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"If My People Pray"

Missions Fest '09 Draws Record Attendance

The theme of Missions Fest 2009 asked the question, "What happens when God's people pray?" The answer came in a tumultuous shower of blessings as thousands attended the annual event, held at Canada Place from January 30 to February 1, 2009.

The aggregate attendance of the conference surpassed 40,000 visitors, the first time in Missions Fest's 26-year history. Participants took in free public sessions, 130-plus seminars, and rallies for children, youth, and young adults. The exhibition hall, filled with 240 mission agency displays, stopped at regular intervals to pray for geographic areas of the world. Hundreds of volunteers set aside their denominational loyalties and worked side-by-side to serve others and facilitate the weekend.

The needs in the countries of Cambodia and India were presented by Canadian missionary Marie Ens, and Joseph D'Souza, President of OM-India and the Dalit Freedom Network. Their presentations touched and challenged many lives, leading to times of informed prayer. Featured speakers Mike Yankoski, Mark Buchanan, and Tony Campolo challenged audiences to live out a radical faith. Hundreds of people responded to challenges given at the adult plenary sessions, youth rallies, and young adult session.



Mark Buchanan, local pastor and author, spoke at the morning plenary sessions

Local television and radio media commented that the traffic situation on Saturday night resembled "the perfect storm." Events at GM Place and BC Place ended at approximately the same time as the evening rallies at Missions Fest, and resulted in an enormous traffic jam. One radio host was reported as saying that "thousands of Christians are at Canada Place at a Missions Conference, and are adding to the congestion." If

nothing else, his listening audience knew that a significant number of Christ's followers were meeting together to consider the topic of world mission.

Missions Fest Vancouver is sponsored by 160 local congregations which promote the weekend, send volunteers, and participate with an annual financial contribution. Missions Fest celebrated its 26th year of bringing Christians together under the banner of the Great Commission.



Dr. Tony Campolo returned to Vancouver once again, for his third visit to Missions Fest

2009 Conference Highlights:

The Monday Morning Difference

The dust has settled and the bills are paid. Like any other large event, Missions Fest leadership begins to evaluate the “success” of the conference and asks itself probing questions. However, the two questions which most often are asked by outsiders may not be the most important. While it is true that attendance records were broken and the budget was met, there are two greater questions that need to be asked.



What Were the Goals of the Conference?

The stated three-fold purpose of Missions Fest is to inform, celebrate and challenge people of all ages to get involved in missions by sending, praying, giving and going. It is to be a catalyst that enables people to catch a vision of the Great Commission spoken by Jesus in Matthew’s gospel (28:19-20), and to “connect the dots,” helping people find a place where their interests and abilities can be put to use.

Did this happen this year at Missions Fest? As stories filter into the office, the resounding answer is once again, ‘yes!’ Hundreds of people responded to the public challenges of our speakers, and engaged in private conversations that brought people, churches, and agencies together.

This year the theme “If My People Pray” was not only designed to be a catch phrase, but the hope and desire of organizers was that the conference would be used as a catalyst to a movement of prayer in the city. People prayed together before, during, and after plenary session. Exhibitors and visitors stopped every two hours in the Exhibition Hall to intercede for geographical regions of the world. New friendships were formed and partnerships were forged as God’s people engaged in prayer.

Did Missions Fest Make a Difference?

This leads to the second question, which is equally difficult to measure: Did people do anything different on the Monday morning following Missions Fest? While there are hundreds of testimonies, here are some of the stories that have come from this year’s conference:

- A youth group left the Friday rally and didn’t pass by the homeless people at their Skytrain Station, but rather stopped, asked their names, and showed them true dignity.
- A young lady informed her pastor that she will plan a short-term mission trip for next summer.
- A young man applied for a year’s internship with Urban Promise in Chicago.
- A couple resigned as school teachers and applied to help out in a ministry in SE Asia.
- A young woman cancelled her appointment for an abortion, scheduled for the next day.
- 45 people requested further information to find out how they can become Bible translators.

The bottom-line for Missions Fest is that it needs to touch the hearts and minds of people, bringing transformational change. It is important that people wake up on Monday morning and do something different. It might be a changed attitude, or filling in an application to go on a short-term mission trip. It could be prayer for victory over a bad habit, or asking God to give them a chance to share His love with



another. Missions Fest is only as effective as the Monday morning difference it makes. While this is hard to measure, it makes all the difference in the world.

SPECIAL DELIVERY:

An Unforgettable Day for Dalit Children A Joyous Response to Canadian Generosity

Wide-eyed Dalit* children and their parents could hardly believe what they were seeing as they witnessed the dedication of the new Good Shepherd School in the village of Sircilla, India.

