

Lakeway Area GO TELL Crusade may be start of America's 'great revival'

Of more than 17,000 in attendance, greater than 900 people made commitments to Christ and 45 prisoners in the Hamblen County jail gave their hearts to Jesus during the Lakeway Area GO TELL Crusade with Rick Gage on April 28 through May 1.

Those 900 commitments included 369 first-time decisions to follow Jesus and more than 500 recommitments at the Walter State Great Smoky Mountain Expo Center in White Pine of East Tennessee – most widely known for its rodeos.

Crusade Chairman Dr. Dean Haun, senior pastor of First Baptist Church Morristown, said, “God turned that cow barn into a cathedral. My favorite quote I think was what Laymon Skelton said, 'It's not the first time that God came to a barn to save us.' So we praise God that He came to our barn, and He showed us the power of His presence.”

Thirteen years ago and then two years ago twice, “Someday you're going to be a part of a great revival” was a message told to Dr. Haun – the first time by a pastor in Georgia, the second by a Morristown resident and third by one of his church members from a Messianic rabbi in Israel. In this last instance, the lady said the rabbi told her the Lord had been telling him there would be a great revival coming to America and that it would start in East Tennessee.

With concerns expressed to him by Morristown businessmen about drug problems and family breakups, Dr. Haun said they planned to have a crusade only for Hamblen County churches until churches from surrounding counties wanted to join.

Knowing of the Rev. Rick Gage, evangelist from GO TELL America Crusades based in Duluth, Georgia, and his emphasis on small towns, Dr. Haun asked him to speak to the Carson-Newman University football team at his church since he knew Gage had been a former college football coach.

“We had 42 guys on the football team come to know Christ that day. I had the privilege of baptizing a lot of those guys at Mossy Creek at Carson-Newman, and so that's kind of how we began the process with Rick Gage and with his ministry,” Dr. Haun recalled.

With Gage's crusade leadership manual, Dr. Haun said they were encouraged to proceed with the crusade, involving Gage's crusade leadership team.

Dr. Haun said, “God led me to people who just poured out their heart, their effort, their time, their energy into making this thing happen. And we put all the pieces together and were able to have a very successful crusade,” including the training of 400 counselors to help in the crusade and with follow-up.

“We can put the mechanics of the crusade together, but God touched it with His power. So we give Him all the glory and all the honor because He's the one who breathed on it and made it more than just a series of meetings but made it into something that's still going on today,” Dr. Haun said. “I mean, still people are being saved, people are recommitting their lives, our churches are changed. So we give Him the glory and honor for that.”

Over the past year, more than 50 churches – including more than 1,500 volunteers – banded together to pray, fast, prepare and support this GO TELL America Crusade in their community.

For four days and nights, they reached nine counties and shared the "ON TRACK" assembly with 5,000 students in local middle and high schools in the public school system.

Accompanied by sign language interpretation, GOT TELL Team speakers during the week were GO TELL Team evangelists Adrian Despres, Ken Freeman and Rick Gage. Testimonies were given by wounded Marine veteran Tim Lee and former Tennessee Highway Patrolman and now State Rep. Lowell Russell with musical guests Charles Billingsley, Chuck Sullivan and the "At Liberty" Worship Band.

With a three-mile traffic jam and attendance by about 5,000, Sunday night on April 28 was Church Night, honoring area pastors, including the performance of a Mass Choir.

Russell spoke on Monday, April 29 on First Responders Night when First Responders and their families were served a free barbecue meal before the service. Then each First Responder received a Lakeway Area Medal of Honor in appreciation of their service.

Tuesday night, April 30 was Veterans Night with Lee. Student Night on Wednesday, May 1 included the serving of free pizza to around 3,000 students and 4,000 more in attendance for the crusade with 390 decisions.

Before the crusade, weekly prayer themes were revival (personal/community), area churches, area pastors, volunteer teams, crusade team, spiritually lost (Each One Reach One), weather/logistics, school assemblies (students), crusade week and crusade follow-up.

