



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FLORENCE, MS/CLEARY BAPTIST CHURCH STUDENTS TO SUPPORT "FIELDS OF FAITH" EVENT, JOINING THOUSANDS OF YOUTH ACROSS AMERICA ON OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

**FLORENCE, MS** – Students from **Florence, MS/Cleary Baptist Church** will be joining thousands of other youth on athletic fields all across America on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 to share their Christian faith with fellow students during the fifth annual "Fields of Faith" event. This rapidly-growing, interdenominational outreach event will be held at more than 400 locations throughout the country on the same day.

While many Christian rallies are anchored to an entertainer or professional speaker creating a spectator event, "Fields of Faith" is structured as a student-to-student ministry. Peers invite their own classmates and teammates to meet on their school's athletic field to hear fellow students share their testimonies, challenge them to read the Bible and to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

**"Students from all over Rankin County will be coming to the Florence high school baseball field at 7pm on Wednesday, October 8th, 2008 for this event. It will be a time of hope for the teenagers within our community to find true meaning and purpose in life!"** said Kevin Wade, Associate Pastor for Students and Activities of Cleary Baptist Church.

The growth of "Fields of Faith" has been remarkable. It began with 6,000 kids on 23 fields in Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas in 2004. Three years later, an estimated 75,000 students participated on 386 fields all across the country during last year's events.

It's not just those numbers that have FCA organizers excited about "Fields of Faith." It's the real-life impact that these events are having on young people. Last year's series of events saw 1,852 students make first-time commitments to Christ, 4,089 recommitted their life to Christ and 9,149 committed to reading the Bible daily.

"Athletic fields provide a neutral and familiar spot for students to assemble," said Les Steckel, FCA President and a former NFL coach. "Many nights are spent on those fields cheering on local teams, but on this particular night the praise belongs to God."

The impetus for "Fields of Faith" began with Jeff Martin, an Oklahoma Area Director for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, who conceived the idea from 2 Chronicles 34 upon searching how to address the spiritual battles facing today's generation of youth. In the scripture, King Josiah, who was an influential teenager very similar to "Fields of Faith" attendees today, gathered his people and challenged them to read the Bible. As a result, they changed the culture.

In 2004, the Josiah-influenced dream came true when students gathered on school athletic fields throughout three states for the first "Fields of Faith" event. That was the beginning of what has become one of the most significant faith-related gathering of students in a single day.

"Throughout history, God has sparked great spiritual awakenings through young people," said Martin. "And that is the power of what we are trying to accomplish through 'Fields of Faith.' It goes beyond its appearance of a one-night rally on an athletic field. It goes to the heart of the future of a nation. It's not just another event; it's a change in culture."

While "Fields of Faith" has its roots with FCA leadership, the event is designed to include multiple national Christian organizations, ministries and church denominations. A local leadership team, primarily of students, will determine the program of each "Fields of Faith" event.

More information about "Fields of Faith" is available at [www.FieldsofFaith.com](http://www.FieldsofFaith.com). To learn more about the event in **Florence, MS**, contact **Kevin Wade, 601-845-2020 Ext. 304**.

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## **MEDIA CONTACT**

**Kevin Wade**  
**Associate Pastor for Students & Activities for Cleary Baptist Church**  
**601-845-2020 Ext. 304**  
**[media@clearybaptist.org](mailto:media@clearybaptist.org)**