

Billy Joe Daugherty Dies at 57

✖ Megachurch pastor Billy Joe Daugherty died early Sunday morning after a brief battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He was 57.

A memorial service will be held Nov. 30.

Daugherty, founder of 17,000-member Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Okla., announced last month that he had been diagnosed with cancer, spawning a global prayer chain for his healing.

In a statement released Sunday, church leaders said Daugherty "experienced his ultimate healing by entering into the presence of God." They said the pastor passed away peacefully at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, surrounded by his family.

"We are sad to lose the presence of our pastor, shepherd, father and brother," the statement said. "We are thankful, however, for his life, love and influence on the individuals and ministries he inspired for the last 30 years."

Although known for his teaching on faith, health and prosperity, Daugherty avoided much of the controversy that has surrounded many Word-Faith preachers, including his mentors Oral Roberts and the late Kenneth Hagin Sr.

Committed to world missions, Daugherty helped plant ministries around the world. He founded the International Victory Bible Institute, which has campuses worldwide, and Victory World Missions Training Center.

In Tulsa, Daugherty founded Victory Christian School and the Tulsa Dream Center, which provides food, clothing and medical

services to those in need. He and his wife, Victory co-pastor Sharon Daugherty, also host a television show, *Victory in Jesus*, that is broadcast worldwide, and the couple have written more than a dozen books.

"I am certain that to his very last breath he affected millions of lives for the gospel," said Bible teacher Marilyn Hickey, who befriended the Daughertys more than 30 years ago. "It is a great grief to me to think he is gone. ... He was like a rock to the body of Christ, but in leaving he left a lot more rocks, solid believers."

Kenneth Copeland, a longtime friend who has spoken at Victory's annual Word Explosion conference, said Daugherty was a man of utmost integrity. "He and Sharon are people of character and quality," Copeland told *Charisma*.

"Of course, we do not enjoy seeing him leave, but two things we know for sure: His place with Christ Jesus is assured. The second is that Sharon Daugherty is a powerful woman of God who will continue in the high standard, excellence and uncompromising ministry of the Word of God."

Bishop T.D. Jakes, who was scheduled to speak at Victory Dec. 20, said the global church has lost a treasure. "Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty was an extraordinary pastor whose leadership was only rivaled by his love for people of all walks of life," Jakes said. "The body of Christ has lost a general and a treasure of mammoth proportions. Our loss is heavens gain."

Born in Magnolia, Ark., Daugherty was raised in the United Methodist Church and married the daughter of a Methodist minister. He eventually became associated with independent charismatics after being baptized in the Holy Spirit while a student at Oral Roberts University (ORU), where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1974.

He and wife Sharon attended classes at Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas before returning to Tulsa to serve as

youth ministers at Sheridan Christian Center.

Daugherty became senior pastor there in 1976 when the pastor retired, according to the *Tulsa World*. The church grew from 300 to 2,000 under his leadership, but a disagreement with church leaders caused Daugherty to leave in the early 1980s and start Victory. In 2007, the church moved into a \$32 million, 5,000-seat worship center, built debt-free.

Daugherty served on the Board of Reference of ORU, and stepped in as interim president in 2007 when former president Richard Roberts resigned amid allegations that he misused university funds.

“The Oral Roberts University community mourns the loss of a truly gracious and generous kingdom leader,” said current ORU President Mark Rutland. “Billy Joe Daugherty was not just a landmark in Tulsa, but a spokesman for the gospel beloved around the world.”

In addition to his wife, Daugherty is survived by his mother, Iru Daugherty, and his four children, all of whom are in ministry: Sarah Wehrli, Ruthie Sanders, John Daugherty and Paul Daugherty.

The memorial service is to be held at 1 p.m. Nov. 30 at ORU’s Mabee Center.

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