

Man Revived by Prayer After Heart Attack at Healing Meeting

Tampa-based Billy Burke is said to have raised auto salesman John Holloman from near-death during service

While liberal theologians debate whether or not miracles are for today, pastor Billy Burke of Tampa, Fla., conducts healing services three times a week. John Holloman, a Tampa auto salesman who attended one of Burke's services, is one person who would check the "Yes—for miracles today" box if that debate were ever put to a vote.

Burke is the senior pastor of The Miracle Center World Outreach in Tampa and host of a weekly half-hour TV program titled Expect a Miracle. He has conducted healing crusades in various countries for the last 20 years.

Holloman suffered a heart attack during a healing service Burke was leading in April of last year at First Assembly of God in Fort Myers, Fla. Paramedics were called, but a physician in attendance said Holloman had no pulse. When Burke prayed for him, Holloman revived.

"I am not a medical doctor so I will leave it to others who are qualified to say if he died or not," said Dan Betzer, pastor of First Assembly. "But I can say of surety that if he wasn't dead, there wasn't much hope he would ever leave church alive. Brother Burke's prayers, surrounded by the congregation, did bring the spirit of resurrection into that man's body."

Doctors at Health Park Hospital found Holloman's right ventricular valve so weakened they were surprised he made it to the hospital. Holloman was an alcoholic and not a Christian before his healing.

"I hadn't wanted to go to church that night, but my wife insisted—which was a surprise to me, since she hadn't given her life to the Lord either," Holloman said. "When I knew something was very wrong, I turned to my wife, said, 'I love you,' and blacked out. I learned the details later."

As evidence of Holloman's changed life, he has been sober since the healing, his wife has gotten saved, and he has led five others to Christ. "Now all I talk about is the Lord," he said.

Burke's personal belief in miraculous healing started at age 9 when he was healed of a terminal brain tumor during a Kathryn Kuhlman crusade. Before another service at First Assembly in Fort Myers, Burke said miracles should breed excitement among believers.

"God is taking us into deeper realms of signs and wonders," Burke said. "There is also a difference between surprise and shock. Shock shows unbelief and doubt, while surprise is that sweet element of God kissing a prayer, or a meeting, and keeping us ever mindful that He is in charge. It's an element that keeps us humble—I welcome God surprising me."

Betzer confirmed his belief that the Lord has given Burke spiritual gifts that astound the lost and convince them of Christ's divinity.

“To Billy Burke, the Holy Spirit has certainly granted gifts of faith, miracles and divine healing,” he said. “He is with us one Sunday night each month. Attendance is strong, many are saved each night, and we see deliverance from sickness that can be attributable only to God’s direct intervention. Jesus said there would be signs and wonders. We are seeing those manifestations at First Assembly.”

To critics of miracles and healing, Burke said: “The Word says until we see Him face-to-face, we all see through glass darkly. The way I see it is until we see Him we need all the gifts, not just to help people, but they are the only thing that puts us on a level playing field with all the darkness and evil in the world.

“I do see critics thriving where there is fraudulent behavior and manipulation. Where the real is, there is also the unreal, the counterfeit and the true— the wheat and the tares. But we can’t throw out the baby with the bathwater.”

In addition to his various outreaches, Burke has authored several audio albums and two books—Freedom From Fatal Thinking and Knocking on the Right Door for Your Miracle (Advanced Media Group).

Kevin Hrebik