

God Saves through Another Sandhills GO TELL Crusade 26 Years Later

By: Carolyn Cunningham

More than 800 decisions for the Lord Jesus Christ were made during the Rick Gage GO TELL Crusade in Rockingham, North Carolina with more than 12,000 in attendance Sept. 16-19. Of those decisions, 441 were for salvation.

Crusade Chairman Thad Ussery said, "Quite a few were saved before the crusade started" with prayers for the unsaved in the months leading up to the crusade. "This crusade brought a unity among the denominations that we had not seen before, and the effects can still be seen with baptisms. All over the county, people tell me how much they appreciated the crusade and of different people who were saved.

"Rural areas should have a Rick Gage GO TELL Crusade because it will light your county up," Ussery added. "We just had revival getting ready for the crusade with all of the prayer meetings." He said his pastor Mickey Briles of Beverly Hills Baptist Church was instrumental in getting the crusade vision rolling. Briles said he was encouraged by retired pastor Eugene McNair who coordinated the Freddie Gage crusade.

However, Briles gives the credit to the youth of his church. "The whole reason was our kids wanting more of their friends to enjoy what they had experienced at camp, so we had to have the crusade.

"Rick Gage and his ministry have a genuine passion to see people saved, and they have the anointing to make it happen. Every year, our kids are saved at Rick's GO TELL Camp. They have stuck with it, and one will go into ministry," Briles said.



With this GO TELL Crusade, Briles said, "There has been a lasting change in my church. Nothing impacts like this crusade - no conferences, no seminars. The fruit surpasses anything you can imagine."

Ussery and Crusade Co-Chair Cathy Wilson both said threatening weather on the first three nights of the crusade was a concern, but the rain either stopped or went around the crusade stadium. "The Lord is in control of nature - just like the storms in our lives," Ussery said. Agreeing, Wilson said, "Although the rain showered every day, it did not rain ONE drop during the crusade and the sky was beautiful.

During the day, many people would call or e-mail me and ask what was the back-up plan if it rained. I said GOD. I had faith that HE would hold off the rain and HE did." The Richmond Senior High School Stadium in Rockingham held 4,000 and was filled every night.



Wilson said, "Just recently at the local football game, a man told me that a part-time worker at his business came to the crusade because he had been invited. Although he did not come the first night, he heard all the excitement and came the next night. He made a decision to accept Christ, and then he was given a Bible by his employer - a very special gift that he was very happy to receive."

About the more than 800 decisions, Ann Carr, wife of Finance Chairman John Carr, said, "I am hearing that many of these have been baptized and are now in church." More than 350 volunteers from 41 different churches helped, and 40 churches supported the crusade financially, she added. "There was a sense of one purpose only, and that was to touch someone for Jesus Christ."

Evangelist Rick Gage, president of GO TELL Ministries in Atlanta, was joined by University of South Carolina football chaplain Adrian Despres and speaker and author Tony Nolan. Musical guests were Chuck Sullivan and Joy Fowler. Gage also brought the BMX Bike Team to perform for School Assemblies.



Gage spoke to 5,500 students about life's choices and the dangers of drugs, alcohol abuse, teen suicide, premarital sex and bullying in several ON TRACK school assemblies. The Wednesday night crusade ended with a free Pizza Blast for youths.

Gage's father, well-known evangelist Freddie Gage - now retired and living in Texas, began his crusade ministry more than 50 years ago. When the elder Gage conducted the crusade in Rockingham 26 years ago, there were more than 42,000 in total attendance and greater than 1,000 salvation decisions.

"Many have shared with me that was the greatest religious event the county had ever witnessed," the younger Gage said. "God did it again!"

Outreach Co-Chairman Steve Newton, who had assisted during various Freddie Gage crusades, now helped during the Rick Gage crusade. Steve's wife Jeanne Newton set up a Facebook page, which she said will continue with future announcements, crusade videos and her photos from the crusade. Among them are scenes of some of the hundreds of people praying face down, flat out on the wet football field during the invitation. She also helped reach the Hispanic community and establish a deaf ministry.

During that Rockingham crusade a quarter century ago, Chuck McKnight answered the Lord's call to preach and assisted on the Task Force for this crusade. Little did he know his son would be eternally impacted by this crusade as he had been during the 1980s.

Writing to Rick Gage after the crusade, the younger Clint McKnight said, "I wanted to personally let you know how much I appreciate you being obedient to the Lord and sharing what the Spirit prompted you to share Wednesday night at the crusade in Rockingham. That message haunted me from Wednesday night until Sunday morning when I surrendered my life to Christ!

"Your testimony described my life. Also, like you, I 'walked the aisle' at 9 years old, got baptized and thought, 'Me and God, we're okay'; but there was no change. I am now 29 years old; and just like Jesus restored sight to the blind man, my eyes were finally opened and I realized there was no fruit of salvation in my life! I knew

what to say around certain people and how to act; I had a lot of people fooled - even myself. I couldn't remember a time when I was excited about reading and praying or pretty much anything to do with Jesus.

However, about this crusade, McKnight said, "I attended every night and was challenged. I fought moving on the invitation every night, but I am so thankful for God's mercy and grace. You will never know how your testimony touched my heart and allowed the Spirit to open my eyes. Thanks for being obedient. To GOD be the glory!"

On the last night of the crusade, Hospitality Chairman Earl Rose said a counselor told him he had a young man receive Christ and his wife also was saved while speaking with a lady counselor. "At the same time, both of their children also were praying to accept Jesus as their personal Savior."



Some churches have mailed letters to all of those who made decisions, Rose noted. "Also, some have made home visits. All those who have made decisions have been called by churches, counselors, telephone committees and individuals who just wanted to encourage and invite these people to church and get them plugged into a Bible-believing church." Several churches have baptized many of those who received Jesus and have reported that records of new people visiting their church for the first time are at an all-time high, he added. "Praise God for what has been done. If we honor Him, He will honor us and HE has."

Another counselor Johnny Martin said he spoke with a man who wanted to be sure of his salvation - even though he attended church. "I have followed up with him, and he seems to be improving. He also hopes to talk to his stepdaughter, who is dying of cancer, about her salvation." Martin also counseled a teen from another county who believes God is calling him into the ministry.

Mrs. Carr said, "We are still hearing about conversions. One that was really exciting was when a counselor went into the local Dairy Queen one night after the meeting. He saw a young lady at a table, and he could see she had been crying. He sat down next to her and struck up a conversation. She had been to the crusade but did not respond to the invitation. The counselor was able to lead this young lady to the Lord in the Dairy Queen! PTL."

Another story was shared by Mrs. Carr about a grandfather and his grandson. "His grandson had been active in church and felt comfortable about his salvation. However, while in bed, God began to move on him; and he realized he was not completely sold out to Christ. He rededicated his life that night in bed. Then his grandfather rededicated his life after their conversation."

For more information on scheduling a GO TELL Crusade in your area, please contact Rick Gage GO TELL Ministries at 1-866-446-8355 or email info@gotellministries.com.