

YESSS

to Jesus



Pastor Pancho Juarez, CC Montebello, CA, shares a message of hope with thousands gathered at the YESSS Beach Festival.



Event volunteers wear "God Speaks...Are You Listening?" t-shirts as they greet beachgoers and hand out water bottles.

At Ocean Grove, New Jersey, thousands gathered to hear God's message of salvation through Jesus Christ during the YESSS Beach festival, sponsored by The BridgeFM, a radio outreach of CC Old Bridge and Cornerstone CC. Many came forward to say "Yes" to Jesus.

*story by Carol Eskaros
photos courtesy of BridgeFM*



Elders from CC Old Bridge baptize a young boy at the end of the festival.

“God Speaks...Are you listening?”

The words were emblazoned on the banners, tents, and t-shirts that dotted the beach in the early morning of Saturday, July 16, 2005, as crowds began to gather in Ocean Grove, NJ, for the annual YESSS (Youth Experience Surf, Sand, and Salvation) Beach Festival.

Co-sponsored by The BridgeFM and the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, the YESSS Beach Festival gave local beachgoers and radio listeners throughout the tri-state area the opportunity to hear and meet CC pastors and worship leaders heard on The Bridge.



“One resident of Ocean Grove remarked that he’s lived there 20 years and had never seen such a thing—a huge event where there was such a sense of family and where people actually cared enough about the locals to clean up after themselves. The whole event just left this great impression on everyone involved.”

Pastor Lloyd Pulley



Pastor Lance Cook, CC La Habra, CA, exhorts dozens who gathered early in the morning for surfing instruction with Christian Surfers Jersey Shore.

The festival kicked off at 7:00 a.m. with a clinic sponsored by Christian Surfers Jersey Shore. Hundreds gathered under overcast skies to catch waves, learn surfing basics, and gain some encouragement by former surf shop owner turned pastor, Lance Cook, CC La Habra, CA.

Lance addressed the growing crowds on the beach, exhorting them to give people not just what they need outwardly, but what they need inwardly—the Gospel. When asked by the Herald News why outreaches like these are important, Lance explained, “If you look at the Word of God, the Gospel message is one that’s designed to go out. I think there’s a mindset in Christianity today that people are going to be naturally drawn to us, they’re going to come to us, but if you



One woman weeps as she receives the Lord and is comforted by a member of CC Old Bridge following Pancho’s invitation to come to Christ.

look at the Great Commission, the whole spirit of that message was, in its design and origin, to take in and then carry out.”

“To expect them just to walk in—we’re not fulfilling the Great Commission. We’ve got

to go to them. People love the beach; so let’s go to the beach. Let’s let them see the love of Jesus Christ within us.”

One beachgoer, Donna Parry, and her daughter, Ann Marie, both of Wallington,

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Pastor Lance Cook



The Paul Rodriguez Band and CROWND lead beachgoers in worship.



Thousands gather to hear God's Word on the beach at the YESSS Beach Festival.



"We were blessed as we witnessed the magnitude of the radio station's impact on the entire New York and New Jersey area. Equally impressive was the fact that it was raining hard in many places in New Jersey, except for one clear patch that hung over the outreach. It seemed that the Lord kept back the rain all day."

Pastor Chris McCarrick

NJ, came out early to catch the waves with Christian Surfers. Donna, who suffers from multiple sclerosis, was thrilled to have gotten up on a surfboard.

A ministry of CC Old Bridge (CCOB) and Cornerstone CC, The BridgeFM conducted giveaways and broadcasted live from the beach throughout the day. Beachgoers enjoyed inflatable games, volleyball tournaments, activities, and refreshments. They were encouraged to go to the cross, a permanent fixture on the beach at Ocean Grove where pastors and elders were available for those who needed prayer. Members of the First Baptist Church of Hackensack, NJ, attend the YESSS Festival every year. When asked what they were looking forward to the most, one member of the church group said, "Just to have fun and relax and praise the Lord."

Beachgoers were seen standing in worship, enjoying fellowship, and tossing Frisbees, while musicians like Thomas Mack, of Michigan, who was touring with his worship team, *Heartsong*, led audiences in wor-

ship. Of his first East Coast beach outreach, Thomas said, "I was totally taken in by the people serving each other at the event, as the body of Christ is called to do. Since the world rarely sees this, I think it stood out to the unsuspecting beachgoers who stumbled upon the event."

In addition to Thomas Mack, others who led worship throughout the day included Mike McCarrick, Cornerstone CC, and Chris Rypkema, of CCOB. Pastors Chris McCarrick and Lloyd Pulley also shared with the growing crowds from God's Word.

Lloyd was particularly blessed by the outreach. "I was blown away not only by the crowds that came out, but also by the servants. Christians from various churches, all wearing these blue shirts with 'God Speaks... Are You Listening?' on them, serving each other, praying with people. One resident of Ocean Grove remarked that he's lived there 20 years and had never seen such a thing—a huge event where there was such a sense of family and where people actually cared enough about the locals to clean up after

themselves. The whole event just left this great impression on everyone involved."

Chris McCarrick, Cornerstone CC, was amazed by the number of people in attendance who had learned of the outreach through the radio station. "We were blessed as we witnessed the magnitude of the radio station's impact on the New York and New Jersey area," he said. The crowd was estimated at 3,500. "Equally impressive was the fact that it was raining hard in many places in New Jersey, except for one clear patch that hung over the outreach. It seemed that the Lord kept back the rain all day."

Participants were encouraged to gather closer to the stage as the evening's worship service was about to begin. Pastor Pete Episcopo, CC Crossfields, Plainsboro, NJ, led worship, and Pastor Pancho Juarez, CC Montebello, CA, shared a message of hope and encouragement in Jesus. Dozens came forward to receive the Lord. Many more lined up to be baptized in the ocean at the end of the day's events.



Children, along with adults, receive the Lord after Pancho's invitation.

Reverend Allan Brooks, who invited The Bridge to participate in YESSS, said of the day, "The beach festival was awesome! I felt from the surfing group—as well as throughout the whole day—that the witness, the testimony, and the teaching were the strongest we have ever had." ☺

BridgeFM—New York City **103.1 FM**
Monmouth **89.7 FM**
Sullivan County, NY **99.7 FM**

Calvary Chapel Old Bridge
732-679-9570
www.ccob.org

The BridgeFM
732-901-9953
www.bridgefm.org



One man rejoices after being baptized following the YESSS Festival.

"I was totally taken in by the people serving each other at the event, as the body of Christ is called to do."

Thomas Mack