

Prayer Campaign in Spain Seeks to Open Europe to the Gospel

C. Peter Wagner's Concert of Praise on Aug. 14 is part of his ongoing effort to evangelize what he calls the '40/70 Window'

Hundreds of intercessors are expected to gather in northern Spain Aug. 14 for a "concert of praise" aimed at unseating a demonic spirit that has been dubbed the "queen of heaven."

Organized by charismatic theologian C. Peter Wagner, the praise event in Santiago de Compostela is part of an ongoing effort to mobilize prayer for the "40/70 Window," in hopes that the region will become more receptive to the gospel. The territory extends from Iceland to Hokkaido, Japan, encompassing parts of Europe and Russia.

"On that day, hundreds of intercessors, prophets, and apostles from nations throughout the world will gather together in the huge plaza facing the magnificent 1,000-year-old Cathedral of Santiago to exalt Jesus in worship and prayer for two hours," wrote Wagner, president of Global Harvest Ministries in Colorado Springs, Colo., in a letter to supporters.

As part of his Target 40/70 Window initiative, which ends in 2005, Wagner has taken teams to Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria and Kazakhstan since 1999. This year's focus, Santiago de Compostela, is where some Catholics believe the apostle James is buried. It became a favorite pilgrimage site of Europeans in the 1980s, rivaling Rome and drawing 7 million people in 1999.

Despite the terror bombing in March, frequent pilgrims to the site doubt there will be a decline in turnout. Marion Marples of the Confraternity of St. James, an England-based association of former pilgrims, said people journey to Santiago de Compostela for many reasons—because of personal crisis, to reflect on their relationship with God or just for the adventure. “As far as I can tell the bombings have made no difference,” Marples said. “This year is a holy year [because James’ July 25 birthday falls on a Sunday], and the numbers are as high as ever.”

Wagner said the devotion to James at Santiago de Compostela is under the control of the queen of heaven, a demonic goddess spoken of in Jeremiah 7 and 44. Citing Acts 19, Wagner said the goddess was worshiped as Diana, or Artemis, in the apostle Paul’s day. Today, he said, it is worshiped as Cali in Calcutta, the sun goddess in Japan, and the moon god or goddess in Muslim nations.

He added that the queen also usurps the worship of Christ by posing as Mary, the mother of Jesus, in nations where Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion. He said the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, the Black Madonna in Poland and the Virgin del Pilar in Spain are manifestations of the queen.

However, charismatic Catholic leader Ralph Martin, head of Renewal Ministries in Ann Arbor, Mich., has expressed concern about Wagner’s associating the veneration of Mary with idolatry. At the launch of Wagner’s 40/70 Window campaign, the two began a written dialogue that spanned more than six months.

Author of *The Catholic Church at the End of an Age: What is the Spirit Saying*, Martin claims Catholics give Mary special

honor, but do not worship her. While Wagner says there are born-again Christians within the Catholic Church, he argues that bowing to a statue, seeking to communicate with the dead and offering gifts to a dead person are idolatrous forms of worship.

Martin disagrees. "Confusing the true Queen of Heaven (of Revelation 12:1-5), with the satanic counterfeit (of Jeremiah 7) is a catastrophic error, and is profoundly offensive to Jesus, I believe," Martin wrote in 2000. Much of the respect paid to the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Black Madonna "is not idol worship, but the kind of effusive veneration shown in the Bible itself and many non-American cultures to this day," he said.

Wagner has continued his prayer campaign despite such concerns. The concert of praise in Spain has the potential to crack open "the spiritual iceberg that the Queen of Heaven has succeeded in establishing over Europe," Wagner wrote.

Cindy Jacobs, founder of Generals of Intercession in Colorado Springs, agrees, saying the event will "break open the heavens" through worship in Santiago.

"I believe God is issuing a Macedonian call to intercessors and worshipers to gather in Spain so the anointing can break the yoke for a nation to be saved," Jacobs told Charisma.

But Wagner said the meeting is not meant to be confrontational, and he forbids exorcism of the queen during the event, which he said is being welcomed by Spanish officials. He said the emphasis will be on praise "because Christ has already given us the victory."

Wagner believes there was a spiritual breakthrough in 1999 when 5,000 Christians gathered in Ephesus, Turkey, for a four-hour concert of praise. He predicts that event in Spain will have similar ramifications.

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