

IN LOVING MEMORY
BISHOP HARPER HUNTER
JANUARY 8, 1922 - JUNE 6, 2011

Crossing the Bar
by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.



Order of Service

- Reading of Eulogy – Bishop Steve Wilson
Senior Pastor, Peerless Road Church of God of Prophecy
- “Somebody Made It And So Can I” – Video by Bishop Harper Hunter
- A Tribute – Bishop R.C. Howard
General Overseer, Church of God of Prophecy
- The Tennessee Connection – Bishop E.C. McKinley
State Overseer of Tennessee, Church of God of Prophecy
- “It Is Well” – Congregation Sings
Mike Plumley, Sondra Slatzer Hunter, Chuck Slatzer,
Sonja Slatzer Gallagher
- The Singing Evangelist – Bishop Adrian Varlaek
Church Historian for the Church of God of Prophecy
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” – Heidi Jones Bradley, Granddaughter
- The Family Speaks – Rev. Dr. Harold D. Hunter, Ph.D.
- Prayer of Thanksgiving – Rev. Terry Fowler
Assistant to Presiding Bishop
International Pentecostal Holiness Church
- “Lord, You Are Holy” – 3P
Extended Family Members

Interment at Sunset Memorial Gardens

- Bishop Ray C. Wynn, Senior Adult Pastor
Peerless Road Church of God of Prophecy
- “Amazing Grace” – Ceylon Jones Bradley
Great-granddaughter

Bishop Harper Hunter, a *general* in the army of the Lord, slipped the surly bonds of earth and took his flight to the Celestial City of God on Monday, June 6, 2011.

Harper Hunter, Jr. was born in a humble home on January 8, 1922, in rural Dickson County, Tennessee, to Harper Herbert and Edith Hunter. Harper used to enjoy telling people he was born in Cheap Hill, Tennessee. Both of his grandfathers worked the soil for a living so Harper knew his way around a turning plow and a team of mules. His first job was breaking ground on his Grandfather Scott's Cumberland River bottom land with the mule, Old Mary, for which he was paid 75 cents per day.



Harper was converted and sanctified in 1935 and joined the Church of God of Prophecy at White Oak Flat, Tennessee, at the age of 13. About two years later he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. After graduation from high school, Hunter attended George Peabody College for Teachers and Vanderbilt University as he had a great desire to get a college degree. He toyed with the idea of being a truck driver and had a desire to take flying lessons among other things, but “preaching” was NOT on his list. He says, “God didn’t ask me if I wanted to be a preacher; He simply called me and I had to reckon with it.” When asked about his ambition of finishing school, he said, “I got over that.” What about your ambition of flying? “I got over that, too” he replied.

In 1941 with his guitar in hand, Rev. Hunter soon became an evangelist-in-demand as he and his brother-in-law, Charles Batson, traveled the country in a 1938 Oldsmobile holding revival services. Many souls were saved, many added to the church, and a church was established after his meeting in one locale. During this time, Harper also attended Bible Training Camp, eventually graduating from the

institute. In 1943 Harper and Charles were appointed as Church of God of Prophecy co-state overseers of Maine by General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson the last year Tomlinson moderated the General Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy. As of June 2011, Harper and Charles were the last living appointees of the A.J. Tomlinson era. Later that year when A.J. passed away, Harper was selected clerk to record the events that led to the selection of M.A. Tomlinson as general overseer of the church. The official account, written by his own hand, is archived at the church headquarters.



During a 1945 revival service in Akron, Ohio, Harper met Betty Lorene Williams—a pretty young lady and musician whom he deemed an outstanding candidate for a minister's wife. As the story is told, Betty not only played piano and organ, but she was a drummer as well. Later that year they were married. According to Betty, it went something like this: "Harper and Charles closed out one revival on Friday but had another one starting on Sunday. We were married on Saturday, July 28, in the home of Brother and Sister W.W. Snyder with

J.B. Wright as the officiating minister. After the wedding, Charles, Helen, Harper and I got in the car and drove all night to start the revival the next morning. That was our honeymoon!" Thus began their life together for 66 years.

Rich stories are often told of the young Hunter family pulling a trailer full of musical instruments (including an organ), staying in church members homes and doing without the comforts of home and a private life. At the culmination of each revival they held a water baptism service. There are pictures on record where Harper had to break ice in an Ohio river before one baptismal service. The stories are thrilling and timeless when one considers how God could take a humble country boy and use him in such a mighty way.

