

GO TELL Crusade Rocks Childress

By: Carolyn Cunningham



More than 700 decisions for the Lord Jesus Christ were made during the Red River GO TELL Crusade in Childress, Texas last month with 306 of those for salvation.

Amazingly, an estimated 6,000 of the town's 8,000 attended the four-night crusade on Sept. 9-12 at Fair Park Stadium. They included members from many churches across the Southeast Panhandle.

"Thousands of precious souls were confronted with their eternal destiny," said evangelist Rick Gage, founder of Atlanta-based GO TELL Ministries. "We saw a great move of God." Rev. Tony Nolan, also from Atlanta, also told of Christ's intervention in his troubled life. They were joined by worship leader Chuck Sullivan and vocalist Malissa Smith.

"Saved is a term that has become obsolete in many of the churches in America," Gage said, in part, to the crowd. "When was the last time you have wept over lost souls who are going to hell? Young people, when was the last time you prayed for your mom or dad to be saved?"



Gage also spoke to around 1,000 students in several public schools at ON TRACK school assemblies Monday through Wednesday about life's choices and the dangers of drugs, alcohol abuse, teen suicide and premarital sex. More than 12 churches agreed to support the crusade, concluding with a Pizza Blast and Youth Night on Wednesday.



Chad King, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Childress, served as the counseling and follow-up chairman for the crusade and recalled the miraculous way the crusade came about.

"For the past couple of years, we have been praying about having an evangelistic crusade in Childress. It had been on my mind and something I would pray about," he said. During early December 2011, he discussed this idea with his staff at a retreat.

"We discussed it and agreed it would be something that was needed in Childress. We left the retreat meetings agreeing to pray about the hopes of having an evangelistic crusade," Rev. King said.

A week or two later, Gage was driving through Childress to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to catch a flight back to Atlanta. Gage said Childress had been on their radar for a potential crusade several years ago, but the timing was not right. As he got to the edge of town, Gage said God told him to turn around, go back and find First Baptist Church, which he did on that cold, damp day.

"As he arrived at the church, I was in my office. That morning, I had just talked to a pastor friend about the idea of having an evangelistic crusade in Childress. He shared with me about Rick Gage and GO TELL Ministries. That day, I had looked at the GO TELL website to watch some of their videos; so I knew what Rick Gage sounded like and looked like," Rev. King said. "As he walked into the church offices, I immediately recognized his voice and went to greet him before my secretary could call me about a visitor.

"We discussed and talked about what God had laid on my heart about an area crusade," he said. "There is no doubt in my mind that God's hand was leading us to have an evangelistic crusade from the very beginning. It truly was a divine appointment that afternoon!"

Craddock said prayer was the foundation, beginning with monthly prayer walks from March through August around the rock-walled football stadium, site of the crusade. Then daily prayer walks were held for seven days before the crusade.

At daybreak on the Sunday morning of the crusade, a group prayed and walked around the stadium seven times. Then members from all of the churches conducted one last prayer walk after church at noon that day. "I believe that not only did God hear our cries for the lost in our community, but He also brought the participating churches together as the body of Christ."

Craddock said one woman was not planning to attend the crusade, but she could hear it from her house. "Something told her she needed to go and check it out," he relayed. "She was saved that night, the only night she was able to attend because she had to work all the other nights."

Later in the week, she told her sister what happened to her. When her sister attended, she also was saved.

"We also heard a report of a man who didn't attend the crusade but went to church the next Sunday morning, and he and his wife were both saved," Craddock added.

Another lady said she and her husband had an hour-long conversation "about things we have never talked about in the nearly ten years we've been married" after the first night of the crusade. "God wasn't just winning and saving souls tonight; He was planting seeds of change, mending hearts, strengthening marriages, making families stronger in Him. Praise God for the changes He is bringing to lives in Childress."

