

New York Prayer Event Remembers Two 9/11s

A group of Christians plans to gather quietly in New York this weekend to remember the events of another Sept. 11 that they believe carry prophetic significance today.

The three-day “No Surrender” solemn assembly begins Friday and features prayer leader Dutch Sheets, and marks the anniversary of a failed peace talk in New York on Sept. 11, 1776, between British Lord Admiral Richard Howe and Second Continental Congress members Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge.

That meeting, held two months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, came at a time when the British seemed to be winning the Revolutionary War. Howe offered to end the conflict if the Americans would return to British rule. They refused, and the war continued for seven more years, resulting in America’s independence.

Joseph Askins, founder of New York-based Living Faith Ministries and organizer of the No Surrender event, believes something similar is happening spiritually today as the nation faces mounting pressure to leave its Christian roots and become secular.

“We’re being intimidated into surrendering what our founding fathers created into a secular-humanist society that ... is trying to do away with Judeo-Christian principles and anything to do with God until there’s a disaster,” Askins said. “And we’re now also, going back to Sept. 11, 2001, [facing] an onslaught by Islam to take over this nation and try to intimidate us into giving them what they want.”

The event includes prayer and worship services on Friday and Sunday, as well as a re-enactment of the 1776 peace conference

Saturday at the historic Billopp House on Staten Island, N.Y.

"I believe while we're there [at the Billopp House] the Holy Spirit's going to impart to us what He wants our part to [be] in seeing that our nation awakens, which I believe is already beginning," Askins said.

On Saturday, participants also will remember the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack. Askins, who owned a computer company before going into full-time ministry, said he was at Ground Zero minutes after the bombings and stayed for eight days, partnering with Street Life Ministries give out food and water to police and fire fighters digging survivors from the rubble.

He said the message from 1776 is just as relevant for fighting terrorism and evangelizing Muslim nations.

"I believe the Islamic terrorists were trying to instill a spirit of fear in the people of the United States to get us as a nation and the church to stop what we were doing in dealing with radical Islam around the world and also stop the inroads the gospel was having in Muslim nations," Askins said.

"Just as British Admiral Howe and the Hessian Soldiers tried to intimidate Benjamin Franklin, Edward Rutledge and John Adams to give up at the peace conference on Sept. 11, 1776, the Islamic terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001, were sending a message to leave Islam and Muslims alone or else we'll bring the fight to your shores," he added.

Sheets, Colorado-based author of the best seller Intercessory Prayer, said the "no surrender" theme is needed at a time when many Christians don't believe the nation can turn back to its Christian roots.

"I think there are a lot of Christians in America who have given up on America in the sense that we could ever be as turned toward the Lord as we once were," Sheets said. "And I

just can't accept that. I refuse to accept it. I believe there's a great awakening coming. And I believe part of the outcome will be a returning to our roots and our calling as a nation from the beginning."

For Askins, not surrendering has political implications as the midterm election approaches. "It's not surrendering to the spiritual forces that are at work using flesh to try and come against the furthering of God's kingdom in the earth," he said.

No surrender "means everything," he added. "It means the reformation of our society."

Askins isn't expecting a multitude but has partnered with several prayer networks, including Concerts of Prayer Greater New York and Cindy Jacobs' Reformation Prayer Network, which has been praying for each state to return to its covenant roots through its Root 52 prayer tour. He believes God will respond if Christians declare that they won't give up on the U.S. reclaiming its Christian roots.

Sheets believes this generation has much to glean from the pioneering spirit of the nation's founders.

"If we don't have a generation that rises up and says we're willing to leave the safe place, the settlement, the safety of the familiar and stop being conformists and say we're going to buck the system and we're going to take this thing back to where it needs to be-if we don't see that happen, we're in real trouble," he said, adding that he believes such a generation is emerging.

Askins agrees that the hour is critical. "The heart of the men in 1776 was, 'We're not going to surrender to tyranny,'" Askins said. "And we're to say no surrender, whether it costs me my life, my family, all that I have.

"For God's glory, we want to see this nation shift back," he

added. "There is no other nation in the history of the world that has had the blessing and all that we have been afforded. And it's not because of we as a people ... it's because of who our God was. If we take Him away, we'll lose those blessings."