

Ex-Crack Addict David Piper Leads Ongoing Revival in Mississippi

House of Praise in the small Gulf Coast town of Hurley is seeing conversions regularly

A former crack-addict-turned-evangelist is leading a revolving series of meetings in a small southern Mississippi Pentecostal church. Salvations and reports of miracles—characteristics of revival—are occurring consistently, say observers at the House of Praise church in Hurley, Miss.

Evangelist David Piper has been visiting the church once a month for the last year. In 1998, Piper—then a crack-cocaine addict—traveled from his Tifton, Ga., home to Orlando, Fla., to attend a Benny Hinn crusade where he was delivered of his addiction. The automotive consultant said he quit his job to go into full-time ministry.

“I was directed to go to Brunswick, Ga., to a revival meeting,” Piper said. “I only had enough money for three days when a man was led to come to me. He told me I needed to visit Ruth Heflin’s campground in Virginia.”

After learning that the lodging for the camp would be free of charge, Piper said he prayed and that at the last minute God provided the gas and food money for his trip. He said God told him to be obedient and He would open the doors.

“When I first met Ruth [Heflin], she spent 20 minutes with me and was led to pour her life into mine,” Piper said. “My mother died when I was 9. From [the time I met Ruth] until her

death, pastor Ruth and I would talk on the phone at least once a week so she could speak into my life seeds of greatness. She was just that kind of person. She became my spiritual mother.”

Since Piper began his visits to House of Praise, many healings have been reported, including several among crack addicts. On one Sunday night Piper asked people in the congregation who had been healed to stand. Those standing reported being relieved of cancer, painful spines and deaf ears.

Some who attend House of Praise meetings attribute the presence of God in the church to the original worship songs composed by pastor William Hancock.

“The pastor has a touch with God,” said attendee Sandra Pruitt of Lucedale, Miss. “He knows how to stir to bring God into a service. What we have is special and is one of the best-guarded secrets on the Gulf Coast.”

Some think that Hurley, famous for its pine trees and wide-open spaces, could become another small-town revival center, as Smithton, Mo., was. Visitors already are traveling across state lines from Mobile, Ala., to attend.

“There’s not another church in the river of God in this area,” one Mobile visitor said. “We make the trip because we want to be in God’s presence. We are hungry for God.”

“It is easy to preach in this church because of the glory of God that is here. You people are really blessed,” Piper said. After finishing one Sunday service, Piper went to a Biloxi Hospital to pray for another crack addict.

"I'm just happy to be in this full time now," Piper said. "God opens the doors, and I go through them, whether they be an individual who needs prayer or a church who calls upon me."

In January when Piper was ministering at House of Praise, five people claimed after the service to have been translated by the Holy Spirit to an African mission field. At the end of an intercessory prayer time, each person related a similar experience.

Each month an increased sense of the Holy Spirit's presence is felt in the service because of the hunger of the people for God, Piper said.

-Jerrell H. Miller