

# Cowboy Church Newsletter

Summer, 1986



## Outa the Box

By Pastor Jeff

Cowboy Church has been in full swing now for almost six months. Since January 26th a lot has taken place, and we'd like to take our hats off to a few of those who have been a special blessing.



Since our beginning two people especially have been called on to assist in a number of areas. One is Sam Ed Spence of Keller; the other is Chuck DeHaan of Graford. Chuck did the artwork on our posters and other projects, while Sam wrote

the copy for the Cowboy Church page that went into Billy Bob's world wide advertising. Both men are on the original corporate board of Cowboy Church. Gracias.

In March, Hub Baker came up with the idea of having Buckaroo Club (children's church); hats off to "rookie of the year." Since the Buckaroo Club began, Rob and Tammie McPherson have been the head of that department, and have done a great job. Rob is a blessing every time he turns around . . . building benches for the office, wooden frames for our posters and various other things around Cowboy Church. Hats off to Rob, Tammie and family.

In February, God sent Tim Smith in answer to our prayer for a song leader. Anyone who has attended a service here knows how talented and special he is . . . praise the Lord for Tim.

The Lord has brought a lady in several times who shakes the timbers in the Bull Arena when she sings. She's Pattie Collins, and we've adopted her permanent. On May 31st, Patti and Esther Maldonado, along with a bunch of Cowboy Church folk, put on a free barbeque at the Bull Riding Arena. We fed approximately 700 people, while the gospel music shared the good news about Jesus. Thanks to Dick's Bar-B-Q for selling us the meat reasonably and Risky's Bar-B-Q at Billy Bob's for slicing it for us at the last minute. Gracias barbequers!

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## Cowboy Church At Billy Bob's

"You gotta be kiddin', they're having church where?"

That's right, partner, Billy Bob's Texas, the nation's largest honky tonk, is having church services!

And it's for real!

Cowboy Church, that's the official incorporated name, held its first service in the bull arena of Billy Bob's on Sunday morning, January 26, which was during the local Fort Worth Fat Stock Show. "We had a crowd of some 350 and about the same number of the following Sunday since the Stock Show was still going," said Jeff Copenhaver, pastor of Cowboy Church and the current president of the Cowboy Chapter of FCA. "Since then we've been averaging about 100 each Sunday morning, and we've added a Sunday night service along with a Wednesday night Bible study."

How did it all come about?

"It's answered prayer," commented Jeff. "Dennis McKinley, several others and myself have been praying for quite a while about a way to reach the rodeo-oriented youth of the metroplex (Dallas-Ft. Worth) area. Then this past December at the PRCA Finals in Las Vegas, Tex Whitsen, the general manager of Billy Bob's Texas, attended one of the cowboy worship services where I ministered and asked me if I'd conduct a Sunday service in their bull arena. And it's just developed into a regular service."

"Actually," continued the Cowboy Church pastor, "even with all the 'hooptola' about our location and all the publicity (there was even local television coverage of the first service), this church is here for the same

reason God established any church — to preach the Word, help build the Kingdom of God and make disciples for Jesus Christ. However, because of our location, Cowboy Church will have a lot of folks attend who might never set foot in another church. Sure, there will be a bunch of 'curiosity attenders,' but when they come they'll hear the Word of God . . . and some of this seed we're sowing is falling on fertile soil. In fact, we had about 50 people give their heart to the Lord during the first service, and we're seeing life changes every week."

Jeff, who won the PRCA calf roping title back in 1975 and still competes on the circuit, admitted that he never had any designs on being a pastor. "Yet," he noted, "God has given Sherry (his wife) and me a heart for these people . . . to share the love of God with them and to nurture them in His Word. And what's really neat is that God has given us a nucleus of about 30 solid believers with a like vision and the gifts to make Cowboy Church a real work of the Spirit . . . to reach the western world of this area for Jesus Christ; and what a tremendous training ground for personal evangelism God has provided here for all of us!"

A portion of the plans for Cowboy Church includes a series of free rodeo schools that began in June for both riding and roping events. "We'll have guys like Bobby Del Vecchio (bull riding) and Bruce Ford (bareback) helping us," said Jeff, "and this will provide still another avenue for the Gospel to be shared."