

West Virginia Revival a 'Phenomenon' as Youth Being Saved and Baptized by the Hundreds

For those believers who have lost all faith in the younger generation, you need to be tuned in to what is going on in the Huntington, West Virginia area right now.

As the catalyst, Nik Walker Ministries is helping to stir up a revival in one area of that state that has not only the locals brimming with excitement but also has many throughout the country buzzing, as people are being saved and baptized into the kingdom of Jesus by the hundreds.

Chuck Lawrence, lead pastor of Christ Temple Church in Huntington where nearly a month-long revival has shaken the city, says the Holy Spirit's work, through Walker, is bringing hope to an area that has been decimated with hopelessness for decades.

"True revival brings hope, and it brings revitalization. I think that's what you're going to see here," Lawrence said in an interview with Charisma News. "There's going to be a vibrancy that's going to come from this.

"This area has been inundated with a lack of hope. Drug addiction has been paramount and the suicide rates are unbelievable. Young people have run into one thing after another, and life has not brought them what they have hoped for. But the gospel of Jesus Christ can change all of that. I think what they are seeing is that there is hope for them. They sense God's presence; it's real to them. They're not experiencing religion right now but relationship. It see it in their eyes, that hope has arrived. That's what God is doing

right now.”

Shawn Maynard, a former pastor at Christ Temple Church in Huntington and a friend of Lawrence’s who now lives in Florida, says more than 300 area high school and middle school students have given their lives over to Jesus in the three weeks since Walker arrived from his home base in Cleveland, Tennessee. Maynard says more than 500 baptisms have been performed at Christ Temple Church in that time as well.

Not only has Walker been preaching regularly at Christ Temple Church, but he has preached at several high schools—at the request of the students and the approval of the administration. In all, he has nine high schools set on his schedule, some at which he already has spoken.

Maynard says what is taking place in the Huntington area is “phenomenal” in a time when many schools across America are experiencing chaos and turmoil—including bitter disputes between parents and boards of education surrounding their children’s school curriculum and the toxic cultural atmosphere that is being spread.

“What is happening is unprecedented for such a depressed area,” says Maynard, a member of the Christian Life Missions Board at Charisma Media. “The conditions have been ripe here for revival for a long time.”

The 25-year-old Walker is also scheduled to preach at the pharmaceutical college at Marshall University in Huntington on Thursday. He preached in front of more than 500 people at Christ Temple Church on Wednesday in a special impromptu 1 p.m. service geared toward addiction recovery. Many recovery organizations heard about the service and called and requested to bring groups there, but many more added to the numbers when they caught wind of it.

For the most part, Maynard says, Walker’s presence and message has encountered little pushback at the schools. That in itself

Maynard considers a miracle.

However, when Walker preached at Huntington High School recently, some students were upset that they were “forced” to attend the assembly, but that was unintentional, Maynard says.

“To my understanding, there were about 160 students that signed up for the assembly,” Maynard says. “In a couple of classrooms, home rooms, with a total of about 15 students, the teachers were under the misunderstanding that this was required, mandatory. The students asked if they could leave, but were told that their home rooms were locked and they couldn’t let them leave. So, the students were upset, and they actually were to stage a walkout on Wednesday.”

reported that the assembly drew the ire of the American Civil Liberties Union of West Virginia (ACLU), a group of other organizations and parents who said such events at a high school is a clear violation of students’ civil rights.

“It is inappropriate and unconstitutional for the district to offer religious leaders unique access to preach and proselytize students during school hours on school property,” the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a nonprofit that promotes the separation of church and state, said in a letter to the school district.

Maynard says that Huntington High School is the only place where complaints about Walker’s presence have originated. Maynard says Walker did not contact the schools to hold an assembly there. The requests came from students and the school administration approved the requests.

During the assemblies, students and their families are encouraged to join evening services at Christ Temple Church, where many individuals are finding Christ.

At first, Maynard says he was a bit skeptical himself about Walker’s efforts. But not anymore.

“Especially with a young preacher like that, you never can tell what’s going to happen,” Maynard says. “But I’m seeing some real fruit here. This is looking like the very tip of the iceberg of revival. It looks like this could break loose into something huge, and it’s something everyone should keep an eye on.” {eo}

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