

Prayers for Spiritual Awakening to Mark 9/11 Anniversary

Christians nationwide will mark the ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks by gathering at their county courthouses to pray for God's mercy and a spiritual awakening in the U.S.

The third annual Cry Out America is expected to draw participants from every state and more than 830 counties. Grassroots supporters will pray from noon to 1 p.m. Saturday at their county seats, repenting and crying out for revival in their regions.

"The American church is being called to experience and lead a contemporary awakening so that new generations of Americans can know the power of Christ's love and this nation can be preserved," said the Rev. Billy Wilson, a Pentecostal minister and executive director of the Awakening America Alliance, which is sponsoring Cry Out America.

In Washington, D.C., a cross-section of Christian leaders – including Teen Mania founder Ron Luce, Tom Phillips of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Global Day of Prayer U.S. coordinator Bob Bakke also will pray for the nation as they gather at the Pentagon for a wreath-laying ceremony to remember the 3,000 victims of 2001 attack.

Wilson believes Sept. 11 was a prophetic sign of what was coming in the 21st century – including the collapse of structures thought to last for generations, the encroachment of non-Christian religions and terrorist acts that incite fear.

Nine years later "we see that replicated over and over in our

nation," he said, pointing to bank failures in recent years, the spread of Islam in the U.S. and random shootings on college campuses.

"In many ways, 9/11 was just a loud prophetic sign, and we feel like it's very appropriate on that day to come before God to say in the 21st century, in this kind of environment-with the encroachment of other religions, an environment of fear and terrorism, an environment of collapse and uncertainty-that we need Jesus more than ever in America," he said. "We're uniting together to cry out for that help and for that covering over our nation and, of course, for a new spiritual awakening."

In a prayer guide posted on its website, the alliance lists 20 indicators of spiritual awakening such as increased conversions and baptisms, a stronger emphasis on prayer and fasting, healthier marriages, and a greater Christian influence in media, politics and other cultural spheres.

Wilson believes the church is "on the precipice of seeing a fresh breakthrough." He says he's already seeing signs of awakening, including more talk of the need for spiritual renewal, unprecedented participation in his group's annual 21-day fast in January, and a growing emphasis on church planting and evangelism.

"Obviously the Holy Spirit is stirring the nation toward a new awakening," he said. "What will push us over the edge will be united intercession and this deep hunger that drives us to go beyond where we've ever been before with the Lord. And that's one of the things we hope Cry Out America on 9/11 demonstrates the spiritual hunger in the American church and our desperation for God's help."

The Awakening America Alliance mobilizes prayer for the U.S. and is partnered with such ministries as the Assemblies of God, Aglow International, Youth With a Mission, the Church of

God (Cleveland, Tenn.) and Intercessors for America.