In 1947 Hunter was ordained a bishop and appointed state overseer of Wisconsin, followed by the birth of Harold Duane a few months later.

Duties as an overseer and teaching in BTI did not overtake the evangelistic fervor that possessed Harper's very being. Indeed, the traveling Singing Evangelist became the traveling Singing Evangelist-State Overseer! Harper was appointed World Evangelist and brought his little family to Cleveland where his darling daughter, Deborah Starlene, was born in 1955.



As the years rolled by, Hunter was also appointed state overseer of Kentucky, Wyoming, South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Alabama, South Carolina and Mississippi. At the International Headquarters of the Church of God of Prophecy he served as World Evangelist, General Evangelist, Assembly Band Movement (ABM) Secretary and Field Secretary to the General Overseer (assistant general overseer).

At one point in the late 50s the Hunters briefly pastored the Eastview church in Cleveland between appointments. Harper's usually boundless energy was gone, along with weight loss and difficulty ministering in the pulpit. Later, after improving and gaining his weight and strength back, a chest X-ray revealed four or five spots about the size of his little finger on his left lung. The physician told him the spots were the marks of tuberculosis which had healed and left scars. Harper left the physician's office praising God as he knew the Healer had intervened in his life.

In addition to his preaching, teaching and administrative duties, Harper Hunter was a popular singer in the church, recording various 78 rpm records and seven LP albums and cassettes (as the technology changed) through the Church of God of Prophecy Broadcast Record Club on the Majestic Records label. The first of the

LP albums was distributed in 1952 and the last one celebrated the 40th anniversary of the club in 1992. Throughout the years he wrote various books and many articles published at the White Wing Publishing House arm of the church. In 1987 a biography of Hunter's life was written by Marie Back and published with the title *The HUNTER . . . Without A Gun*.

Bishop Hunter traveled to many countries and all 50 states preaching, teaching, and ministering to church leaders on the field. He was loved by old and young alike. The youth of the church knew him as the state overseer who enjoyed being an integral part of the state youth camps—especially playing a good game of softball with the campers during the day and praying them through to deeper experiences with God at the evening altar services. When Hunter's state appointment transferred him to another state, one young man lamented, "We'll never get anyone that will love us like he did . . . enough to wear his blue jeans and play ball with us."

Most important of all, Hunter was known as a man with an exemplary prayer life, carrying a burden for the souls of lost humanity. His praying started in the wee hours of the morning and continued throughout the day. Of all the titles bestowed on him, Hunter wanted to be known simply as a singing evangelist, for he was a "lover of souls".

Rev. Hunter is survived by his devoted wife, Betty Hunter of Cleveland; his son, Dr. Harold D. Hunter and wife Sondra of Oklahoma City; his daughter, Deborah S. Hunter Jones of Smyrna; granddaughter, Heidi Jones Bradley and husband Blake of Nashville; grandson, Matthew Landon Jones of Nashville; great-grandchildren, Ceylon, Lennon and Jude Bradley of Nashville; sister, Helen Hunter Batson and husband Charles of Roseburg, Oregon, and



a host of nieces and nephews. Preceding Rev. Hunter in death are his parents, Harper and Edith Hunter of Ashland City, Tennessee; mother and father-in-law, James and Sadie Williams of Akron, Ohio; and son-in-law, Rev. Mikey Jones, Jr. of Smyrna.

The Singing Evangelist who brought thousands of converts to the Cross of Calvary; who inspired thousands with his prayer life, preaching, teaching, writing and mentoring; who sang hundreds of songs about his Redeemer and heaven—now is singing and rejoicing and playing that tambourine with his own unique style before the King of King and Lord of Lords.



Harper Hunter is now to be counted among that "great cloud of witnesses" that urge us to "lay aside every weight" and "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1, 2). One of God's choice warriors now dwells in the Holy City of God.



