

Randy Clark: The Healing Miracles Preacher - by Larry Sparks & Troy Anderson

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While kneeling at the altar, Randy Clark felt a sharp pain in his left eye lasting just a split second.

The unusual pain caught his attention because he had only recently received a 'crash course' in different ways to receive words of knowledge—downloads of supernatural information from the Holy Spirit that otherwise would be unknown to the recipient. One way was actually feeling the condition someone was experiencing.

Cautiously, the pastor of the small Midwestern church approached the pulpit microphone and stammered out, 'If ... uh ... some of you ... uh, possibly has something wrong with their left eye, well ... uh ... if you'll just come forward, we'll pray for you.'

His confidence was diminutive and his faith was even smaller. At the time in the early 1980s, gifts of the Spirit and healing miracles were foreign territory for this Baptist pastor.

In a matter of minutes, a widow named Ruth approached the altar. Clark and his team gathered around her, praying until, Clark says, 'we ran out of things to say.' That night, Ruth was reportedly healed of tunnel vision affecting her left eye.

The miracle was significant, but what happened the following week would ultimately help shape the 'consciousness of a generation' of Pentecostals and charismatics as it relates to the move of the Spirit in recent decades.

The following Sunday, Clark gave the church an opportunity to share testimonies. A woman stood up in the back, and in a strong, southern accent, said, 'Brother Randy, I think I'm having one of them there things you was just talking about 'cause there's nothin' wrong with my right wrist, but it's killin' me.'

At first, Clark was concerned that his teaching had opened a Pandora's box of controversy. Was it just the power of suggestion? No one responded until the end of the church service. Then, right before the benediction, Clark's best friend's wife, Barbara, stood and addressed the congregation.

With tears streaking down her face, she told of a debilitating pain in her wrists she had experienced for years. After two surgeries, and the insertion of plastic devices, she was about to give up hope. They prayed for her wrists and she was healed, Clark says.

Those services marked the beginning of a ministry that Clark says has now been witness to tens of thousands of miracles God has performed over the last four decades. His driving message: God can use 'little ole' me.' From the very beginning, Clark's ministry showed how everyday believers could operate in the supernatural.

During his four decades of ministry, a new move of supernatural Christianity characterised by signs, wonders and healing miracles has ignited around the globe.

This phenomenon comes amid the explosive growth of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement. Over the last century, the number of Pentecostals, charismatics and members of independent churches has grown geometrically from less than 1 million to nearly 700 million, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Much of this growth can be attributed to the fact that Pentecostals and charismatics 'often pray for healing, and those receiving prayer often perceive these prayers to be effective,' according to the Global Medical Research Institute, a Stoneham-Massachusetts-based center that 'seeks to apply the rigorous methods of evidence-based medicine to study Christian Spiritual Healing practices.' A 2006 Pew Forum survey estimated 200 million Pentecostals and charismatics believe they have witnessed or experienced divine healing.

'In many countries, healing is the main reason for the explosion of charismatic/Pentecostal—and Christian—growth rates,' says Craig S. Keener, a professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary and the author of *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. 'As of about 10 years ago, it was estimated that perhaps half of all conversions to Christianity were because

of experiences with healing. I so much appreciate Randy Clark because he brings together strong dependence on the Spirit with interest in sound biblical and historical teaching. That is a vitally important combination.'

Lending more credibility to this worldwide phenomena, a survey of 1,000 American doctors found 73 percent believes healing miracles actually occur and 55 percent said 'they have seen treatment results in their patients that they would consider miraculous.' More than 80 percent of Americans believes in the 'healing power of personal prayer.'

'One of the objections people sometimes raise against miracles is that belief in them is unscientific, because science must always find a natural explanation,' Keener says. 'What the survey suggests, however, is that a significant proportion of those trained to address natural explanations who work concretely with real human beings recognise that there are times when natural explanations fall short and divine activity is involved.'

