

# "Somebody Loves You" Festival in Los Mochis



Tears streaked the face of a Los Mochis, Mexico, police officer. The young man, drawn to the message of the cross, did not go forward to respond. He watched hundreds of people walk past him towards the stage ready to turn from their past and receive a new life in Jesus Christ. He was overcome with emotion, yet he stayed where he was. He was on duty, and duty came first.



*Pastor sings to kids selected from the audience to participate*



*The Stadium and Soccer field of Los Mochis.*

As the crowd dwindled, Joel and Jenny Abel, who attend the pastoral school at CC Golden Springs, approached the officers and asked if they had heard the message given by Pastor Raul Ries. The young officer and 20 of his comrades had been listening and were ready to pray for their salvation. By the time the Festival ended, more than 100 of the 120 Los Mochis policemen on duty had come to Christ.





## A LIFE CHANGING MESSAGE

"Throughout the world, people enjoy the bountiful blessings of both land and sea from Los Mochis," began Pastor Bob Grenier, CC Visalia, California. Emcee for all three nights of the "Somebody Loves You" Festival, he addressed the crowd of over 10,000, the largest ever in attendance at the stadium.

"Tonight, we have come here to bring something to the people of Los Mochis. It is the life changing message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Pastor Raul gave his wife, Sharon, an enthusiastic 'thumbs up' before climbing to the stage on opening night. Following a moving performance by well-known Latin singers, Yuri and Rabito, Pastor Raul delivered a compelling, dynamic message, interwoven with his personal testimony. Waves of people streamed forward as the invitation was given to make a decision for Jesus Christ.



*Raul gives his wife Sharon an enthusiastic "Thumbs*

## THE ANGELS IN HEAVEN REJOICE

In the crowd was baseball legend Ozzie Smith, a former shortstop and possible Hall of Fame inductee for the St. Louis Cardinals. Ozzie accepted Christ on that first Friday.



*A Salute to the National Anthem.*

In the Mexican culture, class status is strictly observed, and people tend not to associate with those from a different class. But the multitude that was drawn to the field to receive salvation each evening of the Festival stood side-by-side, all equal and equally in need of God's forgiveness and redemption. From a population of 350,000 in Los Mochis, over 30,000 turned out for the "Somebody Loves You" outreach, and 3,775 people were saved!

Another baseball great in attendance was Benjamin "Papi" Valenzuela. "Papi" played third base for the San Francisco Giants in the 1950s and was the first player to be inducted into the Mexican Baseball Hall of Fame. He has long been recognized and revered in the Los Mochis area and has even coached the Los Mochis Caneros. He, too, went forward and made a public confession for Christ as his personal Savior. With all his trademark fervor and congeniality, "Papi" moved throughout the city, telling everyone he met about the crusade. "The people are happy, very happy you have come," he told the volunteers who had come from the United States.



*Joaquin Anzu ministering to the Los Mochis Police Officers.*



*A tender moment receiving the Lord.*

"Nothing like this has ever happened in Los Mochis," commented local resident Omar Ballerjo. "The churches and the Christian people felt they were small and weak. "Somebody Loves You" has brought the Christian community together and given us strength. God is working in Los Mochis and really cares for the people of this town."

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Looking back, it is striking to see how mightily the hand of the Lord moved to make the Festival a reality, beginning with

businessman Al Rosario's involvement. Al Rosario travels around the world, servicing accounts from Disneyland to Japan. He has always loved listening to Raul Ries teach on the radio. In 1998, he met Pastor Raul and caught a vision to reach the world for Christ. And he wanted to begin with the people of Los Mochis. Al and his business partner, Eddie Martinez, who have since become crusade consultants, introduced Pastor Raul to President C. Esteban Valenzuela Garcia of the municipality of Los Mochis. Following that meeting, the city of Los Mochis opened its arms to host the

"Somebody Loves You" Festival during the weekend of February 16, 2001.

God then called the Calvary Chapels of Visalia, Tucson, and Costa Mesa to participate. They joined Raul Ries' church in Golden Springs in sending over 140 volunteers from the States to join nearly 400 volunteers from Los Mochis to prepare for and serve during the Festival.

Volunteers worked tirelessly to insert new believers' information in over 5,000 Bibles, to hang hundreds of posters announcing the Festival throughout the town, and to hand out 200,000 fliers, sharing Christ with the public. One team went to a high school and was escorted into the auditorium during the school's Valentine's Day assembly to speak about the crusade.

God even expanded the team's territory of ministry during the week of preparation. A persistent request for someone to come and speak came in from the town of Ejido Rosales. Youth pastor Mike Buford



*Youth Pastor, Mike Buford, reaches new heights to display posters for the festival.*





"Papi" Valenzuela interacts, invites people visiting relatives at the prison.



Robert Rodriguez, the technical coordinator, interacts with Pastor Raul and Al Rosario.



Ozzie Smith is in for an object lesson given by Raul.



The setup & Sound crew pray before the evening's event.

and a group of volunteers from CC Visalia traveled in faith to Ejido Rosales to minister there. They showed Raul Ries' movie, "Fury to Freedom," to a large gathering of townspeople. At the conclusion of the film, Mike called on the grace of God as he invited those present to accept Christ as their Savior. Several children, and even

the most down-and-out man in the town, came forward to accept a new life in Jesus Christ, reminding Mike that our God is a God of love and mercy who works mightily through broken and imperfect vessels to gather up His lost sheep.

#### WHERE IT GOES FROM HERE

Over 40 local churches will follow up with the 3,775 new believers. Pastor Raul, touched by the response to the crusade, continues to train the pastors of Los Mochis. He commissioned three Spanish pastors, Pastor Jose Carrasco from Chile, Pastor Jesse Barela, and Pastor Larry

Grigsby and pastoral student Joaquim Anzu from Calvary Chapel Golden Springs to organize a Pastors' Conference. The theme of the two-day conference was "Faithfulness to the Divine Command," from the book of I Timothy. Forty-five pastors attended. Each pastor was given study materials, including *Halley's Bible Handbook, Second* by Pastor Romaine, and *Why Grace Changes Everything* and *The Philosophy of Ministry* by Pastor Chuck Smith.

Even though the initial excitement from the "Somebody Loves You" Festival has come and gone, Pastor Raul's prayer is that this new body of believers in Los Mochis, Mexico, will continue to multiply and always rejoice in how much the Lord loves them.

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The Spirit moves during the Crusade.