

# Derek Prince, Charismatic Author And Bible Teacher, Dies in Jerusalem

The former atheist, educated as a scholar, was a forerunner of modern teaching on prayer and the biblical restoration of Israel

Internationally known author and charismatic Bible teacher Derek Prince died of heart failure Sept. 24. He was 88. Prince had suffered from a series of chronic illnesses in the last several years and died in his sleep at his Jerusalem home, a statement from Derek Prince Ministries said.

Prince, who had lived in Israel off and on since the 1940s, had a teaching and healing ministry that spanned some six decades. His daily radio program, Today With Derek Prince, currently reaches more than half the world and includes broadcasts in Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Malagasy, Mongolian, Russian, Samoan, Spanish and Tongan.

A controversial though popular Bible teacher known for his logical and reserved teaching style, Prince wrote more than 45 books about the Holy Spirit, faith, marriage, deliverance ministry, healing, prayer and fasting, and God's destiny for Israel. His The Spirit-Filled Believer's Handbook has been translated into more than 60 languages.

"I really believe he is going to be remembered as one of the leading teachers in the charismatic renewal, and one who helped save the charismatic renewal from extremes," said author Stephen Mansfield, who is writing a biography about Prince and was with him days before he died. "He always tried

to ensure that his teaching was solidly biblical.”

But Prince did not set out to be in ministry. As a university student he was a philosopher and self-described atheist.

Born in India of British parents, he was educated in England as a scholar of Greek and Latin at Eton College prep school and at the University of Cambridge. He held a fellowship in ancient and modern philosophy at King’s College, Cambridge. While serving with the British army in World War II, he began to study the Bible and became a Christian.

After being discharged from the army in Jerusalem at the end of the war, Prince witnessed the return of Jews to Israel from around the world and interpreted it as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Israel’s restoration became a main focus of his teaching. His books *Our Debt to Israel*, *The Last Word on the Middle East* and *The Destiny of Israel and the Church* have informed Christians of their scriptural responsibilities to Israel and the Jews.

“He was an example ... for many believers throughout the world,” said Batya Segal, who with her husband, Barry, leads Vision for Israel ministry. “He had a tremendous passion for the Word of God, for the land and people of Israel.”

In 1945 Prince married Lydia Christensen, a Danish missionary more than 26 years his senior. He became father to her eight adopted daughters—six Jewish, one Palestinian Arab and one British—and the couple later adopted another daughter in Kenya.

The Princes immigrated to the United States in 1963 and

pastored a church in Seattle. In the early 1970s Prince began to teach about the need for Christians to pray for national leaders, and helped found Intercessors for America (IFA) in 1973. Prince's book *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting* is still one of the IFA's best sellers, said President Gary Bergel.

"Many people don't know how much influence he had on the prayer movement," Bergel said. "That initial teaching really set the course of our ministry."

Though well-known for his teaching on deliverance ministry, Prince is also remembered for his participation in the controversial discipleship, or "shepherding," movement in the 1970s. As reports of control and manipulation began to circulate, Prince eventually withdrew from the movement he began with Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford and Charles Simpson. He publicly repented for his involvement, saying, "I believe we were guilty of the Galatian error: having begun in the Spirit, we quickly degenerated into the flesh," *WorldNet Daily* reported.

Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan said that although Prince never regained the level of popularity he had before 1977, he had widespread influence in the charismatic renewal and his "well-organized teaching" filled a void for many charismatics.

Prince's first wife, Lydia, died in 1975, and in 1978 he married Ruth Baker, a single mother to three adopted children. She died in 1998 in Jerusalem, where the couple moved in 1981.

Prince is survived by 11 children and an extended family of more than 150.

**Eric Tiansay and Adrienne S. Gaines**