Craddock said, "We continue to hear how marriages have been saved, and people that may or may not have attended the crusade are continuing to be saved and attending area churches. There is definitely a trickle-down effect, and we praise God for continuing to work in our area."

"As we have been preparing for the crusade for months, we have been praying and believing that God would send a mighty movement of His Holy Spirit to our community," Craddock added. "It has been amazing to see people come together and see walls torn down among our churches to truly join hands and do God's work."

Rev. King added, "I have seen lives changed as a result of the crusade." One instance is "a good family" with "lots of friends" and "active in the community" but "just not church people." He said they attended every night of the crusade, and on the last night all four gave their lives to Jesus Christ. "As a result, I have had the privilege of baptizing them, and they are now actively attending church."

Also, he said, "I have witnessed a marriage relationship that has been restored because of how God spoke to them at the crusade. Today their relationship is growing, and a new love has been formed between them because they allowed Christ to take over.

"It was amazing to see God use people to tell others how to accept Christ. You could see the excitement in their eyes! We have been following up with each decision; and as we do, we are discovering more opportunities to witness and ministry to people in our community."

For instance, one 80-year-old gentleman recently told him he and his family have been changed forever by the crusade. "No doubt God continues to change lives in our community as a result of the crusade," he added.

"I am thankful to Rick Gage that God got a hold of him and turned him around that cool, rainy December day to come back into Childress and start the process of an evangelistic crusade," Rev. King said. "A total of 716 souls are forever grateful!"

Crusade Secretary Belinda Eddins, who works at a crisis pregnancy/outreach center in Childress, was "thrilled to share with each client who came through our doors about the crusade event." As a result, many attended. "We are not government funded, so we share the Gospel freely and give Bibles to all who do not have any.

"Being on the executive team came with many attacks – from our church to our close friends to just plain ole satan. I have grown to love the executive team God placed together, and I do consider all of them now family. We shared such an awesome bond," Mrs. Eddins said.

"I saw many lives changed during the week of the crusade and many marriages saved as well. Church denominational walls have also fallen. I see a lot of unity not in all the churches but certainly more than ever before. The participating churches of the crusade are on fire for God," she said. "The moment the crusade week was over, it seemed people around town were a lot nicer to others."

"God did a mighty work in my family as well. My youngest son, a senior in high school, rededicated his life to Christ – along with the entire baseball team, which is a tight group of boys. My oldest son, at 20, is really thinking about the direction he is going, which is positive.

"God also led us from our old church of more than 10 years to the First Baptist Church of Childress. We NEVER saw this one coming. We sure weren't looking. We were happy where we were but felt lukewarm at times. The crusade showed us to get off the pew and share Christ," she added.

"I can't tell you the Godly man my husband Kyle has become. He has gained so much confidence in his walk, and he is able to share the Lord. One other thing is my husband apologized to me once the crusade started for not jumping on board earlier. It's all God's timing, and I appreciated all those times he let me go for meetings and other things that it took to make this crusade happen. It was a lot of work but very rewarding," Mrs. Eddins said. "The crusade has not died down. We are fired up and pressing on."

Publicity Chairman Christopher Blackburn, president of the Blackburn Media Group, said, "In my church alone, there have been around 20 baptisms since the event with many more scheduled. This is a testimony to the power of God working through this town thanks to GO TELL Ministries.

“Rick Gage, whom I now consider a friend, is an effective teacher of the Word and has not only led many to Christ but he has improved the daily walk many of us have with the Lord. I thank God for Rick and the GO TELL team and would highly recommend a GO TELL Crusade for any town.”

Susy Smith commented, "I am so thankful for Rick and his family and all who allowed God to use them through the crusade, for I had never been used by God. He chose the crusade to work through my life to reach others for Jesus. I know people have been reached, and I know my life will never be the same. Praises be to our Almighty God."

For more information and scheduling, contact Rick Gage GO TELL Ministries at 1-866-446-8355 or email info@gotellministries.com.