

Massive Prayer Effort Focuses on New York City

The Call New York City will cap a national effort to recruit thousands to intercede for the city

A three-day prayer blitz in Cranford, N.J., in March drew more than 800 revival-hungry Christians and challenged attendees to create a 24-hour “house of prayer” in New York City for training intercessors and bathing the city in prayer.

The event, organized by Eagles’ Wings Ministries (EWM) of Clarence, N.Y., also helped prepare local believers for a potentially huge event late this month that could have thousands fasting and praying for “The City That Never Sleeps.”

Representatives from the Israeli Consulate and New York Jewish community attended the opening session in response to EWM’s work in Israel. Appearing unfamiliar with Pentecostal worship, they glanced at one another wide-eyed as evangelicals and Pentecostals from 14 states and diverse denominational backgrounds worshiped, prayed side by side, and jumped, shouted and cried for revival in the metropolitan New York region.

“Pour out your Spirit, Lord,” pleaded Robert Stearns, executive director of EWM. “We repent. There needs to be a refreshing. We hold up the blood of Jesus over these churches. We are calling for churches to operate as one in the body of Christ.”

Orthodox Rabbi Gerald Meister told Stearns: “I’ve had a lot of

experiences in different churches. Tonight I had an awakening.”

Stearns, 33, has been leading weekly interdenominational praise and prayer events in northeastern New Jersey since 1996. More than 400,000 people have attended these gatherings, he reported.

“We’ve been praying for many years for the metro New York area, believing that God wants to really do something extraordinary in this region,” he said. “And we know that God doesn’t do anything except in response to prayer.”

Stearns believes “The Big Apple” is ripe for revival. He yearns to bring unity among Christians to achieve that goal. “Our heart is not so much to relate by institution or by denomination, as much as it is friend to friend,” he said.

He networks with 250 churches in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut and is launching a new ministry called Metro New York House of Prayer.

“It isn’t about a certain denomination. It’s not about our ministry,” Stearns said. “It’s about releasing the body of Christ to be a house of prayer.”

He envisions a 24-hour prayer facility in New Jersey similar to others found in Jerusalem, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Kansas City, Mo. He sees the house of prayer training prayer specialists and church teams, teaching prayer interns, mobilizing intercessory events, as well as flooding the Eastern seaboard and beyond with a call to prayer.

Phil Coenraad started an all-night prayer meeting in his home in Hillsborough, N.J., one year ago. About 12 people meet Mondays from midnight to 7 a.m.

“We invite the Holy Spirit to give us His agenda,” he said. “There have been amazing answers to prayer. Eagles’ Wings has been an inspiration. They have pushed us to higher ground.”

EWM cooperates with other groups such as Greater New York Concerts of Prayer, Ground Zero Clergy Task Force, and The Call, based in California. The Call president Lou Engle delivered a passionate challenge to participants at the March prayer conference.

“We need to fight the war together!” he shouted. “We’re believing for atmospheric change.”

Engle is spearheading a week of prayer and fasting and evangelizing in New York City June 22-29. He anticipates 50,000-100,000 Christians jamming Flushing Meadows Park on June 29 for a 12-hour prayer and consecration assembly.

The event coincides with the 40th anniversary of Engel vs. Vitale, the U.S. Supreme Court case that removed voluntary prayer from public schools.

“We’re seeking to mobilize daily prayer in schools across America,” he said. “Our challenge is calling for one praying student from every junior high, high school and college.”

Greater New York Concerts of Prayer, led by Baptist minister

McKenzie Pier, strongly backs The Call New York City.

“We are not going to allow secondary doctrine or differences in worship style to create disunity,” Pier said. “As a Baptist I am very appreciative for what the Pentecostal church means in New York.

“It’s probably doing the most effective evangelism in the city. So many people are becoming Christians as a result of the presence of the Pentecostal church.”

As executive director of The Call New York City, Stearns anticipates a stirring move of God in June.

“New York is a microcosm of the world,” he said. “This city has the capacity to influence the globe.”

Peter K. Johnson in New York City