Reflections About HARPER HUNTER

Harper Hunter as mentor to young ministers:

This man of prayer, this man of faith, this man of evangelism, helped mold those first impressionable years of my ministry. My wife and I were privileged to live in the Hunters' home for two years. The devotionals, the prayer time we spent together still affects my life today. On many occasions I left the house at 6 p.m. Brother Hunter would be in the basement earnestly praying. When I would return at 11 p.m. I could hear him still seeking the Lord. He had not left that place all night. On other occasions as we traveled to nearby churches Brother Hunter would stop the car without warning and say, "Oh, we must pray; there's a great need somewhere." There were times in prayer that it seemed as though Brother Hunter would possibly die under the great burden that he felt in prayer. His life of prayer has made a tremendous impact on my life, ministry, and family. **Pastor Kerry D. Murphy served with Bishop Hunter as Illinois State VLB Secretary. From a letter written to Marie Back, author of *The HUNTER . . . Without A Gun***

(He) has been the single greatest influence in my life and my ministry. He was a godly Mentor. He helped mold me into the man I am today. There are still times that I visualize him praying and I rehearse some of the "great" statements he made to me many years ago. Heaven's gain will be a great lose to the entire Christian faith. He is one of those "Spiritual Fathers" that simply cannot be replaced. **Phil Pierce served four years with Bishop Hunter as Alabama State VLB Secretary and State Music Director**

Prayer was a #1 priority of Harper Hunter's day. He not only had planned prayer times, but would suddenly stop and pray when he felt a burden.

(Pastor J.L. Twitty) and Brother Hunter were touring the northern district churches in Indiana. They were driving through Bluffton when Brother Hunter experienced a sudden burden to pray. He wanted to go in a church to pray. They came upon a church building (not one of ours), found the door unlocked and went in and prayed for some time. At the conclusion of the prayer they left a note explaining that they had been there and why, and thanked the minister for the use of the church. The minister of that church was so impressed that he later made contact, ultimately joined our Church, and is currently an evangelist in Indiana. As Brother Hunter so often states, "Prayer changes things." **From *The HUNTER . . . Without a Gun***

What an honor it was to pastor (Peerless Rd. COGOP) and be friends with Harper Hunter. Brother Hunter was one of a kind! His life focus on winning the lost and seeing revival in our generation was unlike anyone I have ever met. This is all he talked about and what he lived for. Where did this passion come from? While pastoring he and Sister Hunter, I discovered first-hand one of the things that kept his passion for soul winning burning so brightly. Early morning, fervent prayer was Brother Hunter's delight. He usually beat me to the church and was willing to tarry long in prayer. Rain, shine, good days or bad days he was there faithfully crying out to God for hurting people and for God to visit us again. He was so amazingly disciplined in this that it was a great inspiration to me in my own prayer life. Brother Hunter would also share quotes, poems, scriptures, etc. on revival with me that I in turn have shared in sermons around the world. In many ways, Brother Hunter lived more in the heavenly realm than in the earthly. He talked about, sang about, prayed about and preached about heaven all of his life. Now, heaven has become his place of rest. What a homecoming he must be enjoying! **Rev. William Wilson, Executive Director, International Center for Spiritual Renewal**

Sign on Harper Hunter's office door when he was General ABM Secretary:

Do Not Knock. From 10 to 11 a.m.—come on in and join me in PRAYER!

As two young evangelists planted a new congregation in Athens, TN., a unique spiritual manifestation prompted A.J. Creel to write: "From that moment in history even until now, I knew Harper would be greatly used as a chosen vessel for God and the promotion of His Church. . . . A friend told me not long ago that Bishop Hunter's knees had huge calluses on them from being on them for such long periods of time praying. Oh, for intercessors who won't let go until this world is aflame with REVIVAL!" **Bishop A.J. Creel, former pastor and state overseer**

Brother Hunter was my first overseer and a true mentor. He was a true evangelist at heart and would take me from bar to bar on the streets of Rapid City, South Dakota, to witness to the lost. My most memorable event was in California when I was attending BTI and Brother Hunter was an instructor. He came to my room and asked me to go up on the mountain with him. After walking awhile, he removed his shoes, found an old log and he made an altar. We prayed there for quite some time. In the following years whenever we met at an assembly or a convention, his first greeting was, "Jim, remember the log?" Yes, he knew how to pray and he taught me so much. To this very day, I'm still learning from the example he set for me in intercessory prayer. I thank the Lord for this man of God. Yes, I still remember the Log! **Rev. James Bennett, retired pastor**

Written to his ministers when Harper was overseer: “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Isaiah 52:11. LET ME KNOW HOW A MAN LIVES THEN I’LL BE PERSUADED ABOUT HIS PREACHING! Dead men give out dead sermons to dead congregations. UNANointed PREACHING KILLS. The preaching man is to be a praying man. Go to the church one and a half hours (1½) before service to wash the busy world out of your mind and come before the audience with a fresh anointing like a man from another world. **From *Nuggets of Gold* by Harper Hunter**

Sinners in the altar:

