

Author Judson Cornwall Dies

The prolific charismatic author is best remembered for his in-depth teaching on worship and intimacy with God

Renowned Pentecostal Bible teacher Judson Cornwall, whose itinerant ministry was cut short by cancer four years ago, died Feb. 11 at his Phoenix home. His family said that he had suffered a severe stroke three days earlier and had trouble communicating. Cornwall was 80.

“When he died, his wife, Eleanor, and their daughter, Justine, were singing ‘Into Thy Presence We Come’ to him, and Eleanor told him it was OK to leave, and he did,” said Terri Gargis, Cornwall’s longtime secretary.

A third-generation minister, Cornwall was preaching at the age of 7 during the Depression era, and later was regarded as an apostle and pioneer. After starting and pastoring churches in the West, Cornwall, a former Assemblies of God preacher, ministered worldwide for more than 20 years, preaching, teaching and training ministers and laity of various denominations.

Grant Thigpen, pastor of 2,000-strong New Hope Ministries in Naples, Fla., who had known Cornwall for about 15 years, said he had “a profound knowledge of the Word, and he loved to worship the Lord.”

“Judson encouraged me by telling me I would never fail as a pastor if I continued to love the Lord and love the people God placed me over,” Thigpen, 54, told Charisma. “He was a man of integrity, deep revelation and an excellent communicator.”

While preaching at the International Worship Institute (IWI) in Bedford, Texas, in July 2001, Cornwall suffered excruciating pain in his back. After returning to Phoenix, he was diagnosed with an inoperable, malignant tumor on his spine. For several years, he also battled diabetes.

Gargis said Cornwall's pain grew increasingly worse in the last year, forcing him to stay in his lounge chair for most of the day.

"He was eaten up with cancer, so his whole body was shutting down," Gargis, 60, told Charisma. "It is sad to lose Judson. He has been a wonderful friend and boss for the past 19 years. And yet I rejoice to know his worn-out body is dancing before the Lord."

LaMar Boschman, founder and dean of IWI (), said during Cornwall's last visit at the institute, "he had visions of heaven and angels."

"He was anticipating the worship and the presence of the Lord, the celestial realm," Boschman, 51, said.

Although cancer ended Cornwall's traveling ministry, which featured speaking engagements at four churches monthly, he stayed busy. In 2003, Cornwall started recording his books on tape for the Oklahoma City-based Library for the Blind. Gargis noted that he recorded 41 of his books on tapes and three other books from other Christian authors.

Iverna Tompkins, Cornwall's sister, said her brother will be best remembered for his in-depth teaching on worship. "Multiple thousands have testified of their lives being

changed by the practice of this revelation,” Tompkins, 75, said.

Boschman agreed, noting that Cornwall was “one of the fathers and pioneers of contemporary worship.”

“Before worship became a style of music and worship companies grew into an industry, before there were worship leaders and worship CDs, Judson had a message of spiritual worship,” Boschman told Charisma.

“Like a farmer with a holy seed, he crisscrossed the globe and cast it into the earth, and it caught root and grew into the mature revelation we enjoy today.”

A prolific author of more than 50 books, many of which have been translated into other languages, Cornwall wrote classics such as *Let Us Worship*, *Elements of Worship* and *Let Us Praise*.

“His last book was written at the urging of the publisher after learning that Cornwall continued to counsel others from his wheelchair,” Tompkins, a Bible teacher and conference speaker, said. “The book is well named *Dying with Grace*, for this is exactly what he did to his last breath.”

In the book, released last year by Charisma House, Cornwall wrote: “I believe that just as He gives us a grace to live, God gives us a grace to die. Dying is a part of living. Death is not a cessation of life—it is merely a stepping into the next realm, into the divine, heavenly realm, and God will give me—and you—grace to take each step from this life to eternal life.”

Eleanor, Cornwall's wife of 61 years, said he "never complained about anything while he was sick."

"He was an excellent patient and did everything that was asked of him," Eleanor, 82, told Charisma. "He never lost hope that he would be healed. In the last few months, he physically couldn't take the trip to church every Sunday, so we held our own services at home."

Gargis added: "Judson never stopped praising the Lord during the years he was fighting his cancer. He read the Bible all day long and his heart stayed in a constant state of praise. He wanted to be healed and get back out on the road, but that didn't happen."

Other well-known charismatic leaders who have died in the last year-and-a-half include Fuschia Pickett, Derek Prince and Kenneth Hagin Sr.

In addition to three brothers and a sister, Cornwall is survived by his wife, three daughters, nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, including a great-grandson born just before Cornwall's 80th birthday. The boy was named after Cornwall.

Hundreds of people attended Cornwall's memorial service, which was held Feb. 17 at Scottsdale Worship Center in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Eric Tiansay