



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 14, 2011

## Tens of Thousands Gather to Pray for Detroit, America

Tens of thousands of Christians descended upon Detroit's Ford Field, home of the NFL's Detroit Lions, on November 11 and 12 to pray for the restoration of a city that has been decimated by poverty, crime, corruption, and hopelessness. Sponsored by The Call, a group of pastors, church leaders, and young people committed to praying for a spiritual transformation in America, The Call Detroit 11.11.11 gathered individuals, churches, and organizations from nearly every corner of Detroit to seek God's mercy and ask for His blessing over the area.



Promoted as a solemn assembly rather than a traditional Christian crusade, the event included no well-known speakers or Christian rock bands to entertain and inspire the crowd that poured into the sports stadium. Instead, both national and local religious leaders led the assembly, along with tens of thousands more watching via the Internet, in 24 hours of fasting, worship, and prayer, including repentance for social ills like abortion, racism, and anti-Semitism, along with intercession for God to bring spiritual renewal both to the city and the nation.

"We are not just seeking to have a good gathering," explained [Lou Engle](#) (above left), founder of The Call. "We are trying to move heaven on behalf of a desperate situation in Detroit."

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On The Call's website, organizers explained the purpose of the event: "We will gather to this city that has become a microcosm of our national crisis — economic collapse, racial tension, and the shedding of innocent blood of our children in the streets and of our unborn." As Engle told the crowd: "We need Jesus' face to appear all across America"

While the event was promoted as inclusive of all who desired to pray for the city, several groups protested against the gathering as divisive. Reported the *Detroit News*: "As people poured into the rally, a vocal but respectful crowd of about 50 people held signs that said 'Love thy Neighbor' and 'Pro-woman, Pro-Family, Pro-Choice' and chanted against hate and bigotry." Among those in the group protesting the event was a local pastor, the Rev. Charles Williams II of Detroit's King Solomon Baptist Church, who told the *Detroit News*: "We are living here to live harmoniously. Work together, live together, pray together. And we pray for those who are like us."

Leaders in Detroit's Muslim community also criticized the event as exclusive. "For our Christian friends, I recommend if they come out, they should join the counter-prayer vigil with pastors taking a moral stand for inclusion," said Dawud Walid, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations-Michigan. "For Muslims, I strongly urge them not to go in the proximity of Ford Field, because I don't want anyone in the Muslim community to be potentially approached through provocative or belligerent acts."

But other area pastors, like Bishop Wayne Jackson of Great Faith Ministries, one of the churches that



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helped promote the event, insisted that the gathering was all about bringing people together for the good of the city. "I know people are getting confused about the rumors out there," he said. "And we know there's word out there in the Muslim community that we're coming out against them, but we're not."

Jackson quoted a favorite scripture used by Evangelical Christians seeking a return of America to its Judeo-Christian foundations: "If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Explained Jackson: "That's why we're doing this. This is not anti-anything. This city needs healing."

Nonetheless, reported the *Detroit News*, Jackson conceded that they were praying for Muslims to convert to the Christian faith. "We are praying that Muslims will convert because we believe Christ is the way," Jackson told the newspaper. "We pray that people will come to the cross. We pray that Buddhists will come to the cross, that everyone can come to the cross."

While in the past The Call's website has included a warning against a rising tide of Muslim extremism in the U.S. (that message has since been taken down), those who attended the gathering said there was no hint of hatred or animosity against any group. Instead, the focus of the 24-hour prayer meeting was of unity and God's love.

"In my opinion, I didn't hear any anti-Islam rhetoric or anything like that," Nathaniel Maccabees, one attendee, told [National Public Radio](#). "We're all God's children, all Abe's children at the end of the day." Another participant, Gerrit Anderson of Lansing, told NPR: "It seems like the Lord's anointing on Detroit, that he wants to move this city for some reason ... kind of taking a broken city and reviving it, and showing that picture to the nation. That he longs for America to come back to him, and to his love."

In the waning hours of The Call, Barbara Yoder of Shekinah Christian Church, one of the area's hundreds of urban congregations, stood on the event's main stage and declared the hope for Detroit and America that The Call's organizers said is at the foundation of their desire for spiritual renewal in America. "God is beginning to overtake this territory and God is raising up leaders," Yoder told the crowd, adding a challenge to the assembled: "God is calling you into the darkest places of Detroit. We call forth the awakening to break through ... God is going to visit this nation with an awakening!"



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