

Seattle-Area Church Hosts Long-Term Revival

Evangelist Jerry Gaffney's meetings at Kirkland Assembly of God have lasted more than four months

Back in April a Vietnam veteran-turned-evangelist who has a passion for reaching one of America's most unchurched regions began what was originally scheduled to be a two-week campaign at Kirkland Assembly of God near Seattle.

By August, some 22 weeks later, Jerry Gaffney was still preaching, and miracles were still occurring. A woman who fought a 20-year battle with an incurable blood disease was reportedly healed. Another woman who had only 30 percent lung capacity because of multiple sclerosis said she can breathe normally. And a woman who had to be carried to her seat during the service because of a fractured spine stood and walked.

"Miracles are a confirmation," said Bob Wallace, pastor of Kirkland Assembly. "God is doing a mighty work here."

Twice a day Tuesday through Friday and twice on Sunday, people fill Kirkland Assembly, turning it into a nonstop prayer center. Services sometimes last five hours.

Gaffney, who became a Christian 13 years ago at age 41, had never stayed at one church longer than two weeks prior to the Kirkland meetings.

"No revival was ever started by a committee," Gaffney told Charisma. "Revival starts when the power of God comes down on the people. Revival starts in the laity."

Gaffney said the outpouring of God's Spirit in this small Pentecostal church is a fulfillment of a vision he received from God six years ago. In it he saw millions of people walking down Interstate 5 through Seattle, all praising God.

Gaffney's vision is spreading, and his meetings are drawing international attention. Unannounced, pastors who have been part of revivals in their countries have come from Nigeria, Uganda, Japan and Nepal to share the vision they've received for the Northwest.

"You can't orchestrate something like this," Wallace said. "These are people we've never met, never talked with. They've just come to share their vision for the Northwest. They've heard what's happening here, and they've come. That is the incredible part."

Wallace said the movement began three years ago when he fell 30 feet off the roof of a house, shattering his pelvis, lower back and elbow. Doctors who patched him up with 26 pins and screws told him he'd never walk again. Yet he was healed 12 weeks after the fall and today walks without a limp. X-rays show breaks in two of those 5-inch titanium screws, allowing Wallace full motion.

"For three months, I was on my back," Wallace said. "But during that time, God was speaking to me. He had my attention."

Wallace, who was already seeing his congregation's commitment growing, decided in April to call Gaffney, a man he had only met once. They both figured Gaffney would stay two weeks before moving on to preach at another church. Gaffney's preaching, which emphasizes the power of God and the importance of evangelism, has helped enlarge the vision of Wallace's congregation.

Today, the church is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day, with people praying around the clock.

Gaffney believes many Christians are waiting for God to move, when in fact He is waiting for them to act. "The Word of God says, 'Draw nigh to Me, and I'll draw nigh to you. Seek Me, then you'll find,'" the evangelist says.

Wallace has drawn criticism for endorsing Gaffney, who is not a licensed minister and has been criticized by some leaders in the Assemblies of God. "They want us to be accountable. I understand that," Wallace said. "But what I'm finding is they want conformity, not accountability."

Gaffney said his status as a layman enables him to reach a broader audience. If he were licensed by one denomination, he would not be able to cross denominational boundaries to minister. "Every denomination has rules about other ministers coming in, but there are no rules for laymen," he said.

In just six years of ministry, approximately 60,000 people have made decisions for Christ in Gaffney's meetings. More souls are on the way, he believes. Says Gaffney: "My passion is to see Washington, Idaho and Oregon explode for Jesus."□

–Gail Wood in Seattle