

Frances Hunter Dies

✖ Healing ministry pioneer Frances Hunter died early Tuesday morning after battling kidney failure and congestive heart failure for more than two years. She was 93.

Hunter and her husband, Charles, spent nearly 40 years leading “healing explosions,” where they prayed for the sick and taught Christians about the ministry of healing. Known as the Happy Hunters for their ready smiles and quick humor, the couple wrote more than 50 books about divine healing, including the best-seller *How to Heal the Sick*.

In 1990, they began the World Evangelistic Census, a campaign that mobilizes people to do door-to-door evangelism while taking a census of the world. Millions have reportedly come to Christ through the effort.

As recently as 2007, the couple hosted a Worldwide Day of Healing for All Nations that was broadcast worldwide on television and the Internet. This year’s event is to be held Sept. 19.

“Charles and Frances Hunter were the most effective couple I ever saw among healing evangelists,” said Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan, dean emeritus of the Regent University School of Divinity. “In their own unique way, they touched multitudes with the positive healing message.

“I once worked with them in a crusade in Honduras and saw up close how much the people loved them. Frances had one of the most powerful and charming personalities I ever saw. They were a perfect team. They never lacked for vision.”

Born on May 8, 1916, in a one-room log cabin in southern Illinois, Frances Fuller weighed only 2 pounds at birth and was placed in a shoebox to die. She stunned the midwife and her parents when she let out a cry and proved that she was determined to survive.

She attended high school in St. Louis, where she learned secretarial skills. After being widowed with two small children, she started a secretarial business in Florida that grew into a printing company.

She attended church only occasionally and was a self-described "chain smoker" before a car accident in 1965 left her blind in her left eye. The experience caused her to search for God, and she accepted Christ at age 49 and became "an instant fanatic" about her newfound faith. Eventually, her sight was restored.

She met Charles Hunter, a widowed accountant, in October 1969, just months after his conversion. The couple was married on Jan. 1, 1970, and baptized in the Holy Spirit the following year after listening to teaching tapes by the late charismatic evangelist George Otis.

"The day I got saved I immediately had compassion and wanted to lay hands on the sick," Frances Hunter told Charisma in an interview last year. "We got baptized after we got married and got a hunger to see people healed. God called all of us to lay hands on the sick, and they will be healed and recover."

When she and Charles launched their healing ministry, few churches were teaching Christians how to lay hands on the sick. "When we first wrote our book *How to Heal the Sick*, there was no activity in that area going on in the church," Hunter said last year. "Nobody was laying hands on the sick, and that little book is still revolutionizing lives today. We just ordained 329 people in March [2008], and we ordained over 900 people [in 2007]."

Hunter saw thousands of people abandon their wheelchairs and

canes while ministering with her husband at large-scale stadium events across the U.S. and in 49 nations. Last year, Hunter said she had recently received an e-mail from a 34-year-old man whom she prayed for when he was just 4 years old and suffering from cerebral palsy.

"I set him on my lap, laid hands on him and prayed for him and he took his braces off," she recalled of the man's healing 30 years before. "I said, 'Jeffy, run to the back of the church.' He never walked in his life. He took his braces off and ran."

In recent years, both Hunters had been in frail health. Charles Hunter, 88, had six major spinal operations between May and December 2003. Frances Hunter had a bout with breast cancer the same year, which eventually led to a mastectomy. In 2007, Hunter was diagnosed with double pneumonia, congestive heart failure and kidney failure, and said doctors told her she wouldn't survive another year.

"God did a healing miracle," she said a year after that diagnosis. "God isn't finished with me yet. I'll stay in the healing ministry and believe God."

Cal Pierce, director of Healing Rooms Ministries in Spokane, Wash., said Charles and Frances Hunter laid an important foundation for contemporary healing ministries.

"I think the key to [the] forerunning that the Hunters have done in the body of Christ is teaching us that the ordinary believer can do an extraordinary work by the power of the Holy Spirit," said Pierce, whose ministry honored the Hunters in 2008 during its annual Spiritual Hunger Conference. "It's not just for 'somebody,' it's for His body. That's significant for us because it's the ordinary person doing extraordinary work [at the healing rooms]."

Frances Hunter's daughter, Joan Hunter Murrell, who is a traveling healing evangelist, will lead the Hunters' Texas-based ministry. *Messengers of Healing*, a biography about the

Hunters, was released in April.

Hunter is survived by her husband, Charles; a son, Thomas Steder; a daughter, Joan Hunter Murrell; nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral services have yet to be announced.

A memorial service is tentatively to be held Aug. 3 in Houston.