

Charles Blair, Pioneering Charismatic Pastor, Dies at 88

✖ Charles E. Blair, a pioneering charismatic pastor who later led missions work in Ethiopia, died at his home Thursday at the age of 88.

Blair was the founding pastor of Calvary Temple in Denver and led the congregation to become one of the first megachurches in the city. He retired in 1998 after 50 years of ministry.

In the 1970s, Blair was embroiled in scandal after he sold unsecured securities in an effort to raise funds for a retirement center. Blair said he sold the securities unwittingly but was fined and put on probation. He later sought to repay the investors.

In later years, Blair devoted his attention to missions work in Ethiopia, where his Blair Foundation has ministered since communism fell there in 1991.

In 2003, he launched the Ethiopian Call, a church-planting effort in Ethiopia's western Benishangul-Gumuz district near the Sudan border. To date, the missions outreach has helped build some 1,350 churches, where more than 64,000 adults worship each Sunday, according to the Blair Foundation.

A funeral service will be held Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at Calvary Temple.