

A Tribute to My Friend and Mentor

When Jamie Buckingham died in 1992, he had been the conscience of the charismatic movement for 25 years. One of his platforms in his later years was *Ministry Today* magazine for pastors and leaders. His passing was a blow for those of us who loved him, and it forced us to find a new leader who would speak with authority to leaders in the charismatic community.

I reached out to Jack Hayford, who was already respected for the success of his Church on the Way and for speaking at many important venues. I'd known Pastor Jack, as we called him, since 1977, and he had written for the first issue of that magazine.

He agreed to fill in for 18 months as senior editorial adviser to help us out. That 18 months morphed into 18 years! The role gave Pastor Jack a platform to speak to leaders, and we worked with him over the years by sponsoring conferences and publishing several of his books.

But his role with our organization and with me personally went well beyond that of an editorial adviser. We developed a deep bond. Even though we were 2,000 miles apart, we saw each other regularly, and over the years, our families became friends. My wife and I considered him as giving spiritual oversight to our entire publishing/media organization. We talked over strategies and goals for Charisma Media with him, and he helped us discern God's will on how a publishing house can also have a leadership role in the body of Christ.

Over time, I found I could call on him to deal with tough situations. He counseled me personally about an unpleasant problem in my local church. Twice I flew to California just to talk to him face to face about difficult circumstances for

which I needed counsel. We had that kind of relationship, so his passing comes as a big blow to me personally.

Even though his health had declined in the past few years, we were stunned when he died on Jan. 8, 2023. This issue was almost ready to go to press, but we decided to move our articles to another issue and devote much of this issue to his memory. Other articles in this issue tell his story, much of which I was a part of, especially The King's Seminary and later, The King's University. I remember when he first told me how the Lord gave him the vision to establish a seminary. I was honored to be invited to serve on the founding board.

During those years, I saw Pastor Jack go through many transitions, such as turning over the pastorate of The Church on the Way to his son-in-law, Scott Bauer, who died suddenly at age 49 of a brain aneurysm. I remember when he took over the leadership of his denomination, the Church of the Foursquare Gospel, at a time it needed his strong, steady guidance. I knew his wife Anna well and flew to her funeral when she died of cancer in 2017, and I remember him telling me a year later when he decided to marry Valarie Lemire.

Seeing him behind the scenes, navigating big issues and often dealing with difficult people, let me see how consistent he was. A man of vision, he never wavered in his faith and had a mentoring role with many other leaders. He always took time to focus on those relationships, just as he did with me, and offer wise counsel.

He died as I was finishing my new book that releases in May, *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World*. I had already quoted some of his writing in the book but decided to add this dedication:

I dedicate this book to the late Jack Hayford, who exemplified the Spirit-led life and was an example of integrity in the Pentecostal world more than anyone I've known. He was the

editor of the Spirit-Filled Life Bible, wrote more than 500 songs, including "Majesty," and influenced me more than anyone else in the past 30 years.

Some national ministries have placed ads in this issue to publicly honor him. Charisma Media did too. We interviewed numerous well-known leaders to pay him tribute. I wanted to add here my personal thoughts of how he impacted Charisma Media and me. Due to his influence on my life, I'll never be the same. I pray I can have a fraction of that kind of influence on those around me.

Stephen Strang *is founding editor of Charisma. His latest book, Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-Down World, now available for preorder at , releases May 16, 2023.*