

More than 1,100 make spiritual decisions for Christ at Southeast Georgia GO TELL Crusade with Rick Gage

By Tina Kicklighter

WAYCROSS, Ga. (April 29, 2009) –There's a reason people refer to evangelist Rick Gage as "the Small Town Billy Graham." His Southeast Georgia Go Tell crusade on April 19-22 at Waycross Memorial Stadium drew more than 16,000 and resulted in 1,140 spiritual decisions for Christ with 673 salvations, 374 rededications and 93 other decisions. The event also featured Rick Stanley, stepbrother of the late Elvis Presley, and Dr. James Merritt, host of Touching Lives international broadcast ministries and founder and senior pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Georgia.



"The Bible says that when one sinner comes to Christ, all of heaven rejoices. I know that this crusade made our Savior proud," said Jerry Weathersby, chairman of Gage's Waycross crusade. "We spent more than a year organizing and praying that God would bring a revival to our area. Clearly, He heard us and responded in a big way."

Crusade plans began in October 2007 when event co-chair Bill Bryson recruited several local businessmen who prayed that God would remove denominational and racial barriers and bring a major revival. "God honored our prayers. It was a complete team effort for Jesus

Christ. People forgot religion and banded together to see souls won," he said.

The final night of the crusade – Youth Night – drew more than 7,500 and resulted in 564 spiritual decisions. The evening also featured a mini-concert with the Oswald Brothers, third place winners of CBS's "Singing Family Face-Off" on *The Early Show*. Each night, the Go Tell crusade also featured worship leader Chuck Sullivan and musical guest artist Joy Fowler of Atlanta.

"I watched masses of people going forward on that final night. I have never witnessed anything like it – it was one of the most amazing moments of my life," said Len Knowlton, who served as a counselor at the event. "As long as I live, I will never forget it."

Gage and his crusade team also addressed approximately 6,000 students through assembly programs at area high schools and middle schools in five counties. The crusade team also visited inmates at the Youth Detention Center at Ware State Prison, where several inmates received Christ as their Savior. The event kicked off on Friday evening with a youth service at the Brunel Street Church of God and Gage preached on Sunday morning at Sweat Memorial Baptist Church.



"The crusade team's mission was to get out into the community and touch as many lives as possible and share the Gospel with them," said Gage. "No one rested until the stadium lights went down at about 1 a.m. on that final evening."

According to co-chair Bryson, young people accounted for about half of the salvations and the oldest person saved at the crusade was 90 years old. He also cited a wheelchair-bound 76-year-old man who kept asking for someone to help him to get down to the grassy area on the field during the altar call. "Finally, someone heard him and helped wheel him down. He said that if no one had heard him, he was going to dump himself out of his chair and crawl forward," said Bryson.

Other testimonies included a 32-year-old woman who was depressed because her husband had left her. A friend invited her to attend the final night of the crusade. "She was saved at the crusade and later

admitted that she had planned to kill herself that night. God transformed her life and within days her husband came back," said Bryson. "A teenage boy had also planned to kill himself on that same night. A friend invited him to the crusade and he was saved as well."

Bryson says that several marriages were also reconciled during the event and that three people who had signed up as counselors were saved during the crusade, along with two church elders.



"Now the real work begins," said Gage. "All participating churches will spend the next several weeks following up on those who made decisions during the crusade, helping new Christians find church homes and providing spiritual leadership to everyone who made a decision for Christ."

For more than a decade, Gage – a former college football coach turned evangelist – has filled high school football stadiums with crusades in small communities throughout America. Using Billy Graham's strategy, local churches team to help organize the events and provide follow-up ministry. Fifty-two area

churches were involved with the Southeast Georgia crusade.

In addition to his crusades, Gage has a summer camp ministry for high school and middle school students. Over the past 20 years, his camps in Colorado, Georgia, Florida, New Mexico, Kentucky, Texas and Virginia have trained more than 85,000 teens and leaders in evangelism.

For more details on Rick Gage's Go Tell Ministries, visit www.gotellministries.com. For information on the Waycross crusade, call (912) 490-0144.

Read the Florida-Times Union's coverage of the crusade [here](#).