Crusade Co-Chair, Banquet Chair and Business Leader David Wild, president of Wild Business Construction and Wild Partners, said, "We all see where our country is heading. If we don't take it back and turn it around, I don't know where we're going to be in five years. I think our area was starving for a revival. With no walls, no matter what denomination, all classes of people, all classes of churches, they were involved in this crusade.

"This is just the start of something great to come. We're being asked, 'Are we going to have it again next year?' There's still great talk about it in town. It still amazes me that no one is trying to take the glory for it. In other communities throughout the state, to our surrounding states and throughout the country, we hope it spreads like wildfire," Wild said.

Hamblen County Sheriff Esco Jarnagin said, "It was, with honor, to be the Security Team chairman for this historical, God-sent crusade. Over 45 inmates came to know God personally. Every speaker shared words of encouragement, love and hope. God's love was shared with over 17,000 people. Praise to God for Rick Gage. Over 800 souls were called by God for repentance or recommitment."

As for the inmates who "Sheriff Jarnagin calls trustees because 'we trust them not to run off,' we picked up the trustees to help us with the crusade and to feed them," Wild said. "Nine of the 10 went down during the invitation on Sunday. Eight of the nine got baptized on Tuesday because one had been released from jail on Sunday night. I got to talk to them on Saturday through early Thursday morning. The hard part is coming and living it. I told them when they go back to jail, they can be such an inspiration to the other guys. I told them let them see what's in you. Make them see a difference.

Wild added, "I am going to follow up. One of the guys gets out in July. Some will fill out applications with me when they get out. One guy for sure we will place with us. We're getting them Bibles. That's what the crusade is all about – for people who may not ever go to church."

A Crusade Counselor, Paul Jeffries, tells of a young man who came forward for salvation. "He had been under oppression from the forces of darkness. He said he had been bullied and tried to kill himself. He came forward on Youth Night when Bro. Rick (Gage) preached on hell. He was apparently saved at the altar. I got to encourage him in his new walk with Jesus, prayer, Bible study and surrounding himself with Christian friends. I prayed with him and bound the spirits of darkness in Jesus' Name. I gave him Ephesians 6 on spiritual warfare. All glory to God!"

Crusade Counselor/Follow-up Chairman Rev. Gene Nelson, pastor of Russellville Baptist Church, said, "We are now almost two weeks removed from the Lakeway Area Go Tell Crusade, and the impact is still being felt! God is still stirring and drawing hearts to relationship with Jesus Christ! It has been amazing to see what God has done and what God continues to do as a direct result of the Crusade!

"As lead-up to the crusade, my committee had eight counselor/follow-up training sessions. We trained and equipped over 400 counselors in preparation for the harvest God would send. I must confess though, as the crusade approached, I was anxious. Were we ready? Had we prepared adequately? Was there something missing that should have been considered? Did we have the names of all those who had been trained? Did we have enough Hispanic counselors? These and other questions filled my mind.

"Once the crusade got started, knowing all that had been done, I prayed for a tremendous harvest of souls. And God answered! I had the joy of having a front-row seat as hundreds came to the stage, making a decision for Christ! The first night of the crusade, as people came forward, I'll confess that my first thought was about the counseling logistics. However, after the invitation was given and those making decisions filed past me, I was overwhelmed by God's visitation that night! That happened each night.

"On the last night of the Crusade, Youth Night, as I saw hundreds responding to God's invitation, again, I thought, 'We don't have enough counselors.' Praise the Lord. We did not! There were 390 decisions for Christ made that night! Again, I was, at first, concerned about logistics and making sure we had the counseling covered appropriately. Then, as I walked out to the Counseling barn and saw them lined out the door for counseling, again, I was overwhelmed by God's amazing grace and the joy I felt when I considered that He allowed me to see it! I stood in awe!

