



Rev Kenneth Rowan

It's not surprising to see an interpreter at the front of a church translating the spoken word into sign language. What's unusual is seeing an interpreter translating the preacher's sign language into the spoken word. That's what happens three times a week at Turning Point Church in Hays.

Though he communicates with sign language; Kenneth Rowan's preaching nevertheless evokes the feeling of an old time fire-and-brimstone sermon. He lays out the truth just as he sees it with no holds barred – working up a sweat and punctuation his message with thumps on the lectern. His wife, Theresa Rowan, translates his sign language sermon into spoken words.

The church meets in the building that formerly housed Greek's Pisseria 130 W Ninth. The transition from restaurant to church is still ongoing through Kenneth, Theresa, and their daughters Bynthia and JaCinda, they have put in many hours working on the building along with help from other members of the congregation.

Though Kenneth Rowan is deaf and the sermon is given in sign, the service is far from quiet. During worship service, Cynthia plays the church organ and JaCinda and Theresa lead the congregation in song both singing and signing the words. Congregation member Travis Wahrman plays the guitar and youth leader Michael Kendall plays the drums.

A recent worship service included the singing of "He Set Me Free," "Just a Little Talk With Jesus," "Thank God For The Blood" and "There is Power in the Blood". As Kenneth Rowan preached, he wrote scripture references on a board so the congregation could look them up and follow along in their Bibles. In true Pentecostal fashion, members responded with enthusiastic clapping and shouting, some of them jumping up and down, to show their agreement with Kenneth Rowan's points.

Turning Point Church is affiliated with the United Pentecostal Church denomination. They believe speaking in tongues is the initial, outward sign of being born again. Both Kenneth and Theresa are the children of Pentecostal ministers. Kenneth Rowan's father, Kenneth Rowan Sr., pastors a church in Council Bluff, Iowa. Theresa Rowan's father L.D. Hilton, pastored a church in Olathe until his death.

The Rowans met when Kenneth moved to Olathe and started attending Theresa's church. Kenneth Rowan began with an evangelism ministry, which he did for 11 years. Then his vision of his service to God became more precise. He believed the Lord was calling him to Hays, to build a church here. He accepted a UPS job transfer to Hays, where he supervises the morning shift. That was in February 2004.

In the time since Kenneth Rowan started Turning Point Church, it has been slowly growing. Average attendance is about 15, but the congregation already has purchased a building in downtown Hays and has service there twice on Sundays and Bible study Wednesday evening. Rowan is not discouraged by the fact that there is still so much room for more people in the fellowship.

"Old men shall dream dreams and young men shall see visions. We're going to have a church in Hays," Kenneth Rowan said. Kenneth Rowan has many visions for Turing Point Church. He sees a full slate of activities for youth and adults, monthly kids' church and youth rallies, and eventually building a Bible College and Christian school. "It's not going to be just for the deaf only. I am deaf, but my wife voices the services at all times." Kenneth Rowan said.

Reporter Phyllis Zom