

Dr. Frank Jacobs Memory

I started participating at the Easter Sunrise Services in 1976. I was the Music Director and featured soloist, and I did it every year up until the Stadium was closed after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. At the time, I was President/CEO of Miami Rescue Mission Ministries and I had been Minister of Music at the Allapattah Baptist Church in Miami.

It was a fantastic experience. What I remember was the uniqueness of the floating stage in the bay and having the Stadium filled with worshippers every Easter Sunday morning. The Basin would be filled with pleasure boats, the yachts just pulling up to the stage, sometimes 2-3 deep. It was an awesome experience when the sun started to rise over the Eastern Sky. It looked like it was coming right up over Biscayne Bay.

We had many international guests. One of the greatest was Corrie ten Boom; she was the daughter of a Dutch clockmaker. They used her home to hide the Jews from the Nazis. Ultimately, she and her family were incarcerated in Auschwitz and Corrie's father and sister were killed. My wife and I had the privilege of celebrating with Corrie on her 85th birthday the night before at the Biscayne Hotel. Corrie was delighted with her experience at the Marine Stadium. She said that it was one of the most beautiful and unique places she had ever spoken at-and by that time, Corrie had spoken all over the world.

Another memorable time was when we had Dr. Robert Schuller, the boxer George Foreman and the singer Norma Zimmer. Dr. Schuller was brought in by helicopter. He did his presentation, then was taken by helicopter to Miami Airport where he boarded a plane and made it back to California in time for the 11:00 AM Easter service at his Church. Norma Zimmer sang beautifully, and George Foreman gave his testimony of his time after his fight with Muhammed Ali in Zaire, when he almost died in the dressing room and gave his life over to the Lord.

Perhaps the most "controversial" speaker we had was Moishe Rosen. He was the Founder of "Jews For Jesus" and unfortunately, there were negative comments about this in the press before the event and they made it very controversial. There were, however, no major problems at the Service. We had one of the largest crowds we ever had and Moishe Rosen was a very gracious gentleman-there was nothing controversial about his comments.

Another time, our service was broadcast by Trinity Broadcasting out of Santa Anna California. I remember singing "The Holy City". As I travel throughout the country, people still mention to me that they were flipping through the television channels and they saw me singing on the water in Miami.

We used to start the services at 6:00 AM. It was dark when we arrived; daylight didn't start till 6:15 AM and the sun began coming up at 6:30. People would be coming to the Marine Stadium from both sides of the island and the traffic would be backed up coming from Miami. The inspiration level was very high, compared to other services. The setting was so beautiful it was breathtaking as the sun would be coming up. The people on the floating stage had the best of both worlds. We were under cover and we had our backs to the sun. When the sun reached a good height, the people in the stands would have the sun right in their eyes and they would have to squint or cover their eyes with caps and programs.

They closed the Marine Stadium in 1992 after Hurricane Andrew, and they moved the Easter Sunrise Service to a spot near the Seaquarium. It was the coldest Easter we had ever experienced and that was the death knell for it. They did it for a few years at Bayfront Park but they were never able to get the same crowds.

At this time in history, it would be a wonderful thing if we could revive Easter Sunrise Services at the Marine Stadium. For the City of Miami, it was-and could be again-a unifying event for all denominations and races and creeds celebrating together.