"Everyone says, 'You must have hundreds of stories to tell.' Truth is, the counselors and advisors heard the stories. However, I did get directly involved a few times. Just a few examples:

"The first night of the crusade, our youth minister's wife had shared that a couple she knew would be attending the crusade. This couple had struggled with poor decisions and drugs and had lost at least one child to state custody. As I walked out of the Counseling barn, I saw the couple sitting on the curb of the road with my youth minister's wife. I sat down with them, and they shared how the husband got saved that night and the wife rededicated her life to Jesus Christ! Wow! Since that night, they have been at church, and he has come forward to make a public profession of faith and to be baptized!

"On that first night, I heard the pain of a teenager whose father was in jail. She shared the hurt that she and her mother had experienced because of him. She honestly shared that she was having a hard time forgiving him. The counselor and I shared that because Jesus had forgiven us so much, it releases us to forgive others. We prayed with her, and I had a sense of God's Holy presence comforting her in the midst of her pain.

"The next night of the crusade, I was in the Counseling barn when one of the counselors approached me to serve as an advisor for a young man who had received Christ. I asked him what decision he had made. He shared that, at a young age, he had prayed to get saved; but the only reason he did it was because he wanted to take communion. He felt left out from eating the bread and drinking the cup. It was not a genuine decision. However, at the crusade, he made a genuine decision to ask Jesus Christ into his heart! When I asked, "How do you feel now?," he said, "Clean!" What a glorious response!

"This crusade impacted me greatly! It has stirred in me a greater concern, passion and compassion for the lost. I am still amazed that God would put me in a position to train counselors for the tremendous harvest He brought. I am amazed that He put me in a position that allowed me to watch so many people broken by God and being transformed by His Spirit each night. I am so thankful to Dr. Dean Haun for entrusting this position into my hands. I am grateful for a wonderful committee who met regularly in the weeks leading up to the crusade. A group who thought of things I would never have considered. A committee who helped train each counselor. A

committee who was there every night – excited for what God was going to do! Keith Mowery, Jonathan Bewley, Bob Clark, Tim Thompson and Phillips Lyons are incredible! As I keep saying, I am amazed!

“Thank you, Rick Gage and GO TELL Ministries for being obedient to the call of God upon your lives. Thank you for coming to the Lakeway area. Thank you for your passion for the lost and the extra effort you put forth to win them to Jesus Christ! Thank you for allowing me to work alongside your ministry team! It has been an awesome privilege!

“It is all for God's Glory! Great things He has done, and great things He continues to do! It's all about Jesus!”

Valerie Bumpus said, “The crusade was amazing! I sang in the choir and served as a counselor and input decision cards into the computer each evening.

“The first night, I prayed with two 15-year-old girls that the youth pastor at my church had counseled. One accepted Jesus that night, and the other rededicated her life to Christ. After we prayed, I asked if they knew what was going on in Heaven. They said, ‘No’; so I told them, ‘There's a party going on!’ I think they thought I was a little crazy.

“On Wednesday night as I stood in the barn keeping the pizza lines moving, I noted that the arena held 5,000 people and Jesus fed 5,000 people. I'm not sure how many we fed pizza that night, but I got a vivid picture of what it might have looked like for Jesus to feed the 5,000.

“The 13-year-old girl I counseled on Wednesday evening rededicated her life to Christ and ‘got things cleaned up with God.’ After I prayed for her, I asked if she wanted to pray. She blessed me when, after praying for herself, she prayed for me and for the others who came forward that night!

“The chair sermon was very poignant and memorable. Every time I fold a folding chair from now on, it will remind me not to be in chair 2 – lukewarm and self-pleasing in my relationship with God. I went to the altar as a counselor; but before praying with a couple who came forward, I prayed for myself that God would help me be more on fire and bold for Him!

