

Kansas City Revival Goes Global

The former pastor of the 'Smithton Outpouring' says his Missouri congregation is now ready to host a global revival.



[] The man who led a three-year-long outpouring in Smithton, Mo., a decade ago says a new revival has broken out at his church, and he's leading it a little differently this time.

"I have entered this very cautiously, slowly," said Steve Gray, senior pastor of World Revival Church in Kansas City, Mo., located 100 miles west of his last church. "Having done this in the 1990s, I kind of know not to overreact. We wanted to shout it from the housetops: 'Revival is here! You don't understand!' But now it's been very slow, very quiet. I chose my words carefully."

With little advertising, Gray's warehouse-like sanctuary, which he said can accommodate up to 1,500 people, has been drawing hundreds of "hungry" people four nights a week since May 2.

The fact that the revival began a month after the highly publicized revival meetings in Lakeland, Fla., started was not lost on Gray. He told *Charisma* he was intentional about keeping his meetings fairly low profile for so many months. "With the Lakeland [revival] happening at the same time and questions swirling around what was going on in Lakeland, I just thought it would be wise to move slow," Gray said.

Gray said people coming to Kansas City can expect a much more low-key experience on Thursdays through Sundays. "I like to tell people it's a happy, safe place," he said. "I'm not going to push people down when I pray for them. We're not going to exaggerate anything. This is a safe place where God is moving."

Every Friday night in December, the world's second largest Christian TV network will broadcast live from Kansas City. Texas-based Daystar Television Network, which has 128 million potential viewers in the U.S., will beam footage of the Missouri meetings over its satellites and has given the revival a strong endorsement.

"This is a true revival," Daystar President Marcus Lamb said in a statement ahead of live broadcasting. "This is a revival of integrity and righteousness. Some of you need to think about paying the way to send your pastors to World Revival Church."

Gray calls it "a revival of the congregation."

"It's not on the platform, it's out among the people," he said. "You can see it in the children and the teenagers. I think it gives people hope, that their church can be revived without inviting in a guest speaker."

He said God's conviction, along with intense desire among people wanting to "be near Jesus," causes crowds to rush the altar. "I'm not standing there telling them to repent. The conviction just comes in and people want to change," Gray said. "There's repentance, there's brokenness, there's sincerity, there's power, and then the Lord just sweeps through."

Gray said many healings and miracles have occurred, but he wants to keep the focus on "changed lives."

"There are certainly a lot of supernatural things happening, but I'm trying to lean away from the fantastic," he said. "I'm trying to not validate the [supernatural] by saying how many people got healed. I'm trying to validate this by how many people really love Jesus and are serving Him more than they ever have."

One of Gray's favorite aspects of the meetings is a testimonial time when people stand in front of the crowd and answer the question, "Who are you now, now that the Lord has

touched you?"

Gray said powerful testimonies often come from seasoned pastors, "the ones who are broken, discouraged and afraid...who have been in the ministry for years and have lost the fire and got burned out."

World Revival Church has been gone through its own renewal as well since May 2, Gray said, describing what happened that day as an "updraft" of God's presence that suddenly "blew in and everybody knew something had changed."

"We've spent time ourselves repenting and turning to the Lord and adjusting our priorities and examining our hearts," Gray said. "It's been like our own housecleaning. I didn't want to host [the revival] and have my own congregation unstable or anything like that."

In addition to the ongoing revival services, Gray's ministry includes a prayer center, a ministry school and an often humorous, Emmy Award-winning TV show that he hosts with his wife called *The Steve and Kathy Show*. **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

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