

If My People Will Pray

Thirty-two years ago America was at crossroads. The nation was in moral decline with recently legalized abortion and a drug culture left over from the hippie era, while Americans were still reeling from the aftermath of Watergate and the Vietnam War. Not only that, but communism was a real threat worldwide, terrorists held American hostages in Tehran, the U.S. economy was in the tank and a weak president's policies seemed to make matters worse.

At that time God put on John Gimenez's heart to call America to prayer. He wasn't well-known, but he persuaded leaders such as Demos Shakarian of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade and CBN Founder Pat Robertson to join him in calling believers to pray on the mall in front of the nation's Capitol. They called it Washington for Jesus, and many believe it was a spiritual turning point that helped move our nation in the right direction. We elected a new president, the economy rebounded and communism fell a decade later.

Yet not all was right in the world. The entertainment industry continued to go downhill from a moral point of view. The threat of Islamic terrorism continued to grow. What is now called the "gay agenda" was articulated for the first time. And the church reeled from one scandal after another.

From Bad to Worse

Today the problems of the 1980s seem mild to what is an all-out attack on our Christian values in the culture and even in government. We now have a president who seems to be moving toward some form of European socialism. He has embraced the concept of "same-sex marriage" and enacted laws that force religious organizations to provide abortion services against their will.

There is a feeling that things are bad and getting worse.

How else do you explain the huge outcry a few months ago against Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy, who mentioned in an interview that he supports traditional marriage? Many in the media called that “hate speech” simply because he doesn’t support the radical homosexual agenda.

Thankfully, the public responded. A mass of people showed Chick-fil-A their appreciation and gave them record sales, while a gay activist boycott fizzled. But responding to the culture wars involves more than rallying around one of our own who is under attack. More important is what we do in the spiritual realm through prayer. We are in a critical time in which we must seek God and pray that America will turn back to Him.

Beyond Philadelphia

Many are responding. All over the nation God is raising up ministries, prayer initiatives and events that are focused on interceding for the nation and are calling America back to God. One of these focal points is the America for Jesus solemn assembly being held Sept. 28-29 in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It’s the vision of Anne Gimenez, who is carrying the mantle originally shared with her late husband, John.

When I heard about this gathering my heart leapt. I knew I had to be involved. I remembered the significance of the earlier Washington for Jesus and America for Jesus rallies. And I believe this is needed now more than ever before.

One of the ways we got involved was to dedicate the October issue of *Charisma* not to America for Jesus per se, but to the themes it is emphasizing. We cleared the entire issue so that our quarter-of-a-million readers who cannot attend the gathering in Philadelphia can also be inspired to pray.

When Anne Gimenez heard about this, she suggested we have

extra copies in Philadelphia and bind in the printed program for those who attend. That way this special issue and the articles by Jonathan Cahn, Jentezen Franklin and others could go home as a souvenir of the event.

But we know this is far more important than just an event or special issue. This is a time when believers must hear from God and call the body of Christ to its prophetic destiny to intercede for this nation.

That's exactly what America for Jesus is doing. In fact, the focus beginning on Sept. 28 will be to jump-start a nation into 40 days of fasting and prayer. The Awake Youth Rally, beginning at 5 p.m. at the Independence Mall, will include dynamic speakers such as Ron Luce, John Gray and Chris Hill.

A national call to prayer, the centerpiece of this year's America for Jesus, will start Saturday, Sept. 29, on the Independence Mall. The official program begins at 9 a.m., but opening worship starts at 7. All pre-events and rallies are leading up to this moment in history, in which the church will cry out to God for awakening in our nation. As their website, www.americaforjesus.com, states, "We can no longer allow our nation to stay on the course of widespread moral depravity. The time is now! The hour of awakening is upon us!"

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