

Plans Under Way to Take The Call Prayer Events International

Leaders say their U.S. assignment is complete, and they want to help other nations plan their own events

Three years after California pastor Lou Engle issued an urgent call for youth to convene in Washington, D.C., to pray for their nation, the leader of what has become a national prayer movement said the mission has been accomplished.

"I believe in some small way, The Call helped heal the broken covenants of the past, thereby bringing our nation under a measure of covenantal protection," said Engle, pastor of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena. "My assignment was to help shift the courts of America through prayer back to righteousness. I believe we opened that door."

In the future Call organizers say they will help other countries host their own Call events. Meetings are scheduled for Sydney, Australia, in 2004, and Berlin in 2005.

The last U.S. Call event—dubbed The Call Texas and held Nov. 27-29 in Dallas—brought 25,000 participants to the Cotton Bowl for three days. Attendees fed the poor on Thanksgiving Day, then spent seven hours at a worship banquet the following day. There evangelist Tommy Tenney issued a charge "to break strongholds, sow seeds and change destiny. Hitler proved there is power in a rally. We're here to activate."

The next morning The Call Texas began at 7 o'clock and was marked by fasting, repentance, worship and prayer spanning the

next 12 hours. Its goals were to pray that God would right the injustices committed against the unborn and various ethnic groups, to reconcile the generations, and to transform the culture.

The seven previous Call events drew 640,000 people to pray for such concerns as national security at the Boston event—held 11 days after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001—prayer in schools at the New York Call; and the media during the Los Angeles and San Francisco gatherings.

Participants in The Call Texas came from across the country. Allen Lao, an engineer from California, came to pray that the spirit of grief lingering over the nation since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963 would be broken. Kana Steinmayer, a housewife and evangelist who attended with her husband and teenage children, came to show her support for the emerging young leaders.

“The kids get inspired by all the moms and dads of the faith championing them in their call,” she told Charisma.

“Joining the generations is the most important thing God is doing right now,” noted Colorado pastor Dutch Sheets of Springs Harvest Fellowship in Colorado Springs, who was among the prayer leaders during the event. “It’s the key—even flashpoint—of revival.”

Lynne Chapman fasted 40 days in preparation for the event. Having had three abortions, Chapman now leads a San Francisco-area ministry for others who have had abortions. She told Charisma: “I came here to break the back of abortion. In order to do that you get to the root.”

Addressing the legacy of abortion, which was legalized as a result of a court case that began in Dallas, was one of the meeting's primary goals. Engle believes abortion also has roots in the Sand Creek Indian Massacre, which took place on Nov. 29, 1864, in Colorado. On that day U.S. soldiers tore open pregnant women and impaled them on swords.

Sheets said that God takes covenant-breaking seriously, and he led the crowd in repentance for the historic atrocity. Jay Swallow, a veteran evangelist whose great-great grandfather was killed in the massacre, responded: "We forgive. Today is a new day. We'll walk as equals now—no more underlings. I release forgiveness. We forgive in Jesus' name."

In keeping with the theme of repentance, Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., asked forgiveness for crimes against both First Nations people and African Americans, as well as the aborted unborn.

In addition to planning international Call events, organizers want to help mobilize groups to go to their state capitals to spend five hours in prayer for local and national concerns, especially the elections.

Karen Tom in Dallas