

More Than GOLD

Speak the Truth in Love

Story and photos by Tom Price



Assistant Pastor Michael Hunter, right, CC Salt Lake, reasons with a man about his severe method of witnessing to the Mormons. Mike was a Mormon before coming to Christ.



The Olympics provided an opportunity for Assistant Pastor Mike Hunter and the Calvary Chapel Salt Lake congregation to minister to people's spiritual needs.

The 2002 Olympic Games attracted many religious groups. Some were Christians, sharing in love...others were harsh in their approach.



A man preaches at Olympic visitors in front of the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City. His words elicited confrontations.



The CC Salt Lake youth drama team pantomimes the freedom found in Christ to visitors heading to different Olympic events.



Kim Uttley, CC Salt Lake's Children's Ministry director, captivated young and old alike as she made and gave away balloon figures. Meanwhile, outreach teams ministered to parents.



A man dressed in American colors confronts a Mormon about his beliefs in an accusatory manner.

But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

James 3: 8-9

A man was preaching damnation through a bullhorn from his perch in front of the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah. Michael Hunter, assistant pastor of Calvary Chapel Salt Lake, waited patiently for the man to pause. Mike embraces Calvary Chapel's less confrontational approach to evangelism.

"This is what the Latter-day Saints call their New Jerusalem, the New Zion," the man with the bullhorn screamed, gesturing toward the temple that was attracting a crowd of Olympic tourists. "Don't go into their temple of doom and be swept away by their lies!"

"Hi, brother," Mike said to the man, "I'm a pastor at a Christian church and a former Mormon, before coming to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Our church agrees with your message, but I'd like to ask how effective you really think this method of presenting the Gospel is?"

The man looked down at Michael with disdain. "You need to grow a backbone for Jesus and stop hiding behind His skirt. I'm the cruel messenger of Proverbs 17:11."

Michael ignored his comment and continued, "After you go back home, the Christian community here is left with a lot of people that aren't in any mood to listen. " Many Christian groups had journeyed to Salt Lake City to minister to those at the Olympics. The approaches taken were as varied as the groups. Some were confrontational, while others chose to reach out with love and compassion.

Kim Uttley, CC Salt Lake's Children's Ministry director, captivated young and old alike as she shaped playful figures from balloons and gave them away. Her balloons opened the door to share the Gospel with families.. Music also attracted Olympic spectators between events. Christian bands, invited to entertain by John Gotz, CCSLC's youth pastor, were able to evangelize through their lyrics. Kim and John gained access to the

Olympic forum through More Than Gold (MTG), an evangelical sports outreach ministry. Officially sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee, it places the message of Christ and the cross above the commercialism of the games. Church volunteers handed out multicolored pins that illustrate the Gospel message and booklets that share testimonies of Olympic athletes.

"...in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:25-26



Inset: Vonetta Flowers, left, and Jill Bakken celebrate their victory in the bobsled competition. Vonetta, the first African-American to win a gold medal at the Winter Games, is a born again Christian and used the opportunity to glorify Christ in her TV interviews.

An American team races down the track at speeds over 80 miles per hour.



With the Mormon Temple behind them, Assistant Pastor Mike Hunter, left, CC Salt Lake, prays with a man about his relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reaching Mormons

Utah, the headquarters for the Mormon faith, or Latter-day Saints (LDS), has the highest rate of anti-depressant prescription drug use in America, according to Assistant Pastor Mike Hunter, a former Mormon.

Provo, Utah, the site of Brigham Young University, weighs in with the highest per capita use of Prozac of any city in the nation. According to the State of Utah Office of Vital Records and Statistics (1999), Utah had the highest rate of adult female and teenage suicides in the nation.

Raised in Park City, Utah, Mike was a Mormon, like the rest of his family. While serving in the United States Air Force, he found himself surrounded by evangelical Christians who exhibited a passion unknown to him. Piqued by their scriptural defense of the Christian faith, Mike began to question the Mormon doctrine and study the Holy

Bible. As he read the Bible, he felt a peace he had never experienced as a Latter-day Saint. He convinced his wife, Chris, to leave the Mormon faith with him.

Chris tells of the depression she felt after leaving the Mormons. "I felt so betrayed by the Mormon leadership. Coming to grips with the false teachings that had governed

my life was very hurtful. Both our families go back many generations, to the settlement of Utah. But, ultimately, we gained the most important thing in life—a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Over half of the 1,500 Christians that call CC Salt Lake their home are former LDS. Because of his struggle with the experience,

Mike now leads a program that assists new believers with their transition into Christianity. "There's a lot to be admired with the Mormons—great family values, strong work ethics, and good morals. It's not the Latter-day Saints themselves, necessarily, but their doctrines, that are corrupt." ✨



Alison Long, left, wife of Pastor Terry, shares Gospel material in downtown Salt Lake City.



Rebecca Long, left, and Mercedes Gotz, both pastors' daughters, get a respite from the cold after performing skits at the Olympics.



Pastor Terry Long, right, John Gotz, center, pray with a believer at an outreach. John, CC Salt Lake youth pastor, coordinated the Christian musicians' performances during the Winter Games.