



Nancy & Lloyd Greenhaw

Witness

The Year of the Youth in Samoa

Archbishop Alapati declared 2007 to be the year of the youth. This past February he asked our team to go to Upola and Savaii, Samoa’s two large islands, to hold programs for the youth. He has also asked us to come back to Samoa to prepare the youth for World Youth Day in Australia next year, and it will be a great opportunity to teach them street evangelization techniques and lead them closer to Jesus. These young people are strikingly innocent and sincere and it seems they came to these meetings because they want more for their lives and knowing Jesus is the only way they will get it.

Each morning and evening in Savaii we conducted a Youth Rally in a different parish church. Because of the cost of transportation for the kids, they brought at least three or four parishes to centrally located parishes on all sides of the island. By doing it this way we had hundreds of youth at each of the four venues where we ministered. The concluding Rally and Mass at Safotulafai in Fusi began with a procession, representing many parishes. At least 200 youth and adults walked about a mile to the church from one side of the island, and at least that many came from the other side, both meeting at the church simultaneously. One morning we also had a three hour meeting with deacons, catechists, and their wives. Many had come to our meetings on our prior visits and it was great to hear what had transpired since we had last seen them.

Although the events were primarily youth

rallies, we never really knew what ages would attend until the event began. Most were ages 14-18, with many young adults there as well. One evening at Vailoa Parish with Fr. Nimo, the majority of the kids were around twelve and younger. The kids enjoyed Kristin Taylor’s music; she has recorded several songs in the Samoan language. I sang several songs with hand motions and Greg Trainor taught the basic Gospel message using colors that were glued onto the cover of his bible—gold for heaven, white for purity, red for the Blood of Jesus, black for sin and green for new life. The kids loved it and it was a message they could remember.

Throughout the youth rallies our theme was the importance of personally accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. As Lloyd would say, “God don’t have any grandchildren, only children! Your mother can’t say yes for you. Your grandmother, no matter how holy, can’t say yes for you.” Everyone, young and old, must accept Jesus for themselves, and no one can make that decision for them.

We spent five nights on the island of Savaii and then it was time to get back to Apia. We had the opportunity to talk at some high schools which are called colleges in Samoa. We sang with them, preached the Gospel message, and led them through a prayer of repentance and commitment to the Lord. Lloyd began by rapping for the kids, which totally surprised and delighted them. He spoke to the young men at Don Bosco College about the true meaning of manhood and challenged them to be warriors for Christ. There was a great roar as the hundreds of young men together promised God that they would fight for His Kingdom.

The next day we had three more rallies at all girls’ schools and there were at least 1500 students and their teachers present. For sheer excitement, you can’t beat several hundred young women yelling for Jesus! These beautiful young women were contending with many difficulties in their homes, such as alcoholism and abuse, and they really responded to the love of God contained in our message.

The final FIRE Rally on the island of Upolu was in Apia with Archbishop Alapati. We all gathered at Vaisigano Bridge at 6:30 A.M. where we marched with the sound of the Archbishop’s own band to the tallest building in Upolu.

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Kristin (front middle) leads singing at Maria Fatima Catholic Church in Aua, American Samoa.

For the first time ever a Catholic Mass was said on the steps of the national Government Building. What a powerful witness! Lloyd had told the Archbishop that we must take the Church to the streets because those who really need the Gospel would never darken the doors of a Catholic Church otherwise. The music at the FIRE Rally really got the people up and moving, dancing and singing. Kristin shared her music, Lloyd and Greg preached as priests heard confessions on the steps leading up to the capitol, and I taught on the five keys of the *Unbound* method. It was a powerful day, culminating with a beautiful Mass. Because we were on the main street, on the steps of the government building, many people drifted into our crowd or sat for hours on the curb listening to the Gospel. For some, it may have been their only opportunity to hear the Truth. At one point the Bishop asked us and some of his priests to go and lay hands on the 1200 or so people under the open air tents. Many healings were reported and a large number of kids were inspired to ask Jesus into their heart for the first time.

The work we have done in planting, watering, and nurturing for the last few years is beginning to bear much fruit. We were told that the suicide rate among teens has dropped drastically from when we first came in 2004. I don't know if this is related to the programs we held at all the high schools, where we specifically addressed this issue and urged the youth to ask for help. Regardless, it was a real blessing to see hope on the faces of the youth, and to bring the peace that only Christ can give. Lives were changed and we are deeply honored to stand with and support Archbishop Alapati. +

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Lloyd Greenhaw preaches to students at Chanel College in Moama, Samoa.