

Charismatic Pastor Says He Has Been Healed of Hepatitis C

Despite having a 4 percent chance of recovery, Casey Treat says his blood work shows no sign of the liver disease

After a public battle with hepatitis C, Seattle pastor Casey Treat says he has been healed of the viral liver disease.

Though doctors gave Treat only a 4 percent chance of complete recovery, the pastor of 7,000-member Christian Faith Center said blood tests in March showed no trace of the disease he had been battling since late 2003.

Doctors, nutritionists and physical therapists each claimed credit. Treat, 50, attributed it to all of them working in tandem with God's healing touch. "My approach has always been to use prayer and doctors," Treat said. "We should use every endeavor God has given us for healing."

In 2003, before Treat learned he had the disorder, much had been going his way. He was launching a huge building project and broadening his media ministry. But a simple medical exam to qualify for a life insurance policy threatened to upend it all.

"I was shocked and dismayed," he said. "This was not good. God got my attention."

Now a husband and father of three, Treat believes he contracted hepatitis C as a teen. Before he accepted Christ at

age 19, he had been a drug user and was part of the hippie subculture of the day. He said it was during a time of drug rehabilitation that he first heard the gospel.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people with hepatitis C often experience no symptoms for years—and Treat had not seen any signs. Nonetheless, 70 percent of infected persons might eventually develop chronic liver disease. The worst cases need liver transplants. A few die.

Because hepatitis C cannot be transmitted to others through casual contact, Treat continued his ministry activities, but he also began chemotherapy. He chose to keep his condition private until he started losing hair and weight.

When the news was public, Treat used himself as a living illustration. He preached a series titled “How to Be Your Best When You Feel Your Worst,” and reminded teens that dangerous behaviors such as drug abuse and premarital sex can have latent consequences.

As Treat battled for his health, Christian Faith Center continued to expand. What started with 30 people when Treat was 24 has matured into one of the largest churches in the Pacific Northwest and now meets in two locations. More than 150 people work on staff for the church and its affiliated grade school and Bible college. Treat also hosts international radio and TV broadcasts.

After fighting a lengthy zoning battle, Christian Faith Center plans to move into a \$40 million headquarters next year that

will house a 5,000-seat sanctuary. The facility will be located in Federal Way, Wash., between Seattle and Tacoma.

Today Treat preaches regularly at both Christian Faith Center campuses, taking a helicopter between the two. And he still has big plans. Within 25 years, he wants to double the number of campuses and grow the congregations to at least 100,000 people throughout the Pacific Northwest.

In his early years, Treat was influenced by such charismatic leaders as pastor Frederick K.C. Price in Los Angeles. Now, he mentors others.

"Casey has a major influence on pastors, both nationally and internationally," said Jim Reeve, senior pastor of Faith Community Church in West Covina, Calif. "But he has gone beyond just being an influential leader or a model to becoming a father for other pastors of independent and charismatic churches."

Reeve often invites Treat to preach at Faith Community Church and has hosted Treat's Vision conference. "Behind the scenes, Casey lives what he teaches," Reeve said. "Of all the people I know, he is one who truly walks what he talks."

Bill Wolfson, senior pastor of Church for All Nations in Tacoma, agreed. "Casey walks it," Wolfson said. "He is a man of faith. But more than that, he is a man whose faith works by love."

Treat said his approach is simple. "I keep trying to be a better Christian every day," he said. "This is the key to staying on course and reaching your destiny."

Steven Lawson