

500 Pastors Unite in Intercession for Spiritual Awakening in Colorado

Ask Keith Peterson what a spiritual awakening looks like, and the Colorado pastor points to a cartoon that was published on the front page of a Denver newspaper in 1905.

The Jan. 21 edition of the now-defunct *Denver Republican* featured an evangelist with a pitchfork in hand, chasing the devil out of the Mile High City.

The cartoon comically illustrated a spiritual reality that occurred after pastors launched city-wide prayer, prompting businesses to close for noon intercession and nightly house meetings in 10 districts throughout Denver, says Peterson, who leads Pastors For Revival.

For the 500 pastors and 70 churches aligned with Pastors For Revival in its desire for a spiritual awakening in Colorado, prayer continues to play a part in 2014 as it did in 1905.

The pastors have encouraged circles of prayer throughout the city, conducted monthly city-wide intercession, and emphasized personal revival as a condition for a large-scale awakening.

"We're traveling along the same lines as our predecessors who emphasized houses of prayer, rather than theology or teaching, because it's in prayer that we encounter the presence of God.

"We want to be good hosts of his (God's) presence," says Peterson of Pastors For Revival.

The ministry website includes the front-page newspaper cartoon as well as articles on past revivals, pastors' videos and prayer events.

Peterson and Pastors For Revival knew they were on track in 2013 when Anh Le, a Vietnamese molecular biologist trained at the University of Colorado in Boulder and at German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke's Orlando, Florida-based ministry school, told them he'd heard a word from God about Colorado.

"The very day the Holy Spirit told me to hold a crusade in Denver, I could have died when an enraged pimp appeared out of nowhere with a knife as I ministered to a woman he held hostage as a victim of sex-trafficking," says Le, a Denver native.

The son of Vietnamese parents—his father a practicing Buddhist and his mother a Catholic—Le had held one small crusade in Colorado and a larger one in Africa when the Holy Spirit directed him to hold a second crusade, Revival Fest, in Denver Aug. 9-10 at downtown's Civic Center Park, directly across from the state Capitol.

The park is home to the nation's third-largest gay-pride event and an annual 4/20 celebration of legal pot in the Mile High City, both held just weeks before Pastors For Revival called for a nondenominational prayer meeting at nearby Beth Abraham/Church in the City for Awakening Colorado.

"Actually the LGBT community is part of my target audience because, I believe, like with myself when I was an atheist, people who call themselves gay or are part of another religious or ethnic group want more in their lives," says Le, who was called as an evangelist at 19, even as he pursued a degree at the University of Colorado in Boulder and envisioned a business enterprise that would fund his world-wide ministry plans upon graduation.

"I think we're doing warfare in the spirit in Denver," where Le's repeated Gospel messages and ministry over two days were translated by a Spanish-speaking interpreter.

Le, who calls Bonnke his mentor and models his crusades after

the German-born evangelist's ministry, tells audiences that atheism depressed him until he radically encountered Jesus Christ, who brought profound joy into his life and success in business.

A portion of the profits from Le's business, On Fire Merchant Services, help fund Revival Fest crusades, fun, family-oriented events that turn serious when Le prays for the sick, including people infirm with cancer, HIV, arthritis as well as those who are deaf, blind or crippled.

Peterson and Le, while acknowledging crowd size for the two-day Revival Fest was significantly less than the 325,000 who turned out for gay pride in 2013 and the tens of thousands for this year's 4/20 event which coincided with Easter, say that even one person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ or a sick body that's restored is worth the investment of prayer, time and money.

"I wish for the big crowds—but only for the sake of souls," says Le whose African crusade drew an estimated 8,000 people—many of whom he says were saved and healed of serious diseases.

In Africa and Colorado, pastors and Le work side-by-side to direct crusade-goers to local churches where new believers grow in their faith, receive instruction from the Bible, and learn their spiritual gifts for life and personal ministry.

Le tells the story of praying for a young African girl without female genitals. She was brought to the crusade by her mother. After prayer, Le says, the girl's mother reported that her daughter's previously missing private parts were miraculously restored.

One woman who attended Denver's pride event and Awakening Colorado says Le, Peterson and Pastors For Revival are spot-on in welcoming the LGBT community, though few if any showed up to hear the Gospel or receive personal prayer ministry.

Amy Baldwin and her husband, Matthew, who offer what they call encouraging words or prophecy to people interested in hearing from God, say it's easier to connect with the LGBT community than with some Christians.

"It's easier for me to catch God's heart for someone when I am in a place where the darkness feels so strong that the light is obvious," says Amy Baldwin, whose first encounters with the LGBT community were in Thailand with Youth With A Mission.

In Thailand, transgendered males are commonly referred to as "lady boys" and are prized for their contributions to the thriving sex industry. Baldwin believes transgendered people in Thailand outnumber those in the United States, though she admits there's no concrete statistical evidence to support her observations.

"I can't even express how much God loves them," says Amy Baldwin. "His love for them is so fierce," she adds.

Though welcomed at Awakening Colorado, members of the LGBT community were noticeably absent to the Baldwins, who say they plan to attend a fall pride event in Boulder, Colo. with hopes of sharing God's heart there.

"My fear is that the growing acceptance of the LGBT lifestyle here is going to look like Thailand. That's not healthy, especially for children," Amy Baldwin says.

Awakening Colorado organizers and supporters say seeing people give their lives to Jesus Christ for the first time, along with the music, food and fun in downtown Denver is something they would like to repeat. They also hope that participation by groups of people who previously became disenchanted with church or were alienated by some Christians will grow at future events.