

Worshippers Continue 'Unity Revival' at George Floyd Memorial Despite Pushback

The camera pans from a memorial of George Floyd in Minneapolis to a stage set up fifty feet away. Roughly 50 people are gathered in worship—faces toward the stage, backs toward the memorial.

“George Floyd Avenue—they’ve renamed it,” says worship leader Sean Feucht. “That’s where the trauma happened right here. Where the injustice happened right here. And now, right here on this corner, a move of the Holy Spirit is happening.”

On May 25, George Floyd—a black Christian man—was murdered by police officer Derek Chauvin, who placed his knee into Floyd’s neck as other officers watched.

Whether it is appropriate to host a worship event just 50 feet from the weeks-old site of a national tragedy is the question sparking serious disagreement even among Christians.

Feucht responded after several criticized him for holding revival meetings at a place where many are mourning.

Some charismatic leaders say that turning the site of Floyd’s death into a place for worship gatherings is a miracle—proof of how God transforms bad situations for good. Christophe Ulysse, from Youth With a Mission, told Fox News, “We’re going from pain and hatred to healing and hope.” Awaken the Dawn’s Joshua Lindquist says, “God is giving beauty from ashes.” And last Monday, Circuit Riders’ Joel Bomberger said baptisms were taking place and deaf ears were being opened.

But other Christian leaders call it colonization and gentrification.

Feucht—a charismatic artist and activist who founded “Burn 24-7,” “Light a Candle” and “Hold the Line”—is not the only one who believes God is on the move. Awaken the Dawn’s Joshua Lindquist believes the memorial will become an “epicenter of revival.” On his Facebook page, Lindquist explained the heart behind Unity Revival Minneapolis and said miracles are taking places.

“A unity revival is taking place at the exact location where the world’s heart was broken by witnessing George Floyd being unjustly murdered,” Lindquist says. “In response to this heart breaking crisis, many churches & many ministries have come together to share the love of Christ within this hurting community & it has shifted the atmosphere of this place from an atmosphere of death to life. There has been so much unity, healing, deliverances, forgiveness, racial reconciliation, miracles, salvations & even baptisms on the exact location where George’s life was unjustly taken... God is giving beauty from ashes... People have come forward for prayer who said they were suicidal & in despair & depression because of all the world’s frequent traumatic events... They have received prayer and have been set free & have found healing & hope! People of all races have been seen every day in each other’s arms weeping deeply as God is uniting hearts of all ethnicities at the memorial in Minneapolis through the love & forgiveness message that is within the gospel of Jesus Christ!”

Dr. Charles Karuku, senior pastor of International Outreach Church in Burnsville, Minnesota, is one of the event’s key leaders. According to Lindquist, Karuku was endorsed and invited by Floyd’s family to bring healing to the Minneapolis community following Floyd’s death. In a Facebook Live, Karuku described the groundswell of support for the Unity Revival—the associated Facebook group has over 1,200 members as of Monday—and the unity the event is fostering in the community.

“What we are providing is an opportunity for people who are

saying, 'What can I do' to be able to find something to do," Karuku says. "This is the unity that we want to see turn into racial reconciliation. And so our message is very clear. Jesus Christ brings us together and through Jesus Christ we can be reunited one to another, because reconciliation first of all starts with God and then one with another. And when that vertical is in place, the horizontal is so easier."

However, critics described Unity Revival Minneapolis as disruptive to those who were simply there to remember Floyd and mourn his death. They perceived Feucht and other leaders as trying to co-opt this tragedy. One Twitter user, @emmalouiseri, posted a thread of pictures and videos from the event that detailed her concerns.

Another user, @MarlaAReid, responded to Feucht's post with skepticism, writing, "I keep having a major 'check in my spirit' that something is off here. I am all for revival and pray earnestly for Jesus to come and for fire to fall and true repentance to change hearts and for our land to be healed. But this must be the Spirit's doing, not our own."

In a video posted Sunday to Twitter, Feucht admitted the worshippers had experienced "a little bit of resistance" but that they intended to return again. During the prior week, Feucht had tweeted about his mixed feelings regarding Black Lives Matter—"the statement is true while the movement is shady"—and declared, "NEVER LET THE MOB SILENCE THE SOUND OF YOUR WORSHIP!!!!"

Feucht's failed bid this spring to become the U.S. House Representative for California's 3rd Congressional District was also scrutinized by some critics. Feucht placed third in the March primary election, garnering 13.9% of the votes according to the New York Times.

In response to criticism, Feucht wrote on Twitter, "The beautiful worship, prayer, baptism and hope happening at the

George Floyd Memorial site is profound! 9 nights in a row these black local pastors have led it and it's still going! ... These gatherings have zero to [do] with me and/or Bethel. I'm honored to promote, encourage and bring awareness to them though. They live there and know the needs of their own community. If threats, vulgar language and trolling on me and my family is the price to pay, then so be it.

"You can't CANCEL what God is doing and the lives being changed! The response of the church on 38th and Chicago to engage and bring hope is reverberating across the world. The boldness of these pastors is breathing courage into our hearts!"