

FRANKLIN GRAHAM'S 'ROCK THE RIVER' WEST DRAWS THOUSANDS

Mon, Aug. 09, 2010

Jennifer Riley, Christian Post Reporter

Nearly 8,000 young Canadians attended a one-day evangelistic event Saturday, which kicked off Franklin Graham's month-long Western Canada tour.



Despite the rain, attendees came to hear Graham's no-nonsense Gospel message and to enjoy hours of "high-voltage" Christian music at Millennium Park in Fraser Valley, British Columbia. At the end of the day, 466 young Canadians accepted Christ or recommitted their lives to Him, according to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"Everything today has been really touching," said attendee Carleigh, 19, according to BGEA. "It's been one of the most moving experiences for me."

"Years ago, everyone was afraid to talk about God. So this event is great where everyone talked about Jesus boldly."

The Fraser Valley event is the first of three Franklin Graham summer concerts in Western Canada collectively called Rock the River Tour West. It is modeled after last year's four-city, U.S. Rock the River tour up the Mississippi River, which drew more than 100,000 people.

Rock the River Tours are aimed at reaching youths who normally would not attend church.

Graham explained that when he was growing up, children were familiar with church and attended Sunday services. But today, children grow up in a secular society and God has been taken out of government and out of schools.

"Kids today, many of them know nothing about God whatsoever," Graham remarked. "So if we don't reach them, we'll lose them."

According to Statistics Canada, the Christian population in Canada is expected to decline 10 percent – from 75 to 65 percent – by 2031. Meanwhile, the population with no religion is predicted to rise from 17 to 21 percent within the same period. About half of the non-Christian population in Canada is expected to be Muslim by 2031, up from 35 percent in 2006.

Data from Project Teen Canada further shows that more Canadian teens identify themselves as Muslim than Baptist, Anglican and the mainline United Church of Canada combined.

“When I preach,” Graham said before the tour, “I preach the Gospel. Paul said, ‘I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God until salvation to everyone who believes.’ The Gospel is God’s power. When you preach the Gospel, God uses that to pierce the hearts of those He is calling.”

“We’ll pray that there is a great harvest of young people this year who will give their hearts to Christ.”

For the events, local churches and Christian youths are responsible for inviting lost young adults to the free, live Christian music concerts.

The next Rock the River West events will be held in Calgary on Aug. 21 and then Edmonton on Aug. 28.

“This is going to be a tough time,” Graham noted. “There is going to be a battle that will be waged. It is a battle for the souls of men and women, of boys and girls there in Western Canada. We need people to back us with your prayers as we go.”

Copyright © 2010 Christianpost.com. All rights reserved.