Pastor Jonathan Holloway battles vocal chord cancer

By Gordon Bendall
Editor

Well known, charismatic, and once highly energetic preacher and gospel singer, Jonathan Holloway is in the fight of his life.

As a matter of fact, "Brother Jonathan" is battling to save his own life.

"I'm not worried about dying because I know where I'm going," said the 28 year old singer who has just released another recording entitled "Hello Mother, I made it." Brother Jonathan said he was going to preach and sing until the Lord called him. And that's just a matter of time. His doctors have informed him there is very little they can do for him now. Cancer is taking his voice, his strength, and is about to take his life.

As pastor of both the Mayo Grove Baptist Church in Alton, Virginia and the Olive Hill Baptist Church in Leasburg, North Carolina, Holloway is an inspiration. His "down home" preaching style also makes him a favorite Sunday morning radio personality.

But Jonathan Holloway is now only a shadow of the man that he once was. When diagnosed two years ago with cancer of the vocal chords, his doctors advised him to stop preaching and performing. They gave him two options: first choice, to have his vocal chords removed and use a mechanical voice box; or second, to undergo chemotherapy and try to beat the odds. Holloway chose to take the risk and fight. Six weeks of chemotherapy left him very weak. He said the treatments have been a tough battle. The once vibrant performer who would fill an entire church now speaks in hushed tones and walks with the help of a cane. He has lost weight and grows weaker and weaker. His doctors say he could live longer if he relaxed and stayed quiet.

But Brother Jonathan has decided to go against the advice of his doctors. He's going to sing out and move on. He said he's been preaching and singing since he was 16. It's is all he's ever done and he plans to continue no matter what. "I've got to go on. I'm going to preach and sing until I die. I wouldn't have held out this long if I didn't have 'The Faith.' I have to go on. It's my only choice."

Holloway grew up in Pelham, the son of Queen Ester Holloway Totten.

Holloway's 14th Annual Gospel Singing Anniversary will be Sunday, May 31, at the Memorial Building on Highway 158 in West Yanceyville. Guest choirs will begin singing at 1 pm with a special dinner in honor of Brother Jonathan Holloway.

For more information call Annie Foster at 694-5871 or Donna Graves at 694-9593.
(Rev. Holloway taking a break from singing and preaching until 1991

Rev. Jonathan Holloway of Pelham, one of Caswell County's most popular preacher and singer, will discontinue both activities until 1991 due to a throat condition. Rev. Holloway will retain his position as pastor at Olive Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Leasburg and Mayo Grove Baptist Church in Alton, Virginia despite his need for inactivity as a preacher and singer.

The Deacons and congregations at both churches will keep Rev. Holloway as their pastor because he has brought them long ways through God's Grace.

Rev. Wesley Richmond of Providence Baptist Church, Rev. Coleman of Mt. Olive Baptist Church and Rev. M. Paylor of Blackwell Baptist Church will be preaching at Rev. Holloway's churches throughout the remainder of this year.

All Gospel concerts planned by Rev. Holloway will be conducted by the choirs he sings with and the two December revivals in Rocky Mount will be conducted by Rev. T.W. Jones of Henderson.

Rev. Holloway would like to thank everyone for the cards, donations, flowers and prayers.

"A special thanks goes to my church families at Olive Hill Missionary Baptist in Leasburg and Mayo Grove Missionary Baptist in Alton, Virginia," stated Rev. Holloway. "They both have been real good."

Thank you also go to Rev. B.R. Inge of Providence Baptist Church; Rev. A. Randolph; my best friend, Rev. Ronald Brooks, pastor of Zion Level; and Brother Leroy Connally for preaching in Rev. Holloway's place.

"Thanks to the following: Sister Mary Ellen Gibson, Sister Annie Swann, Sister Clara Richmond Ackery, Julia Foster, the Soul Stirrers, my pastor and home church, Rev. H.T. Gray and the Shady Grove

Baptist Church of Pelham, and I must say thanks to Graves Chapel Male Choir. I love you all," stated Rev. Holloway.

"All I can say is I hope things get better in 1991. Also, I praise God and thank him for things being as well as they are...May all of you have a good Thanksgiving and remember me in your prayers," added Rev. Holloway.

Rev. Jonathan Holloway