

# 4 crusades in 40 days see changed lives

By staff

PLAINVIEW, Texas (BP) -- A four-day crusade became a seven-day revival in the Texas panhandle community of Plainview.

A "GO TELL" crusade led by evangelist Rick Gage was extended beyond its original Oct. 2-5 dates through Oct. 6-7 and Oct. 9.

In the town of about 21,000, more than 1,036 people made decisions for Christ, including 554 for salvation, reported Danny Andrews, chair of the Plainview GO TELL Crusade and director of alumni development at Wayland Baptist University.

"We had great cooperation from many churches in our community," Andrews said, noting that planning for the crusade began in March.

"We saw God move in a great way in answer to prayer; a great intensity of purpose among those counseling and encouraging people making decisions; a spirit of joy among all who devoted themselves to so many tasks involved in an undertaking of this magnitude; and a greater appreciation and respect among pastors and fellow Christians regardless of denominational affiliation."

The combined effort brought "the total focus on Jesus Christ and glory to the Savior and the heavenly Father," Andrews said.



The Plainview crusade was the fourth in 40 days in Texas communities by GO TELL Ministries, which Gage leads. In all, 25,000 people attended the evening services of the

four crusades and 2,200 decisions were recorded for follow-up by one of the 100 or more local churches that pledged to minister to and disciple those who responded. Additionally, more than 35 local schools allowed Gage and other crusade guests to speak to a combined 10,000 students.

In Conroe, about 300 individuals made professions of faith and 300 others made

spiritual decisions during the Montgomery County GO TELL Crusade, with more than 10,000 people attending the Sept. 18-21 outreach at the Buddy Moorhead Memorial Stadium.

Crusade team members also spoke in 11 Conroe-area public and private schools, relaying positive messages to students to avoid the toll of drug and alcohol use. The Outcast BMX freestyle stunt team performed various feats at the schools as well as highlighting the crusade's youth rally prior to the final evening service.

Also in Conroe, former New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte was among the crusade's featured speakers.

When he received Jesus as his Savior at the age of 11, Pettitte said it was "the greatest day in my life -- greater than the day I got married; greater than the day my children were born; greater than the times that we won those five World Series.

"The reason is that on that day my life was changed."

Pettitte also recounted how God used difficult times in his career to keep his focus heavenward. In spite of his pitching talent, he spent four years in the minor leagues - - the last two years with a wife and a child to support on a monthly salary of \$700. "My wife's sleeping on an air mattress -- while I'm in the minor leagues -- following the team bus around in a pickup truck," he said.

Pettitte said God "delayed my jump to the big leagues" to mold and shape him and his wife "into the kind of people He wanted us to be. He got me to the big leagues in His perfect timing."

Go Tell crusades also were held in Wheeler, Sept. 11-14, and Darrouzett, Aug. 28-31.

In Plainview, Andrews told of one young man who had every intention of committing suicide by pills or a handgun before the beginning of one of the crusade services. He opted to attend the crusade yet left without making a decision. But he then came back and found Gage and surrendered his life to Christ. Now, Andrews said, "The joy and peace in that young man's life is unmistakable."

The young man began staying up nights reading his Bible and helped with the crusade in various ways on the following nights, Andrews said, adding, "He was in church on Sunday and has found a Sunday School."

Andrews also told of a 71-year-old Hispanic man who prayed to receive Christ. "He told me, 'Never close the door on God.'"

"I love West Texas and the Panhandle," said Gage, a former assistant football coach at Texas Tech who has been in evangelism ministry for 25 years focusing mainly on small- to medium-sized towns. His father, Freddie Gage, was a Baptist evangelist for 50 years.

Gage noted how God had poured out multiple blessings on the Texas communities -- each hard hit by one of the worst droughts in state history.

"God rained down his Spirit on these four crusade towns and it was ironic that it rained in each town at least one day of the crusade," Gage said.

Gage said "event evangelism" has faded somewhat among churches during the last several decades, but he's seen a resurgence of sorts as churches desperately seek some way to reach the lost in their towns.

"A lot of leaders in all denominations have lost their passion for evangelism," Gage said. "But I'm convinced this kind of local evangelistic effort will be here until Jesus comes.

"When we come into a town, we want to partner with churches that are looking for a way to reach the lost in the community but perhaps are discouraged because their individual efforts have not produced many results,"

Gage said. "We come alongside churches in what they are doing as far as evangelism -- local church evangelism, mission evangelism, youth camps and so forth. And we help them use this event to inspire their congregations and build unity among area pastors to reach the lost in the community." Gage added, "We spend time helping churches develop a follow-up program to invite, engage and disciple those who make decisions."

Andrews was reflective but joyful on the close of the Plainview crusade and the beginning of the follow up campaign.

"There was some doubt among community leaders when we first rolled out the idea of an area-wide crusade," Andrews said of the outreach at Plainview High School's Greg Sherwood Memorial Bulldog Stadium. "It was a little discouraging, but the words of that Hispanic 71-year-old man couldn't be more true.

"'Never close the door on God.'"

In Conroe, Gage closed the crusade by preaching: "Thank God for the shed blood of Jesus. Thank God for His redeeming power. Thank God He is the God of the second chance. Thank God He is the God of salvation. Thank God He wants to bring victory and freedom into your heart."

"I need Jesus," one young man shared with a counselor during Gage's invitation time. "I go to church, but I have not been living for Him. I'm afraid to die because I know I don't know him."

Jay Gross, pastor of West Conroe Baptist Church and one of six local pastors at the forefront of the crusade, said it "brought the Gospel of Christ to the forefront of the county's attention, created an unprecedented unity among churches across a diverse denominational spectrum and made tremendous inroads into area schools through a powerful assembly program," he said.

"Now in the follow-up phase, the Montgomery County GO TELL Crusade is proving to be a spiritual harvest that will continue to bear fruit in the months to follow," Gross said.

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Compiled from reports from the Plainview and Montgomery County (Texas) GO TELL crusades.

GO TELL Ministries is on the Web at [www.gotellministries.com](http://www.gotellministries.com).