Dad’s greatest desire was to see souls saved and he was always prayed up and prepared—going to church **expecting** any sinner present to cry out for repentance. It was his custom to carry two clean handkerchiefs in his pocket. “I have done this for years,” he said. “The reason for this is someone at the altar may be crying out to God and might not have one of his own, so I can give that person one of mine.” **Told to Sondra Hunter, daughter-in-law**

Harper Hunter guided the influences that entered his home (in the strictest terms) and gave that same guidance to newly married couples:

You are responsible for what enters your lives and home—the records you play on the phonograph, the TV programs you view, the books you choose from the well-filled shelf. Let all of these be of such caliber as not to jeopardize your experience with the Lord and not mar your Christian testimony, for you become what you see. Whatever gets your attention and holds it long enough, GETS YOU. **Pre-marriage counseling notes/letter to Bishop Allen South and wife Sheila. From *The HUNTER . . . Without A Gun***

State Overseer Harper Hunter was always a visible and active part of each state’s youth camp program as he loved to PLAY and PRAY with the young people—the future church. Longtime Indiana camp director, Marie Back, writes, from *The HUNTER . . . Without A Gun*:

Brother Hunter was always present from beginning to ending of the camps. His sincerity and involvement made the difference in the campers’ attitudes about Christ. (One day) we had a very serious softball game underway. Brother Hunter was up to bat. Did he ever hit that ball! It hit a player on the opposite team (Brian Twitty). . .Brother Hunter hugged the young man, cried with him, prayed with him. . .When the Hunters were transferred to another state, our campers cried. In fact, Brian Twitty cried all the way home (some six or seven hours). He told his parents, “We’ll never get anyone that will love us like he did . . . enough to wear his blue jeans and play ball with us.”

Family Perspective:

I’ve been a member of the Hunter family for 41 years. Early on I discovered that Dad was a prince of a man. He wasn’t one way in public then something different at home. I have NEVER heard a word of criticism or a sharp or unkind word come from his mouth. He had family devotions and prayer every night, regardless of who was visiting or whatever favorite program a member of the family might be watching. I cannot count the times he walked into the family room, turned off the TV, and declared it was time for prayer. He loved his family deeply—calling out the names of each family member, declaring to Satan that he would NOT have his family. I heard him pray hundreds of times, “Lord, I can’t go to heaven without my family.” Dad was a loving man to his family. Every evening after supper and the dishes were cleaned up, he would lean over and kiss Mom’s forehead saying, “Thanks for the good meal, Betty.” There was not one ounce of chauvinism with Dad. Mom didn’t have to ask for help. He would see something that needed to be done around the house, go out to get a broom or rag or Windex, and start to work! How many ladies would like to have a husband like that!!! Dad constantly talked about “having revival” and praying for “the lost”. I have often commented about the future generation. Will there ever be a young man or woman who will “pray without ceasing” as Dad did? Who will replace Dad? Oh, what a great loss this is to the church. Dad, you’ve been the best father-in-law a girl could ask for. I love you so much. **Sondra Hunter, daughter-in-law**

FACEBOOK POSTINGS

Gary Langley, state overseer of Hawaii: I served as a camp director under Bishop Hunter in Alabama for several years. A man of deep conviction and impeccable integrity.

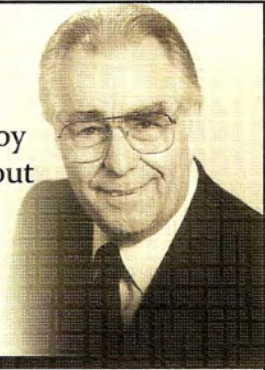
E.C. McKinley, state overseer of Tennessee: He was state overseer of Indiana when I was a little boy. A man of God who influenced a generation . . . I used to call him, “Mr. Revival!”

Chad Smith, Peerless Road church: I’ll never forget the moments of going into the sanctuary at Peerless Road during the early morning prayer time. It was Bro. Hunter who opened the doors and would be in there praying and interceding for people. What a great legacy he has left, and what a great torch he has helped to pass to another generation.

Ron Hamm, founder/pastor of Cedar Ridge Church: The “Hunter without a Gun” was a giant in my eyes. His compassion for the lost was an example to all of us who wore the title of Evangelist . . . Rest easy, great soldier of the cross. You impacted my life.

Precious Memories

The family of Bishop Harper Hunter would enjoy reading your thoughts, stories or memories about Harper. Please take a moment to write these down and place in the basket. Thank you for honoring his life with your presence today.



Lined writing area for sharing memories.