These widespread reports of healing miracles come several decades after the great healing revivals of the 1940s, '50s and '60s when healing evangelists Oral Roberts, Jack Coe and Kathryn Kuhlman became prominent leaders, notable for walking in God's extraordinary miracle-working power.

Then, in the early 1980s, Vineyard movement leader John Wimber spoke a prophetic word over Clark—predicting his ministry would help people worldwide operate in the miraculous power of the Spirit.

From the very beginning, Clark's ministry has demonstrated that everyday Christians can operate in the supernatural. Today, the power of the Spirit is flowing everywhere from mission fields and shopping malls to grocery stores and even aboard airplanes.

'It's a prophetic sign to the culture that God can use everybody,' says Clark, founder of Global Awakening, his Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania-based teaching, healing and impartation ministry. 'That doesn't mean everybody has a gift of healing, but it does mean that everybody can pray for healing and see healings.'

A Supernatural End-Times Revival?

Many believe the prophetic words of Acts 2 are coming to pass as the Spirit is poured out upon 'all flesh.' Today, ministers say the signs point toward a massive end-times revival of New Testament Christianity where miracles are the norm and not the exception.

'Randy has modelled for us all how to live the miracle lifestyle in a practical way,' says Bill Johnson, the senior pastor at the Redding, California-based Bethel Church known as the birthplace of the Jesus Culture phenomenon and the epicenter of innumerable instances of reported healing miracles. 'The grace on Randy's life to impart supernatural grace to people is stronger than anyone I've ever met. It goes beyond encouragement. People become dramatically different after receiving an impartation from Randy.'

Norwegian pastor Leif Hetland, who received an impartation from Clark at a renewal service in 1995, later founded the Global Mission Awareness ministry in Peachtree City, Georgia, to spread the message of God's love and healing power.

'Since receiving impartation from Randy, we have seen more than 1 million people come to faith in Jesus Christ,' Hetland says. 'Randy empowers ordinary believers to a supernatural life in a very natural way. If God can use Randy, He can use me!'

Those familiar with Clark's ministry might recognise him as the evangelist who played a catalytic role in the Toronto Blessing, one of the greatest revivals in the latter part of the 20th century. It began in 1994 at a Vineyard church in Ontario, Canada, and ultimately touched more than 3 million lives—leading to the creation of 20,000 new churches.

'When God sent Randy up to Toronto, it changed the world,' Bishop Mark J. Chironna told his congregation at the Church on the Living Edge during a recent visit by Clark.

'There would not be the level of ministry, or a Heidi and Rolland Baker, if it were not for God using Randy Clark. There would not be a Bill Johnson. I could name voice after voice that God has used to touch the planet with a global footprint.'

After the service at Chironna's Longwood, Florida church, several dozen people stood up and waved their hands in the air to signal that they believed they were healed of different ailments and pains following Clark's prayers.

Nelson Garcia, a 53-year-old private client banker, told *Charisma* he had been suffering from elbow pain for a year and had received numerous medical treatments, but the 'pain wouldn't go away.' 'It got to the point where I couldn't even read my Bible because it weakened my arm, and today when I came to the service, the presence of God just covered me and all I could do is cry all service long,' Garcia says. 'When (Clark) asked if there was somebody who has a problem with their elbow, inside of me my spirit jolted because I knew he was speaking directly to me. That's why I stood up and now I can say if I feel any pain it's probably 1 percent of what I was feeling.'

The Blind See, the Paralysed Walk

Over the decades, Clark has helped launch the ministries of many prominent Christian leaders, including Heidi and Rolland Baker, whose ministry had a profound impact on Mozambican pastors and others who have reportedly raised more than 400 people from the dead.

