

A weekend given to praising

Schedule

TODAY

9 a.m. — Program starts
 10:30 a.m. — Break
 Noon-1:30 p.m. — Lunch
 2 p.m. — Break
 3-7 p.m. — Dinner
 8 p.m. — Celebration concert
 9 p.m. — Ends program

SPEAKERS

Anne Graham Lotz is an internationally known speaker and the author of "Vision of His Glory" and "The Glorious Dawn of God's Story." She is the founder of AnGel Ministries, serves on the board of directors of the Billy



Anne Graham Lotz

Graham Evangelistic Association and is Graham's daughter.

Bunny Wilson is a speaker and author. Her books include "Liberated Through Submission," "Knight in Shining Armor," "Betrayal of the Master's Degree" and "Night Come Swiftly."

Kay Arthur is known throughout the world as a Bible teacher, conference speaker and author of more than 20 books. She has a special message taped just for the chosen Women attendees that she will deliver by video.



Everything falls into place as two-day event opens with crowd of 10,000

BY SHIRLEY ARMBRUSTER
THE FRESNO BEE

Chosen Women organizers got just what they wanted for the 1998 spiritual rally at Bulldog Stadium: gorgeous weather and thousands of women eager to praise God.

"We spent a long time in prayer and preparation for the event. We've been praying for scenic weather to match our [promotional] brochures about 'scenic Bulldog Stadium,'" said Susan Kimes, founder of Chosen Women.

Today's weather forecast calls for sunny skies with highs in the mid-70s. The agenda calls for a full day of music, praise and Bible teaching. And organizers are calling for a crowd of 15,000 women, more than Friday night's estimated 10,000.

Kimes is pleased with the attendance, even though it falls below the 20,000 who attended the first Chosen Women rally last year in Pasadena.

"I believe every woman who came is here because she is supposed to be here," Kimes said. "I am not disappointed at all. Anything the Lord does, he is in, and I'm just thrilled."

Women who attended Friday obviously felt the same. They clapped, cheered and sang along with The Praise Band. They

laughed along with mistress of ceremonies Alaina Reed-Hall as she told light-hearted jokes. They gave a warm reception to Christian recording star Cheri Keagy.

Many were touched by the testimony of Ahn Young, a 23-year-old Southern California woman who was born in Vietnam. She told of being beaten by her father and taken in by friends who shared the gospel with her. Young told of the difference that Jesus has made in her life and encouraged others to commit their lives to him.

And the crowd appreciated the message of Anne Graham Lotz, a favorite speaker at the 1997 Chosen Women conference. Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, will speak again tonight.

A Time magazine article a few months ago questioned the existence of heaven, but Lotz said she doesn't have that question because the Bible says heaven does exist.

And, Lotz said, heaven will be a beautiful place for believers in Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ has been preparing it — as a bride is preparing for her husband — for over 2,000 years!"

The marriage analogy is fresh in Lotz' mind because last year, within eight months, all three of her children got married.

She recounted the details, both



MARY A. LOMMORI — THE FRESNO BEE

Lilyan Fournier, right, and Sheila Kraus spend a moment in prayer on opening night.

big and small, that were involved in the weddings of her son and two daughters.

Lotz painted a powerful picture of God's plan for salvation and eternal life in heaven and invited the participants who did not have a relationship with Christ to make a commitment.

In response, hundreds of women got up on their seats and moved toward the stage en masse to pray with Lotz. She congratulated them and added: "Right now you have eternal life

— and that includes heaven!"

Lotz is an internationally known speaker and the author of "Vision of His Glory," which examines Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Her latest book, "The Glorious Dawn of God's Story," is a study of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

Lotz, who lives in Raleigh, N.C., with her husband is the founder of AnGeL Ministries. She serves on the board of directors of the Billy Graham Evange-

listic Association.

In closing the evening, Reed-Hall spoke to the women gathered around the stage: "Welcome my sisters," she said.

She then told the new believers their "faith" can be spelled out like this: "Fantastic Adventures In Trusting Him."

The crowd cheered. Moments later, Chosen Women's first night participants filed out in the chilly evening to the sounds of the Praise Band playing "Our God is an Awesome God."

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

■ Alaina Reed-Hall is best known from her role as Olivia on the television series



Alaina Reed-Hall

“Sesame Street” and as Rose on NBC’s “227.”

MUSIC

■ The Praise Band, which features John and Anne Barbour,

who as original members of the Maranatha! Praise Band, have appeared for the last five years with the Harvest Crusades, Billy Graham crusades and Franklin Graham’s Samaritan’s Purse crusades. John also has been a part of the band leading worship at Promise Keepers conferences for the last three years.

■ Cheri Keaggy, a popular singer and songwriter, was nominated for Dove Awards in 1995 and in 1997. Her recent albums include “What Matters Most,” “My Faith Will Stay” and “Child of the Father.”

SPEAKERS

■ Anne Graham Lotz is an internationally known speaker and the author of "Vision of



**Anne
Graham Lotz**

His Glory" and "The Glorious Dawn of God's Story." She is the founder of AnGeL Ministries, serves on the board of directors of the Billy

Graham Evangelistic Association and is Graham's daughter.

■ Bunny Wilson is a speaker and author. Her books include "Liberated Through Submission," "Knight in Shining Armor," "Betrayal Baby," "The Master's Degree" and "Night Come Swiftly."

■ Kay Arthur is known throughout the world as a Bible teacher, conference speaker and author of more than 20 books. She has a special message taped just for the Chosen Women attendees that she will deliver by video.

■ Jackie Rettberg has worked in women's ministries for 30 years and is a frequent speaker for retreats and seminars. She also serves as the director for OASIS, a one-day personal retreat for women in ministry sponsored by Chosen Women's sister organization, NEWIM.

■ Scott Craig serves on the pastoral staff of Central Presbyterian Church of Merced and has ministered as a speaker and worship leader in camps, conferences, para-church and church settings. He is a sixth-degree black belt and serves as vice president of the evangelical World Mission Tae Kwon Do Association.

Chosen Women



Rosemary Perez of Fresno, right, gets a hug from Chaplain Nancy Dickson of Evangelical Free Church at the start of the Chosen Women conference Friday. Women throughout Bulldog Stadium prayed, hugged, shouted and sang during the conference's first night.

TOMAS OVALLE —

Chosen Women

