

African Pastor Spreads Fervor in U.S. As Reports of Healings Circulate

Pastor Kingsley Fletcher says the move of God within his North Carolina congregation is meant to extend farther

Darlene Smith had been praying for a miracle for 12 years. She'd seen a variety of doctors, much like the biblical woman with the issue of blood, but still had lost the use of her hands and shoulders to fibromyalgia.

She was in constant pain. Just sitting for a couple of hours would cause her body to swell so much she couldn't wear shoes. Though only 47, Smith said she was "waiting to die."

Then on a Sunday evening as she sat in the back of Life Community Church (LCC) in Research Triangle Park, N.C., she saw a vision of Jesus walking the aisle, preparing to leave the building. She cried out, asking Him not to pass her by.

Smith says He laid His hand on her head, and she saw a bright light and felt love course through her being. When the vision was over, she sat in her pew and suddenly realized the pain was gone. She sat for a half-hour with no swelling, and later walked through a grocery store with no fatigue. She also carried her own groceries with no pain.

Now she can hardly stop talking about her healing.

"I'm just believing God that what happened to me would become commonplace to everybody," Smith said.

Since August, miracles like Smith's have occurred increasingly among the 1,500-member LCC congregation, leading to a rise in reports of healing and angelic visitations. It's something her pastor, Kingsley Fletcher, describes as a move of God, the fruit of congregational fasting and prayer, and an answer to a cry for God's presence to reside with the church.

"We're experiencing the presence of God in such an awesome way," Fletcher said. "It's not just revival. We're not just asking God to wake us up. We're asking God to manifest His presence."

Fletcher, born in Ghana, has long been associated with prophetic ministry, healing and miraculous signs. He notes that many of the people who have been healed did not receive prayer or have hands laid on them. "We are teaching people to look beyond the man," Fletcher said. "We want Jesus."

Fletcher is seeing similar miracles as he travels to minister. Diana Kee, 66, was healed of a speech impediment she'd had since age 3 when Fletcher touched her tongue during a ministry time at a Korean church in New Jersey. Kee, who is African American and had received prayer for healing many times before, believes her healing was a sign to the Korean believers.

"They saw for themselves—with their own eyes—a miracle," she said.

"When God begins to move, everybody becomes a witness," Fletcher said. "As you become a witness, you will testify of the power of God."

Testifying is what Elaine Ewing has been doing since December 2001. The 40-year-old Orlando, Fla., woman tested positive for HIV after surgery in 1999. Though she never truly believed the diagnosis, she was plagued with fear. Then during a service at her church, New Destiny Christian Center, Fletcher announced that there were two people in the room who had been told they would die of AIDS.

Ewing went forward for prayer, then later received a letter in the mail saying her previous blood work had triggered a false-positive reading and that there was no sign of HIV.

What LCC is experiencing is meant to touch the nation, said associate pastor Eric Oduro Kwapong, who oversees the church's prayer ministry. He believes God wants to restore the spiritual vitality the United States was founded on and make it a model of Revelation 14:6, which describes every tribe and nation gathering together in worship. He said true revival is experiencing a permanent move of God that "is not limited to acts and events."

Worship leader Ron Kenoly, who has accompanied Fletcher on trips to Ghana, noted that many African ministers are coming to the United States as missionaries and bringing with them a strong commitment to prayer and fasting that produces a tangible manifestation of God's power. More broadly, Fletcher believes God is preparing Africans for key positions of spiritual leadership.

Fletcher said that if the United States is to become a habitation of God's glory the fire of revival must spread. "Anything that is spread can be dangerous. So when truly the anointing of God is moving, and the encounters we're supposed to be having are really taking place, then this thing cannot

stay in one place. It will spread like wildfire.”

Adrienne S. Gaines