'As Rolland would say, 'If you want to verify it, come to Mozambique and start going out to the villages and talking to the people,' ' says Clark, who has videotaped interviews with many of those involved in these purported reversals of recent deaths. 'Do we have doctors to prove it? No, because there aren't any doctors out in the bush. But it doesn't take a doctor to know what death looks like. That's what I want to get across. There were no doctors to prove that Lazarus was dead either, but we believe it, or the little girl in the room that Jesus raised.'

Since 2001, Clark's team has recorded more than 350,000 purported healing miracles in 50 nations, including instances of the blind regaining sight, the paralysed walking and people healed of cancer, AIDS and strokes.

'We've seen the blind see, we've seen the deaf hear and we've seen people walk who were paralysed, including a paraplegic with a severed spine,' Clark says. 'We've seen people recover from strokes. We've seen people who had only weeks to live to days to live with different things—from AIDS to cancer—get healed.'

'But we still see lots of people who don't get healed. It's not like everybody we pray for gets healed. But we're seeing more than we used to and seeing greater kinds of things than we used to.'

Usually, Clark says about 10 percent of the people who attend services 'get healed'—though in many meetings the percentages range up to 20-50 percent.

As he saw this wave of supernatural phenomenon unfolding around the world, Clark decided to get his doctorate and build credibility in the academic community.

Dr. Andrew Park, a professor of theology and ethics at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, recognises the unique call of God on Clark's ministry. Clark received his doctorate of ministry at the seminary.

'The church has focused on preaching and teaching, but has neglected healing,' Park says. 'Randy Clark has restored Jesus' instructions by carrying out His three-dimensional ministry: preaching, healing and teaching.'

From highly credentialed theologians speaking from pulpits across the globe to everyday believers serving in the pews, many are now reporting instances of the supernatural work of the Spirit.

Those interviewed for this article say they believe God is using Clark to impart and activate the gifts of the Spirit in people around the planet.

As part of his ministry, Clark regularly conducts four-day healing and impartation schools and has spoken at conferences and churches worldwide. Others have been impacted by his books and sermons. Many have attended Global Awakening conferences where many report intense encounters with God and are activated for supernatural ministry. Some get training through Clark's Christian Healing Certification Program (healingcertification.com).

Now, Clark says he wants to bring 'healing crusades' to the United States, combining the 'best of Billy Graham' with healing evangelism.

'I know from my experiences overseas that when people see the goodness and mercy of God in healing that it has a tendency to soften them,' Clark says. 'This seems to match the biblical emphasis of signs and wonders accompanying the preaching of the gospel.'

Harvard Professor Studying Miracles

As part of his effort to examine the evidence for healing miracles, Clark's own doctoral dissertation at the United Theological Seminary was an investigation into the effects of prayer on mobility restrictions resulting from surgeries on people in Brazil who had metal screws and plates in their bodies. Following prayer, these people reported their 'movements were restored; the pain was gone,' Clark says.

Dr. Martin Moore-Ede, chairman of the Global Medical Research Institute and a former Harvard Medical School professor, wrote in an email to *Charisma* that GMRI is investigating various reports of healing miracles 'through a systemic process of medical evidence-based research.'

Clark's academic interest in the evidence for healing miracles follows an education in which he waded through the waters of liberal theology prevalent in many seminaries today.

Since the founding of the early colonies in America, most ministers and theologians have taught that the miraculous works of God ended in the first century. 'The First Great Awakening ended because there was so much opposition to it,' Clark says. 'So we ended up with a culture where many unbelievers believe in the supernatural and many believers have been educated not to believe in the supernatural. That is changing. There are more and more people who are moving away from these views. So many people are being healed and so many things are happening—and so many people are hearing their testimonies—that it's getting hard to deny the facts.'

A Dynamic, Trial-Filled Life

Clark grew up in one of America's poorest counties as the son of an Illinois oil field worker and learned at an early age the importance of perseverance—a trait that explains not only how he survived decades of 'persecution, experienced failures and witnessed disappointments,' but a ministry now characterised by the supernatural.

