

Christians to Seek God's Help on 9/11 Anniversary

☒ Thousands of Christians are expected to gather today at county courthouses nationwide to declare that America needs God's help now.

Billy Wilson, co-organizer of Cry Out America, sponsor of the noontime prayer gatherings, said more and more Christians believe the nation is in a spiritual crisis that is escalating. He said participation this year doubled over the 2008 events, with more than 700 gatherings planned nationwide, including in all 38 of the nation's most populous counties.

"Every day's news is saying to us that we are in a deep spiritual battle," Wilson told *Charisma*. "And what we're finding is there is a very faithful, hungry remnant in the American church who is stepping to the public square to say, 'We need God's help now, and the church needs to be reformed, and America needs to find Jesus.'"

Cry Out kicked off Thursday night with a Sacred Assembly in New York City at Crenshaw Christian Center East. Speakers included 9/11 survivor and evangelist Sujo John, New York Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera, Luis Cortés Jr., president of the Hispanic evangelical network Esperanza; Teen Mania founder Ron Luce, Eagles' Wings Robert Stearns and *Charisma* editor J. Lee Grady.

Today's prayer events are not 9/11 memorials, but Wilson said the date was chosen to cause people to reflect on the message the nation was sent eight years ago.

"9/11 was the greatest physical wake-up call in our generation," Wilson said. "We all remember where we were, what we were doing. It's still a sobering thing to realize what happened here.

"We felt like it would be an appropriate moment to continue to issue a spiritual wake-up call for the nation," he continued. "On 9/11 America went to her knees, we responded with prayer and a positive action to help our neighbor, and we feel that's the right response for the American church now."

He said 9/11 also illuminated the spiritual battle the nation is in to maintain its Judeo-Christian identity.

"There is an encroachment of Islamic thought in America, and the Islamic agenda is growing in the United States," Wilson said. "We see that the real spiritual battle in America is going to be around this particular front, the pluralism of the nation. Cry Out America is really about lifting the name of Jesus in the public square again and that wherever else we look, the real answer for us is in God and in Christ in the nation."

Cry Out is sponsored by the Awakening America Alliance as part of its ongoing efforts to spark another great awakening in the U.S. Wilson said continuing prayer initiatives are developing out of the county gatherings being held today, and he wants to see the momentum build.

"Our heart all along with the Awakening America Alliance has been to see a grass-roots movement of what Jonathan Edwards called 'extraordinary united prayer,'" Wilson said. "We're also working in a practical way to see what can be done to serve our nation and pave the way then for a new generation to experience awakening."