

Tent Meetings Draw Thousands

It started as a week of meetings in the spring, launched on Mother's Day.

C.T. Townsend, a 34-year-old evangelist with C.T. Townsend

Ministries of Asheville, NC, was invited to preach a series of "revival" messages at New Hope Baptist Church in Burlington, NC. It quickly turned into packed nightly meetings. Organizers report that more than 700 people were saved. In early June, nearly 5,000 attended a youth night, and other evenings averaged 2,500 people.



The size of the crowds quickly outgrew the 600-seat capacity of the church, so a large "old-time gospel tent" that seats 3,500 was erected on property owned by Don Cox. "It's been absolutely amazing," Cox said. "The last time I remember anything remotely similar to this happening was in August of 1951 when I went to a tent meeting in Greensboro, NC, and a young evangelist by the name of Billy Graham was speaking."

Meetings continued nine weeks, well into July, with capacity crowds.

Townsend credits prayer as the source of this move of the Holy Spirit, citing the church's commitment to pray weekly for revival. According to Pastor Randy Hobbs, "It's just amazing to be a part of this. . . . We had been meeting over 15 years, praying for revival to touch us locally and nationally."

A few weeks into the meetings, a team of intercessors showed up from hundreds of miles away to stay and pray every day for the meetings. There were also men who prayed underneath the platform every night.

The unity among churches has also grown steadily. "I have

never seen such unity," says Townsend. More than 60 churches were involved, many from other denominations and backgrounds.

Townsend also emphasized that the draw was the preaching of the Word of God. He clearly preached repentance and the coming judgment of God. When the preaching began, he says, "the power of God [came] in that old-time gospel tent."