The journey began on Nov. 20, 1970 when Clark announced his 'call to preach.' Just a month prior, Clark was involved in a severe car accident that nearly ended his life.

'I had severe injuries to my spine, paralysis of the digestive tract and multiple facial and skull fractures,' Clark says. 'I wasn't healed in a single day; I actually had three healings in the hospital and instead of being in the hospital for the expected 49-77 days, I was released in 20 days and was healed by the 15th day.'

Afterwards, he became the pastor of a small church in Illinois. However, Clark's journey to this church proved to be a road paved with great heartache and disappointment.

Chronicled in detail in the book *Lighting Fires*, Clark's early years of ministry saw a collapsed home life, a period of backsliding into sin and the temporary acceptance of liberal theology. In 1971, at age 19, Clark entered into a tumultuous three-year marriage that ultimately ended in divorce.

In 1974, he obtained a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Oakland City College and began attending seminary. Not long afterwards, he had to quit because of the divorce. The dean of students told him that due to his failed marriage, 'you'll never have a ministry.'

Clark considered himself to be a marked man. Thoughts of disqualification for ministry consumed him. This brought him into a season of bitterness that led to sin—alcohol, sexual immorality and deep guilt over the divorce.

Then everything changed. Clark had a vision of his favourite professor who had suffered much rejection in the 1960s from his church over race issues. In the vision, Clark saw this professor asking him this cutting question: 'Randy, do you love the church of God enough to serve her when she hurts you?'

As a result, Clark let go of his feelings of condemnation and unworthiness, and instead believed that—in spite of his divorce, sin and bitterness—God still loved him and had not lifted the call upon his life.

In 1975, Clark married DeAnne Davenport, who is his wife today. Later, he received his Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1984, Clark dynamically experienced God's power during a Bible conference in Dallas, Texas, when he heard teaching from key leaders such as David Wilkerson and John Wimber. One night, Clark approached Wimber for prayer. Wimber prophesied over Clark, saying he would go around the world and lay his hands on pastors and leaders to impart and activate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in them. That same year Clark formally left the Baptist denomination to join the Vineyard church movement.

A Landmark Event: The Toronto Blessing

The night before he departed for his first trip to the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship in Canada in January 1994, Clark received a powerful prophetic word from Richard Holcomb: 'The Lord says to you, Randy, "Test Me now, test Me now, test Me now. Do not be afraid. I will back you up! I want your eyes to be opened to see My resources for you in the heavenlies.' '

While Jan. 20, 1994 marked the official launch of the Toronto Blessing, Clark says the revival grew in momentum as the days went by. Originally scheduled to last four days, the meetings turned into a revival that impacted millions of people around the world. Lasting more than 12 years, it became the 'longest protracted meeting in North American history.'

An Appointment with Destiny

As he looks back over the decades of ministry, Clark recalls two pivotal moments. In the early 1970s, Clark says he'll never forget when he heard the Lord speak to him 'so clearly and plainly' that the 'issue of my lifetime would be the Holy Spirit.'

This prophetic word is foundational to everything Clark has dedicated his life to. His greatest desire is to see the power of the Spirit restored in today's church. The incredible supernatural move of God that Clark has witnessed also goes back to the prophetic word that Wimber spoke over him three decades ago.

What qualified Clark to impart gifts of the Spirit to Christians worldwide? Hunger and humility. In humility, he never denied his faults or failures, and in hunger, he always pressed in for more of God. This is Clark's invitation to every Christian—every 'little ole' me.' The truth is, no human being can qualify himself for service in the miraculous; it's the Spirit alone that levels the playing field and empowers everyday people to do extraordinary exploits in Jesus' name.

Larry Sparks is a conference speaker, student of revival and author of the book, *Breakthrough Faith: Living a Life Where Anything Is Possible* (Destiny Image, 2014). He has been featured on CBN, TBN, and Sid Roth's *It's Supernatural*. You can visit him online at lawrencesparks.com.

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