

SOS San Francisco Annual Outreach – 2008 Outreach Report

Dear Christian friends,

For the past few years, God has been speaking to us that we need to involve more youth groups in our evangelism outreaches. I was saved when I was 24 and immediately started witnessing on the streets. I am now 62. The others in our ministry house are 40-64 years old. We need younger believers to get involved in evangelism—to reach a new generation and to continue this work of evangelizing San Francisco and Berkeley.

This year, for the first time, most of the participants of SOS-San Francisco were high-school aged. On July 4-5, a week before the outreach, a high school choir with 33 students from River Park Bible Church in Fresno ministered with us at Fisherman's Wharf on July 4 and at UN Plaza on July 5. On July 8, a team of about 25 junior high youth witnessed with us at UN Plaza. After some evangelism training, we gave out 200 lunches to street people and shared the gospel with many homeless people.

Our 29th annual SOS-San Francisco outreach began on Friday July 11. A team of 10 youth joined us from Christian Life Assembly of Payson, Utah. It was the third year this church had sent a team to minister with us. Another team of 20 youth joined us from Calvary Chapel, San Jose, CA. And on Thursday a youth worship band joined us from Church of the Valley, San Martin, CA.

On Friday night, we sent our first team to 16th St. and Valencia. Three minutes after they began preaching, a police officer ordered them to shut down. This was not a good way to begin the outreach! The team moved a block away to 16th St. and Mission. There, they had many good conversations and preached without any interference by the police. Jeff King witnessed to Matthew for about one hour. Matthew was very receptive and saw that his sin was serious and he needed a savior. He was not quite ready to commit his life to Christ. Larry Perez witnessed to an Hispanic man. He translated a tract into Spanish for him and later prayed with him to receive Christ.

On Saturday afternoon, we had two outdoor outreaches – at Justin Herman Plaza and at Union Square. Chuck Girard, Tim Moon, Mark Whitehead and Paul and Noreen Coca ministered at Justin Herman Plaza. Vertical Call's worship band and the Utah drama group ministered at Union Square. Many people gathered to hear the music and watch the drama. The crowd was one of the most receptive I have ever seen at Union Square. Most of the people wanted one of our gospel tracts. Wendy witnessed to Josh, who said he wanted to become a Christian but didn't know how.

That night, the team ministered at Powell and Market. Craig witnessed to three Jews that night. One of them, a professional dancer, got very angry at the youth group's skits. She started cursing and tried to walk away, but kept coming back. As Craig witnessed to her, she calmed down and listened to him. Destiny witnessed to a Buddhist man who was taking pictures of the drama. He asked her if she had ever seen a miracle. She shared her testimony of how God healed her of multiple fractures in her knees.

This year, the Port Commission has set up a new system by which street performers can schedule events at Fisherman's Wharf. This system worked very well for us, allowing us to minister with a PA system from 1-9 PM on Monday and Thursday. This is the height of the tourist season, and we witnessed to tens of thousands of people from many nations each day. On Monday, Frank witnessed to Sebastian, a young man who said he was on his way to India on a spiritual journey. Terry met a couple from Taiwan who were saved several years ago by a street preacher at Fisherman's Wharf. They returned with their children, in the hope that they would have the same experience!

On Tuesday and Friday afternoons, we witnessed in Berkeley. Loretta witnessed to Emani, a 20-year-old student at UC Santa Cruz who was raised in an Oakland ghetto. He had never before heard the gospel and said he would talk to God when he got home. Loretta also witnessed to Ahmed from Morocco and Roosevelt, a homeless man whose wife left with his son. Jeff witnessed to Sean, who claimed to be a Christian but didn't know if he was saved. Jessi witnessed to Arianna, an Israeli college student who was a psychology major. She had never before heard the gospel, and was quite receptive. On Tuesday night, we again witnessed at 16th St. and Mission. Craig prayed with a young gang member to receive Christ. Jeff witnessed to Matthias, a former Jehovah's Witness who had a lot of questions about Christ.

On Saturday afternoon July 19, we concluded our outreach at United Nations Plaza. Last Days Harvest Church from Sacramento ministered that afternoon. Many people stood around listening to the music and preaching all afternoon.

The Berkeley Daily Planet issue that week featured an article about us: "Telegraph Merchants Petition Against Amplified Preaching." A petition was submitted to City Hall in attempt to deny us permits on the street. The petition complained that "We, as locals, are insulted...by the message coming from these folks that we, as a community, are somehow in need of 'saving.'" While city officials deny that they would regulate our message, they are planning to change the Berkeley noise ordinance on September 16. Please pray that this new ordinance will not be designed in such a way as to make our outreaches in Berkeley difficult or impossible.

We were greatly blessed by everyone who joined us for this year's SOS-San Francisco outreach. Please pray for all those who heard the gospel this week. Pray that many would be saved. Please pray also for our workers, especially the youth, that God would speak to them about committing their lives to preaching the gospel. Pray that God would call some of them to join our ministry.