The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Allan Chumak, Famous Perestroika TV Healer, Dies at Age 82

October 10, 2017



Allan Chumak (Utkin Igor / TASS)

Allan Chumak, the famous Russian television faith healer of the perestroika era, died yesterday in Moscow at the age of 82.

The faith healer rose to prominence at the height of Mikhail Gorbachev's reign in the late 1980s, hosting an early morning session on the television program "120 Minutes." His on-screen rituals were intended to fill audiences with disease-curing energy.

After earning a degree in journalism from Moscow State University, Chumak began his television career in 1965 as a sports commentator. In his autobiography he revealed that he began to feel a certain energy and disposition toward spiritual healing while working on a series of articles exposing the charlatan tendencies of mystic healers.

In the early 1980s he worked at the Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology, before being allotted the 15-minute television slot that would make him famous.

During his weekday programs, which began at 7:15 a.m., he would imbue various substances — such as water, creams, and ointments — with a so-called “charge.”

Each performance would begin with an announcement of the day's malady. Chumak would then explain how the malady disrupted the body’s energy flow, and then move his hands in curing motions. His most ardent supporters would place water next to the television in the hope that the water would receive the “charge” through the screen.

Embed:

The program was immensely popular, but the Russian Academy of Sciences Commission on Combating Pseudoscience and Falsification of Scientific Research repeatedly condemned Chumak’s practices, claiming that the effectiveness of his treatments lacked evidence. The Health Ministry eventually issued an order restricting unconventional methods of treatment, effectively putting an end to his television career.

After the program’s short run, Chumak continued his practice, but with private clients. In 1999, he even tried his hand at politics, running for the State Duma in the Samara region but winning only 3 percent of the vote.

In a 2010 interview Chumak said that he had been “gifted" by God himself, and invited the “highest members of the church hierarchy” to try to refute his claim.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/10/10/perestroika-era-television-healer-dies-at-age-82-a59221