“I distributed Saturate America door hangers with the Jesus film DVDs and crusade flyers to my neighbors and kept one for myself, so I could see what I was handing out. We showed the children's version of the Jesus film to our 2- and 4-year-old granddaughters the Saturday after the crusade (they watched it three times they liked it so much). My husband Steve explained to the 4-year-old that Jesus isn't dead and He can live in our hearts. On Sunday, she was still thinking about what she had seen and asked her parents questions about Jesus and Heaven. In the evening, she prayed with her mom and dad and asked Jesus in her heart. On Monday morning when I called to talk to her, before I could even ask about it, she told me Jesus was in her heart and she was going to Heaven. I told her I was very happy to hear that because I'm going to Heaven, too. She said, ‘Right now?’ I said, ‘No, not right now,’ and she said, ‘When Jesus tells you?’ I said, ‘Yes, when Jesus tells me.’

“I found out this week that my daughter-in-law and her grandfather attended GO TELL Camp when she was younger, and they had nothing but good things to say about it. I was already happy to help get kids from Morristown to camp, but now I'm even more glad to do my part to see that as many students as possible go to camp on June 27.

“So the crusade has truly impacted my life, and I'm excited to continue serving God in any way I can and point others to Him.”

Crusade photographer Brooks Gray, associate pastor of Media and Worship at First Baptist Church Morristown, commented, “When I was asked to photograph this week's events, I knew I had the responsibility of capturing something awesome. To me, it was more than just snapping a few pics. I get to tell the story of what happened

in spring of 2019 in the Lakeway area. I was focused on what I had to do, and now the weight of what I was able to be part of is starting to set in. This was a week that many will look back on, knowing their lives were eternally changed. A day will come when we'll be able to rejoice together eternally, saying, 'That's when you became my brother! That's the day you joined the family as a daughter of the King!'"

More Facebook comments came from:

Beverly Newbern Finney: "I did not want it to end! But I believe this is just the beginning!"

Judy Lusk: "I need another week of crusade. It was just getting started. Imagine what that would mean to our area."

Travis Lynam: "To God be all the glory. Great things He has done."

Mary Owen: "My granddaughter was saved Wednesday night. This crusade was awesome!!"

Jennifer Fugate Caldwell: "Is it just me? I wish the crusade could've kept going!!"

Paul Howard: "Rick Gage and the GO TELL Ministries are wonderful and life changing."

Darlene Ellis Smith: "Wonderful! God's move was powerful!!"

Jody Keller Vaughn: "I hate to see it end!!! God bless everyone who had anything to do with this crusade!!!"

Connie Holdway: "Our grandson was saved. Praise the Lord for the number of salvations. Praying that the work continues to advance the kingdom of God."

Gaylen Carpenter: "My mom was among those saved! Our lives and our community are so much richer after this crusade!"

Rhonda Epps: "Best thing that has come to this area in long time!"

Tammie Sue Crouch Green: "Praising God for decisions made. Praying for each of them to grow and the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Praying also that they will sow seeds in those around them."

Linda Greene: "Huge, huge change in people's lives! PTL!"

Lisa Hall Alexander: "God's Hand and Blessing were over it from day one!"

Jason and Angie Williams: "What an amazing opportunity for this Lakeway area. God sure showed up."

Teresa Smith Davies: "Great crusade. Some elementary students from my school were saved. To God be the Glory!!"

Daniel Gage, Rick's brother: "Every town in America needs a GO TELL Crusade. God still uses evangelistic crusades probably more so than any other outreach method."

Judy Lusk: "I sang in the choir and have been there every night since. What wonderful music, words of God and services there have been each night. The Holy Spirit has shown up every night, and I truly believe that the souls of those that have come forward each night will be used in a mighty way."

Michael Wilder: "Awesome service. Everyone needs to be attending."

A bonus is that young people from the Lakeway Area will be able to go to GO TELL Student Camp in Toccoa, Georgia during the week of June 27 for free instead of \$350 for each camper – thanks to support from Lakeway area supporters.

Since 1989, more than 100,000 have attended GO TELL Student Camps held in June and July each year.

Continuing resources: LakewayAreaCrusade.com, facebook.com/LakewayAreaGoTellCrusade

For more information about having a GO TELL AMERICA Crusade in your area:

Call: 1-866-I-GO-TELL (446-8355)

Email: info@gotellministries.com

Visit this website: www.gotellcrusades.com