They listened with awe as the Minister of Education for the State of Andhra Pradesh addressed a crowd of 500 villagers and commended the school leaders for their achievement and reminded the Dalit parents of the great opportunity for their children.

The most exciting part of the celebration for the children was the arrival of the Canadian DFN team with armfuls of gifts from Canada. Unknown to the children these rare gifts had been prepared by children and adults at Missions Fest in Vancouver and had arrived just in time for the Celebration.

One teacher said it best when she commented, "These are the first gifts the children have ever received and the children cannot believe that the whole gift is theirs." She said, "They will never forget this day and all the love showered on them."

On behalf of all the Dalit children and their parents I want to thank Vancouver Missions Fest for their gifts of love to these forgotten children. I was so touched by the village mothers who surrounded me and wanted to shake my hand, and although they could not speak English, I received their unmistakable message of gratitude and thanks.

Sherry Bailey, Executive Director
Dalit Freedom Network – Canada

*Note: The word "Dalit" refers to the "untouchables" or broken people of the Hindu caste system.



Hundreds Respond to Spiritual Challenge

First it happened on Friday night, when nearly a thousand youth and young adults responded to Mike Yankoski's challenge. Then it happened in the morning and afternoon sessions. Mark Buchanan and Tony Campolo were overwhelmed when hundreds of teens and young adults came forward for prayer. Each of the sessions in Hall C went against the common thought that altar calls are no longer in vogue and not well received by youth and young adults.

Rather, just as Tony Campolo reminded those gathered at the Leadership Luncheon, "Don't just entertain the next generation – challenge them!" The positive response gives hope to those who pray that youth and young adults will rise up and take renewed interest in the challenges of the Great Commission.



Thousands of youth and young adults took part in the gatherings in Hall C



Be a part of the team of volunteers!

For information on how you can be a part of the 2010 Planning Team see:
www.missionsfestvancouver.ca/volunteers.cfm or phone 604-524-9944

Missions Fest Financial Report*

	Budget 2009	Actual (Feb. 28,'09)
Income		
Conference Revenues	230,000	259,664
Conf. & Indiv. Donations	115,000	117,221
Church Sponsorship	50,000	46,976
Advertising & Other	<u>75,000</u>	<u>58,656</u>
	470,000	482,517
Expenses		
Conference Expenses	218,000	227,568
Salaries & Benefits	187,500	185,499
Office Expenses	32,500	34,545
Other Expenses	<u>32,000</u>	<u>26,264</u>
	470,000	473,876

*Year-end Audited Reports are available upon request.

** MFV fiscal year was Mar. 1, 2008 to Feb. 28, 2009.

A Note from the Director

The words of Acts 14:27 best describe the sense I have as I look back at Missions Fest 2009: The disciples returned to Antioch and shared the news of their recent missionary journey.

"... and they told them **all that God had done** and how He had opened a door for them."

There is great joy in being a part of something where you know that it was God working in you and through you. This is what I hear often from our teams of volunteers and helpers as they set aside differences and worked side-by-side with other Christians of the city. It is in this climate that God had freedom to do many great things in the lives of His people.

Thank you for your role as you volunteered, gave funds, and prayed for this year's conference. Your continued prayer and financial support is appreciated as we plan and work towards next year's conference. Thank you for partnering with us!

In HIS service,

Dwayne K. Buhler, Director

2010: Finish the Race

Plans for Next Year's Conference



The eyes of the world will be upon Vancouver as it hosts the 2010 Winter Olympics. Dreams will be either realized or shattered as the best athletes in the world race against each other. There are some who will race, but will be disqualified for not competing according to the rules. There are others who will give their best only to fall short. Many will stand at the starting line, but some will not finish the race. Only one will gain the gold medal; the prize.

The Apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy was to follow his example and not only start the race, but to finish well. Missions Fest 2010 tackles this theme and considers the stories of men and women who have faithfully run their race. Will Graham, Paul Henderson, Jamie McIntosh, Jackie Pullinger, and Alex Ribeiro will be our special speakers. The conference will challenge the Church, in the midst of Olympic-sized preparations and intrusions in the life of the city, not to lose sight of finishing the race of Matthew 24:14:

And this Gospel will be preached in all nations, and then the end will come.

The 2010 Winter Olympic Games and pre-game preparations will cause significant logistical challenges for Missions Fest, but they also provide special opportunities to meet together and prepare for the many thousands of visitors that will come to Vancouver. It is our prayer that in 2010 we will all sense that the eyes of God are upon His people in the city of Vancouver, and that He will equip His people to finish the race set before them.

Missions Fest 2010 – *Finish the Race* – January 8-10, 2010

Broadway Church – Italian Cultural Centre – The Warehouse

www.missionsfestvancouver.ca