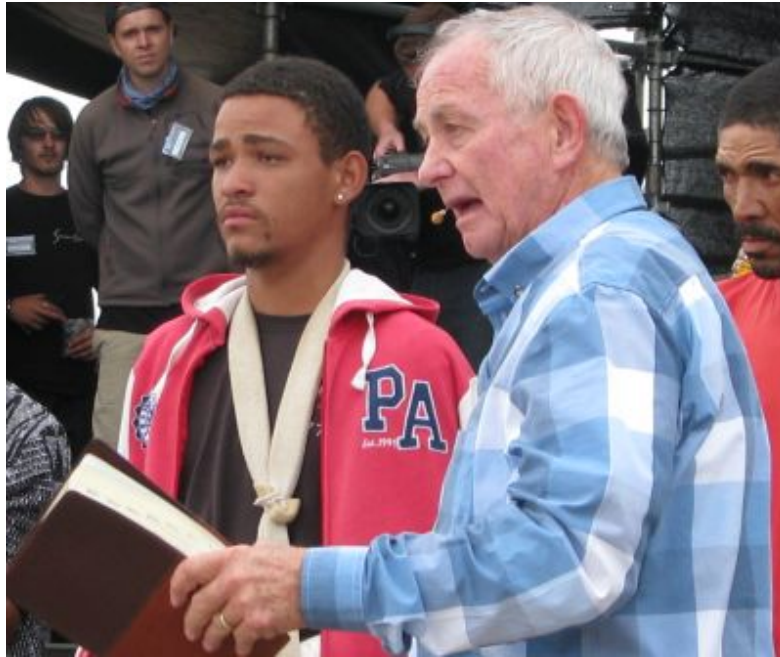


Mitchells Plain gang leaders being followed-up after extraordinary It's Time



Angus Buchan gives his Bible to one of a group of gangsters who responded to an alarar call at It's Time Cape Town on Saturday.

Saturday was an extraordinary day as possibly the biggest crowd ever seen at an event in Cape Town gathered to pray on an open space in Mitchells Plain.

The peace of God was tangible at the Swartklip Sports Ground prayer venue and on the surrounding streets which are notorious for gang violence and where people had predicted there would be trouble as there had been at other events at the same venue.

And, in one of many signs of God's goodness and favour on the day, soft rain began to fall as the crowd began to worship – to be followed by several more gentle showers that were

appreciated in the drought-stricken area.

But the most extraordinary scene of all began when farmer evangelist Angus Buchan, who led the prayer time, called on gang leaders present to come to the front to “exchange that gun for a Bible”.

Call to gang leaders

There was a nervous hush as Buchan repeated the unusual altar call after leading the crowd estimated at more than 150 000 in a prayer of salvation. As the worship team sang Buchan continued to urge gang leaders to come forward. At last one man came forward – then another – and another – until about a dozen men, and two older women – one a Christian worker and the other a mother of one of the men – stood in front of the platform.

Descending from the platform to stand with the gang leaders, Buchan said he was going to do what God had showed him in a dream. He said the Lord had impressed on him that the gang leaders were leaders – they were just going in the wrong direction – and that He wanted to use them in His kingdom.

He told the men that he wanted to give them something because he wanted to show them that they were loved by God, by those present at the It's Time prayer event, and by South Africa.



A woman hugs one of the gang leaders who had earlier responded to Angus Buchan's altar call and been given the evangelist's cowboy hat.

He then gave his trademark stetson to one of the young men, saying: "From today onwards you are going to be a leader for Jesus – I want you to have my hat."

Special Bible

"You are going to be a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ," he said to another of the young men as he gave him his "very special Bible given to me by my family".

Buchan gave his jacket, checked shirt and boots to other young gang leaders before returning to the platform to lead prayers for Cape Town, the Western Cape and South Africa in his jeans, white t-shirt and socks.

"Those men are a representation of many others but I am believing the Church will get around them and rehabilitate them, he said from the stage.

One of the first members of the Church to rise to the challenge of following up the repentant gang leaders is Ashley Potts, director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, who Buchan refers to as his "Macedonian man" because of his role

in his conviction that God wanted the It's Time prayer event to be held at Mitchells Plain. Buchan selected the venue after reading Potts's testimony in a Scripture Union booklet.

"It has been a real honour and quite daunting," Potts, who grew up in Mitchells Plain, said in a telephone interview today.

"I wrote the testimony, not expecting such a response but God had his plan and purposes worked out in advance."



Ashley Potts, director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre.

He said although his testimony was brief, Buchan had caught the heart of what he was saying – and heard “the cry of a young man who grew up in the community, and who believes in this community.”

Last night he visited two of the young men who had responded to Buchan's altar call and he was meeting another tomorrow afternoon. The men's names were not captured at the time, so he was tracking them down with the help of the community, he said.

He said he spent an hour with the two men and their mother last night and was surprised by they way they spoke.

“They had already done lot of things I was coming in to suggest to them,” he said.

Changed hearts

The young man who had been given Buchan’s Bible had gone to his fellow gang members and told them that Jesus had done something in his heart. When they told him to forget those ideas he persisted in telling them that Jesus loved them

“It was beautiful to witness how God has already transformed his heart and way of doing things,” he said.

However Potts said his hope was to give the men an opportunity to gain some stability in their faith before they were called to share their testimonies and talk about their experience.

“If I had my way I would rather they just silently grow in the faith through close mentorship and get involved in the church and gain stability and faith,” he said.

He also said he would be talking to leaders of various gangs and of the Firm, the coalition of gangs, to ask them to allow the church to walk the road with the new converts.

“You don’t just leave a gang and walk away. That’s suicide,” he said.

He said it was also necessary to get the buy-in of members of the community so that the discipling of the young men was not undermined by negative words and attitudes.

“Let’s trust that God will transform the community through them [the young men],” he said.

Buchan told Gateway News yesterday that It’s Time Cape Town had been one of the most moving events that he has been part of in 39 years of preaching the Gospel.

He said several days after the event he was still feeling surreal – “like walking on the water”. He said he had

experienced the power of the Holy Spirit and the wind of revival blowing.

He said they planned to put up huge billboard at three entrances to Mitchells Plain with possibly a picture of a sunflower and the words "The Flower of Cape Town" – a reference to a word he shared at It's Time about a name God had given him for Mitchells Plain.