

Palau Leads Historic Gospel Campaign in France

God's Word is breaking through in a country that Luis Palau says has resisted gospel preaching for hundreds of years—southern France.

Palau led an evangelistic campaign in southern France last week. The campaign, which targeted the cities of Istres, Aix-en-Provence and Marignane, ended with a three-day gospel festival on Marseille's crowded Plage du Prado beach. The festival reached 16,000 with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the first time a gospel event was allowed in an open venue.

"Small as it was by the numbers we are used to, I am so glad I came to southern France," Palau says. "The Lord used this campaign to open doors, to plant seeds, to establish relationships and to lead hundreds of people to Himself. There is nothing greater than that.

"In addition, because of the wonderful multiplier effect of mass media, we had the opportunity to reach many more people through the Internet, television and radio."

Strategy-wise, the Palau campaign rode on the tails of France's official Day of Music on June 21. The festival included special musical performances by guest artists from throughout France and the United Kingdom. The 73-member Salem Baptist Gospel Choir from Chicago was also on site.

Hundreds of individuals made public decisions for Jesus Christ in response to Palau's gospel proclamation that was given in Spanish and translated into French. According to local pastors and leaders, the events were groundbreaking for the region.

"This is historic for us in Provence," says Gilbert Leonian,

chairman of 1 Meme Couer, an organization made up of church leaders from throughout the region. "Never have we seen such open doors or had so many opportunities to openly share the gospel."

Several mayors from the surrounding area shared the same sentiments at a gathering later in the week, greeting Palau and the team enthusiastically and offering support in whatever way possible. The Mayor Adjoint of Marseille went on record saying, "We'll be behind you next year and every summer. We'll offer you the beach as many times as you wish."