

Jamie Buckingham, 59, Preacher Who Criticized TV Evangelists

By BRUCE LAMBERT
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Correction Appended

The Rev. Jamie W. Buckingham, a leading charismatic Christian preacher and author who criticized the excesses of television evangelists, died Monday at the Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne, Fla. He was 59 years old and lived in Palm Bay, Fla.

He died of liver cancer, his family said.

Mr. Buckingham was the senior pastor of the 2,000-member Tabernacle Church in Melbourne, a nondenominational church he founded 25 years ago. He also wrote 42 books and was the editor of Ministry Today magazine and a columnist for Charisma magazine. Spoke Out Against Scandals

He spoke out against the financial and sexual scandals involving Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart and other prominent evangelists, saying, "If we don't discipline ourselves, God will make certain we are disciplined by others." He also faulted the political activities of the Rev. Jerry Falwell with his Moral Majority organization in the 1980 Presidential campaign.

Among Mr. Buckingham's books were biographies of evangelical leaders like Kathryn Kuhlman, Nicky Cruz and the Rev. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network.

Mr. Buckingham was born in Vero Beach, Fla. He graduated from Mercer University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. For more than a decade he was a pastor at churches of the Southern Baptist denomination in South Carolina, Texas and Florida.

While attending a Pentecostal meeting in the mid-1960's for research on a book, he said, he felt spiritually transformed and joined the charismatic movement, which stresses the central role of the Holy Spirit in proferring gifts like prophecy, curing and speaking in "tongues."

He is survived by his wife, the former Jackie Law; two sons, Bruce and Tim, both of Palm Bay; three daughters, Bonnie Ranzino of Melbourne and Robin Moore and Sandy Smith, both of Palm Bay; 13 grandchildren; his mother, Elvira, of Vero Beach; two brothers, Clay, of Manns Choice, Pa., and John, of Birmingham, Ala., and a sister, Audrey Unruh of Springfield, Mo.

Photo: The Rev. Jamie W. Buckingham (Rik Jesse/Florida Today, 1987)

Correction: February 25, 1992, Tuesday An obituary yesterday about a charismatic Christian preacher and author rendered his name incorrectly in some copies. He was the Rev. Jamie W. Buckingham.

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