

Thousands Getting Saved: Could This Movement Help Spark the Next Great Awakening?

America has experienced at least two Great Awakenings in its spiritual history. But in a time when so many feel another is desperately needed, what can spark it?

Many Christians are hoping that a massive spiritual assault they've launched on Washington, D.C., will be that spark.

They've come by the thousands for "Celebrate America," a multi-event celebration taking place during the first three weeks of July.

At night a crowd, which amounts to around 3,000 most evenings, has been packing into DAR Constitution Hall from across from the White House Ellipse for meetings that have concentrated on the country's rich spiritual heritage and how to preserve it.

By day, hundreds have fanned out across Washington, D.C., to witness.

Pastor Eric Gonyon, who works with Senior Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne at Tampa's River by the Bay Church, told CBN News this massive effort all began with nationwide prayer for America.

"We started a 24/7 prayer chain probably at the beginning of the year," he said, with many thousands of prayer warriors joining in across the country.

That steady barrage of prayer was like artillery fire softening up the ground for the hundreds of street evangelists Gonyon and other pastors have been training.

CBN News visited one of these training sessions in DAR Constitution Hall, where Gonyon spent a few minutes teaching on the finer points of witnessing.

But he said he spent most of the time firing up and inspiring the troops to share Jesus because while prayer is certainly important, so is action.

“Faith without works is dead,” the pastor explained. “We believe in prayer, but you got to get up and you got to go share the Good News.”

CBN News followed Fort Worth’s Troy Bravenboer, one of “Celebrate America’s” most enthusiastic street evangelists, and his team from Gonyon’s training session out to the National Mall.

There, the bilingual Bravenboer approached dozens of people around the World War II Memorial, speaking to most in English, but also to some in Spanish.

He started his conversation with one Hispanic family of three by giving them tickets to that night’s meeting at DAR Constitution Hall.

Then he asked them, “Has anyone told you guys recently that God loves you and He has an awesome plan for your life?”

Within a few minutes, he led the mother, father and teenage son through a prayer asking Jesus into their hearts and inviting God to be the Lord of their lives.

By the end of the day, Bravenboer and his team had led some 500 people to that point of salvation.

“And we’ve seen over 23,000 people pray the prayer of salvation,” Gonyon said of Celebrate America’s overall evangelism efforts.

But these three weeks of street evangelism and nightly

meetings are just meant to be a spark. Gonyon emphasized that getting those hundreds of Christians out into the streets of D.C. to witness has been the most crucial part.

“Once somebody wins souls—because most don’t—their heart is broken for the lost,” Gonyon explained. “So when Celebrate America is over, this isn’t about, ‘Oh, that crusade is over.’ They’ll continue to win souls in their sphere of influence.”

The organizers of “Celebrate America” hope that steam rolls into a move of God nationwide.

“We’re believing God for another great spiritual awakening in America,” Gonyon stated. “We’re believing that the church will wake up and fulfill the Great Commission.”