

Revival

Miki Thomas

"Give me a 'J'. Give me an 'E'. Give me an 'S'. Give me a 'U'. Give me an 'S'. What does that spell?...Jesus!", the pastor enthusiastically said amid cries of "Praise Jesus, Worship God." The atmosphere was akin to that of an old time revival complete with rousing gospel songs. Unlike an old time revival, however, most of the participants were gay. This particular revival, held on July 26-28 in Schenectady, NY, was sponsored by the Lighthouse Apostolic Church and the National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA).

The theme of the revival was "We've Come this Far by Faith." It was also a celebration for the twelfth anniversary of the founding of NGPA. Reverend William Carey, or Brother Carey, has been involved from the beginning. He left the United Pentecostal Church because it wasn't particularly "gay cool". Currently, he is pastor of the Lighthouse Apostolic Church in Schenectady, "an Apostolic, spirit-filled, bible-believing church", open to all people regardless of sexual orientation. Being an Apostolic church means that its doctrine is based on what the first century church taught according to the Book of Acts and the Epistles: there is one God, not a trinitarian god-

head, repentance, water immersion baptism, and speaking in tongues, indicating a baptism in the holy ghost.

Reverend Sandy Lewis, pastor of the Casa de la Paloma Apostolic Church in Tuscon, Arizona was the speaker and preacher. She was dubbed "Sister Never Quit" for her indestructible faith in God. During the past several years she lost her house and severely injured her back. Casa de la Paloma for a long time had only Reverend Lewis and her spouse Sister Phil in attendance, but now has grown big enough for them to rent a storefront. She envisions a vast revival amongst the gay and lesbian community with similar churches forming across the country.

Sister Lewis' enthusiasm was infectious, as was everyone's that weekend. Being among gays and lesbians who declared themselves children of God and who took risks in coming out and spreading the word was an affirming atmosphere in which to worship. It is this willingness to come out and take risks that enables NGPA's mission to let gays and lesbians know that "Jesus loves you...no matter what".

For more information about NGPA, write National Gay Pentecostal Alliance, PO Box 1391, Schenectady, NY 12301-1391 or call (518) 372-6001. ▲

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