, and say they been waiting for months for tapes.”

&#8226; “Now, these orders must be carried out. See? And it must be carried right, because it is complaining. They complained with Leo and Gene; they complained with every one; it’s complain with Brother Maguire; and it’ll be complaining with somebody else, but let’s find out what their complaining is.”

&#8226; “Now, but when the tapes are begin to pile up, boxes of them, letters by the dozens pouring in, and they... See, it doesn’t fall back to the tape maker; it falls on me. They’re always bawling me out about it.”

&#8226; “The tape must be made right. And the customer must be satisfied, or stop the whole tape thing altogether; we won’t have no tapes, just let anybody make them that wants to. But if they’re going to charge for them, let them see that they get what they paid for, ‘cause that’s Christianity. That’s no more than do...”

ONE PERSON WAS UNDER CONTRACT TO “MAKE THE TAPES” - LITERALLY TO RECORD THE MESSAGES AS BROTHER BRANHAM PREACHED THEM.

“These trustees has an agreement with the person who is making the tapes, and the tapes are by a franchise.”

“No one else can make tapes unless it be permitted by the person that has the franchise&#8230;”

The context of the entire subject has to do with correcting the problem of poor quality tapes being sold and all the complaints coming back on Brother Branham. Thus Brother Branham is emphatically stating that the trustees are to see to it that the one holding the contract is held responsible to make an “A-number-one” tape.

The Franchise had to do with “making the tapes”, as we have stated, literally recording Brother Branham’s services, then to duplicate and sell the taped message.

THERE IS NOT ONE PLACE IN THE MESSAGE WHERE BROTHER BRANHAM EVER ATTEMPTED TO RESTRICT OR REFUSE A PERSON, WHO HAD DULY PURCHASED AND PAID FOR A TAPE, FROM DUPLICATING IT FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE MESSAGE. TO DO SO WOULD HAVE BEEN TO DEFEAT HIS BURDEN AND PROPHETIC COMMISSION.

To use these quotes of Brother Branham as though they were to extend to the spreading of the Message from duly purchased and paid for tapes is in fact to put the Word of God under the control of

one man. Unequivocally, this would be completely unscriptural. It is a serious and dangerous error to imply something from the Prophet's words that he clearly was NOT dealing with.

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On pages 11-12 (Here I Stand) it is stated that Bible Believers / Cloverdale Bibleway "have proclaimed that all of Brother Branham's work is a part of the «Public Domain»". The fact is, The William Branham Evangelistic Association proclaimed that the tapes were «Public Domain» in a Report Letter dated September 1, 1972 and signed by William Paul Branham, Fred Sothmann, and Roy Roberson. We quote as follows:

Quotes from Report Letter sent out from the William Branham Evangelistic Association Dated September 1, 1972.

*"During the past fourteen years the tape recorded messages of Brother Branham have been franchised by the governing board responsible to Brother Branham, more recently called the William Branham Evangelistic Association. In 1962 the sole right of reproducing the tape recorded Message of Brother Branham was granted to Brother Fred Sothmann, who has consistently paid a twenty five cent royalty to William Branham Evangelistic Association on all tapes sold which is used to send free tapes all over the world. Most recently our attorney informed us that the tape recorded messages of Brother Branham were considered to be «public domain» and could not legally be enforced under a franchise. We accept this as being the law of the land, and henceforth will not try to enforce the franchise of the tape recorded messages of Brother Branham".*

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TAPE MINISTRY 1971 - 1983

In the mid 1970's Cloverdale Bibleway began an extensive 4½ year project of filtering Brother Branham's taped messages. During this period five hundred and thirty messages were completed working from the latest to the earlier messages. Full time staff worked incredibly long hours during these years to provide churches and individuals with the best quality tapes possible. About 300 of these filtered master libraries were made and sent worldwide. Some Missionary minded churches duplicated and sent out additional libraries to the mission fields.

For about 8 years the Bible Believers Radio Broadcast was aired on twenty-seven stations, which covered most of the continental United States and Canada. As well, the broadcast was aired on 100,000 watt Swazi Music Radio in South Africa, which covered an area inhabited by 87 million people. It was during this time that the message of Brother Branham was offered to the listeners free upon request. We received approximately 1000 letters of response per month. As a result we began to manufacture our own cassettes to meet the demand for Brother Branham's sermons.

As the Message spread around the globe and ministers were called of God to feed and care for the sheep, there was an earnest cry to provide these humble little servants of Christ with the Message. Thus the term "Seed Library" was born. After much prayerful consideration, a library of 160 messages

was selected to send out to these pastors so that they could feed the Elect Children of God with the stored up food. Every born again Believer can only rejoice that literally hundreds of ministers have received these libraries.

Around 1981 Brother Joseph Branham contacted us asking if we were interested in selling the duplicating equipment that was connected with the filtering project. It was decided to sell the filtering and duplicating equipment to Brother Joseph as he expressed a desire to filter the balance of Brother Branham's messages. We were happy that he had a desire to continue this work.

On February 23, 1983, a letter was sent out by The Branham Tabernacle referring back to the resolution of July 30, 1965, and seeking to bring it forward to apply once again after many years.

As stated previously in this article, Brother Branham's use of the word "Franchise" in the quotes that we are all very familiar with clearly are in reference to the "making the tape" or recording the messages as he spoke them. How could a prophet attempt to franchise the Word of God?

For someone to infer that any message material that does not come from VOG is "stolen food" is preposterous!!

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#### COPYRIGHT / TRADEMARK ISSUES

Neither Bible Believers nor Cloverdale Bibleway has ever applied for any copyright or ownership to the Message itself.

Around 1998 the Lord made it possible for us to put the messages of Brother Branham on the Internet, thereby truly making the Message without borders, and ensuring that all Believers could have access to the Message, especially in countries where the distribution of books and tapes is severely restricted. Before we put Brother Branham's Message on the Internet we applied

to have a trademark for "William Branham Audio Library", for the sole purpose of preventing any one of the many enemies of this Message from applying for the Trademark and taking Brother Branham's voice off the Internet. We were advised that the words "Audio" and "Library" could not be trademarked. However, we could register the name "William Branham". There was absolutely nothing insidious about this application, nor was there any ulterior motives. Our only objective was to protect "The Voice" on behalf of all believers.

It was stated on page 11 of "Here I Stand" that this was for our "exclusive use". This is absolutely untrue. It is for the unrestricted use of the Bride of Jesus Christ worldwide. We have absolutely no controlling ambitions whatsoever. It is our prayer that VOG would follow our example.

On page 12 of "Here I Stand" it is stated that this Trademark is considered "to be the ultimate act of disrespect against our father." How could the act of taking a very important step of precaution to ensure that Brother Branham's voice would go unrestricted to every nation be "the ultimate act of

disrespect”? We lift up the voice of God’s Prophet for all to hear and this is disrespectful? On the contrary!! For over 40 years of his life, Brother Byskal has honored our beloved Prophet, Brother William Branham, throughout the nations of the world.

While Brother Branham is indeed father to the Branham family, and we highly respect them as such, yet God made him the Prophet to the Bride in this last age, and as such he holds a much higher position than that of an earthly father to his children. When Brother Branham went beyond the curtain of time, it was not his earthly children that ran to him, it was his converts to Christ. Over the years we have supported VOG through our giving and prayers and appreciate every book, tape and effort that they have made towards the furtherance of this Message.

It is our sincere prayer that the information we have provided has been helpful.

There will be no further responses as we have adequately and prayerfully responded to the issues of concern.

Brother Ed Byskal and The Board Of Trustees

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