

## **Newsletter Teaching for 8-15-07**

### **God's Presence in Sturgis**

As bikers moved through the free bike wash in Sturgis, SD, most of them received prayer three to four times before they left the parking lot. Many would linger for extended periods of time, not entirely sure what was keeping them from leaving.

But one biker knew, and he said it out loud: "The Spirit of God is so powerful here that I don't want to leave."

The bikers were experiencing a true movement of God's hand. In past years, this outreach has witnessed perhaps one or two people coming to faith in Christ. But within just over 24 hours of ministry on the bike wash parking lot, 30 people had given their lives to Jesus Christ. By the week's end more than 75 bikers experienced the power of salvation. Besides the first-time decisions, many people were being touched by the healing power of prayers being offered over them.

Why was this year so different from past years? One of the leaders, Steve Uggen of Minneapolis, has no doubt about the answer. ***In part, the Holy Spirit was so present because of the prayers of repentance that had been offered beforehand.***

### **Consecrating Themselves Beforehand**

This world-renowned bike rally in the tiny town of Sturgis draws nearly a half-million bikers each year, many of them living in outrageous rebellion toward God. But those who entered the free bike-washing parking lot were confronted with the love of Christ—and many of them found their hardened hearts softened to the point of actually hugging the ministry volunteers! The bikers themselves were surprised by the powerful manifestation of God's presence—some of them asking why they were feeling "goose bumps" when they entered the parking lot, in spite of the 90 degrees-plus temperature.

The ministry participants had made personal repentance their priority before they even stepped onto the parking lot, and God responded by filling them with unusual boldness and Spirit-led prayers as they ministered to the bikers. For weeks beforehand, and especially the weekend before, the bike wash volunteers spent considerable time seeking the face of God, allowing Him to search out strongholds of sin and unforgiveness in their own lives.

In addition, the presence of God was invited by the continuous 24/7 prayer and worship that continued during the week. Intercessors were recruited from around the country to provide prayer covering. *The Lord was making it abundantly clear that prayer and repentance were the keys to releasing a powerful movement of the Spirit through the volunteers.*

### **Hardened Hearts Being Softened**

As the bikers moved through the different stations of the free wash, they were offered a Bible, a CD with faith testimonies of the volunteers, glasses of water, and free hot dogs. Some received free shoe/boot shines, which allowed 15 to 20 minutes of one-on-one time to converse with a volunteer. Many bikers experienced a breaking down of hardened hearts as they began to share their hurts and tell their life stories to people who took the time to listen.

Prior to the outreach event, the Lord spoke to the organizers and reminded them that salvation was the work of *His* hand. He admonished the believers to walk in the faith that if they prayed for Christ to reveal Himself to the bikers, the Lord would honor that prayer. The volunteers saw that promise fulfilled over and over again throughout the four days of ministry.

### **Covered by Intercessors**

This outreach had unprecedented prayer covering this year. Organizers took unusual initiative to ensure that intercessors were fully engaged with them before and during the event. Several corporate prayer times were held for the volunteers prior to leaving for Sturgis, as well as a phone conference prayer time hosted by Prayer Transformation Ministries during the event.

Some 20 intercessors joined in a phone conference call that included a live report from volunteers in Sturgis. Steve Uggen relayed to intercessors that *God had impressed on the ministry volunteers a great sense of urgency. With only four days to minister to bikers, they were praying for boldness in Spirit to reach every person that God was trying to call into the Kingdom.* Intercessors from around the country joined in heart and spirit with the work that God was doing through a handful of believers in Sturgis.

### **Lessons in Prayer**

Even the apostles needed prayer for boldness to share the gospel. After Peter and John were arrested and threatened for proclaiming Jesus Christ, they returned to the other believers and implored them to pray. Rather than back down from the threats, they cried out for power to continue walking in boldness:

*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. (Acts 4:29-30).*

The Apostle Paul was someone who seemed to live above fear after being beaten, whipped, shipwrecked, jailed, and physically confronted many times for speaking the truth of the gospel. Yet he, too, was in desperate need of being filled and sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit:

*Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should (Ephesians 6:19-20).*

There are lessons we can learn from the early believers, as well as the courageous believers who ventured into the opposing culture of the Sturgis bike rally! Apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelism falls flat. Apart from desperately seeking God, walking in holy lives, and allowing our lives to be vessels of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not see the dramatic demonstrations of God's power.

But when ordinary people submit themselves to the extraordinary power of God, the heavens are opened and the blessings of God are poured out.

*(For more stories of the transforming power of God, check out a new feature on the PTM website as we seek to post stories to encourage and inform you. Go to <http://www.prayertransformation.com/stories.html> to read stories or hear audio clips.)*