

Christians Commemorate 9/11 With Prayer, Memorials

Gathering at county courthouses across the U.S., prayer leaders will remember those who died in the terrorist attacks and seek God for a national revival.



[] As the nation marks the seventh anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks Thursday, Christians in all 50 states are gathering at their county courthouses at noon to pray for spiritual renewal in the U.S.

"On the day when America received the greatest physical wake-up call of our generation seven years ago ... we will issue a new spiritual wake-up call across the nation, calling for churches, leaders, community leaders and all of us to begin to seek God in earnest for a new spiritual awakening," said the Rev. Billy Wilson, executive director of the International Center for Spiritual Renewal and a leader of the Awakening America Alliance ().

Cry Out America, as the prayer initiative is called, began with a solemn assembly Wednesday night at Crenshaw Christian Center East in New York City. Broadcast on GOD TV, the event convened such Christian leaders as Lou Engle, Bishop Anne Gimenez, Bishop Harry Jackson and Ron Luce. Wilson called it "a sacred gathering of prayer and repentance in preparation for the Cry Out America events" held Thursday.

The leaders planed to pray for four hours at Ground Zero, continuing until the hour-long prayer services at noon have ended in every U.S. time zone.

Another delegation in Washington, D.C., is to intercede at the Supreme Court building. "We'll be asking God to visit the nation, to heal our wounds, turn things around in America, especially spiritually," Wilson said. "We really feel we need a grass-roots revival, a grass-roots renewing of our intimacy with Christ and our passion for Jesus that will help a new generation of Americans."

Prayer gatherings will be held in two-thirds of the counties in New England, where leaders say ongoing intercession has prepared the region for a harvest "so great that pastors must ask themselves, 'Are we ready to handle it?'" wrote Cry Out America New England coordinator Madeleine Prendergast.

In Cleveland, Tenn., participants that include the city and county mayors, as well as five New York firefighters who were among the rescue workers on 9/11, will pray outside the Bradley County Courthouse. The group's organizer says they not only will pray for national security, unity and safety for emergency personnel, but they also want to help curb the nation's moral decline.

"The only way I know that God responds to His people is through prayer and fasting," said the Rev. Daniel Sylverston, president of the Cleveland Bradley Ministerial Association and pastor of All Nations Church of God in Cleveland,

Tenn. "We're crying out to God to forgive our sins and heal our land. Cry Out is a travailing, a weeping, it's a repentative time. We're going to ask God for His blessing."

Because they were denied access to their county courthouse, Cry Out participants in Los Angeles will prayer-walk around the county courthouse before leading prayer and worship in the parking lot of the Criminal Justice Center. The prayer-walkers will be linked via teleconference call to intercessors stationed throughout the city. "While we're walking we have several prayer rooms at different churches where people will be praying as well," said pastor Jaren Lapasaran, coordinator of Los Angeles Cry Out events. "If you see it in the spirit, we are blanketing the whole L.A. County in prayer."

The deputy police and fire chiefs will be on hand for a 6 p.m. Honoring Our Heroes gathering held at Heights Worship Center International Ministries in Hacienda Heights, Calif., where 408 white crosses have been planted to remember the emergency workers who died on Sept. 11.

"Cry Out America has become a bridge so that the church and the community can be linked together on a patriotic theme," Lapasaran said. "In our own community we have 150 people who have family members in Iraq and Afghanistan. So on 9/11, we invited the families as well to come. So we don't just honor the dead, we honor the living heroes together."

In Greene County, Mo., which includes Springfield, the

prosecuting attorney
and county sheriff will join a cross-section of area
Christians in praying for
protection for the military, government leaders—and the
church. “The church
needs an awakening in itself to be the agency of righteousness
and good that it
needs to be,” said the Rev. John Maempa, head of the
Assemblies of God National
Prayer Center and an area coordinator for Cry Out America. “So
there’s going to
be a fairly strong emphasis on the responsibility of the
church to be the
Church.”

Organized by the Awakening America Alliance, Cry Out is part
of a
three-year prayer effort to ignite a third Great Awakening in
the U.S. Alliance
members include Assemblies of God General Superintendent
George O. Wood,
Louisiana pastor Larry Stockstill, TheCall founder Lou Engle,
Foursquare
President Jack Hayford, Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)
General Overseer G.
Dennis McGuire, International Pentecostal Holiness Church
Presiding Bishop James
Leggett and George McKinney, founding pastor of St. Stephen’s
Church of God in
Christ in San Diego, Calif. — **Adrienne S. Gaines**