

Healing Evangelist Charles Hunter Dies

Healing evangelist Charles Edward Hunter died in his Houston-area home Monday night after being in frail health for several years. He was 89.

Hunter and his wife, Frances, spent nearly 40 years leading healing crusades worldwide before her death last July at age 93. Known as the Happy Hunters, the couple wrote numerous books on divine healing, including the best seller *How to Heal the Sick*, and produced teaching DVDs to train others in healing ministry.

"[The Hunters] were a wonderful combination of two people who loved each other and loved the Lord," said Stanley Burgess, a distinguished professor of Christian history at Regent University's School of Divinity and author of *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*. "The other thing that impresses me about them is that they loved to train people, and you don't find training for healing in many places. It's going to be very hard to find others that have equal success in that area."

Hunter's daughter, Joan Hunter Murrell, said her father had essentially been bed-ridden for several months and suffered from a weakened heart. She said he died peacefully after lying down for bed.

She saw him the previous day to wish him a happy Father's Day. "I told him he was the best father ever, which was true," she said. "Not only to me but to everybody he ever met."

Born July 23, 1920, Charles Hunter grew up in Abilene, Texas, where his parents operated a peach orchard. He accepted Christ as a teenager and eventually became an accountant. After a stint in the Air Force during World War II, he opened an

accounting firm in Houston.

Widowed in May 1969 after 27 years of marriage, Hunter married an itinerant evangelist named Frances Gardner on Jan. 1, 1970, and the two began to travel in ministry together. Although they sensed a calling to healing ministry, they saw a marked increase in miraculous healings after they embraced the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1971 and began speaking in tongues, authors Richard Young and Brenda Young wrote in the Hunters' biography, *Messengers of Healing*.

"Before their baptism in the Holy Spirit, they had laid hands on the sick with occasional results," the authors wrote. "After their baptism, it was not unusual for person after person to exclaim that his or her pain was gone, injured body parts were healed, or that sores and growths had shrunk or disappeared."

In 1985, the Hunters began leading large-scale crusades known as "healing explosions," which hundreds of thousands of people attended around the world. In 1990, they started the World Evangelistic Census, a campaign that mobilized people to evangelize door-to-door. Millions reportedly came to Christ through the outreach.

Even when Charles Hunter was well into his 80s and Frances in her 90s, the couple held seminars to train people in healing ministry. As recently as 2007, the couple hosted a Worldwide Day of Healing for All Nations that was broadcast worldwide on television and the Internet.

"I believe the gospel must be preached to every creature before Jesus comes back," Charles Hunter said in a 2000 interview with *Charisma*. "That's our aim, to keep busy. To keep on the cutting edge of what Jesus is doing."

Joan Hunter Murrella, Frances Hunter's daughter whom Charles legally adopted in 1970, has been leading the Hunters' Houston-area ministry since her mother's death in July.

Charles Hunter is survived by Frances' two children, Thomas Steder and Joan Hunter Murrell; nine grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral services had not been announced at press time.