

Christian Rock the River West music festival's next stop is Edmonton

The Underground

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The Christian music festival, Rock the River West's next stop will be at Edmonton's Telus Field in Canada on Aug. 28, from 2:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The festival, which is a project of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, will feature Christian bands such as Starfield, Skillet, Flyleaf, Hawk Nelson, Downhere and Lecrae. There will also be sermons from Franklin Graham, the Edmonton Journal said.

Of the event Graham said, "For so many young people, their lives are upside down and in a mess and they don't even know why. That's why I'm so excited to have this opportunity to share the message of God's love with all of these young people. It's a chance to change thousands of lives," the Edmonton Journal said.

Graham, son of world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham, is known for being straightforward when he preaches the gospel. He was disinvited from speaking at the Pentagon on the National Day of Prayer upon the instigation of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation due to comments he made about the Islamic faith (see <http://theundergroundsite.com/index.php/2010/05/national-day-of-prayer-observed-nationwide-despite-ruling-controversy-12004>).

Over 170 churches are involved in this Christian rock event. Fred Weiss, executive director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada said, "That's one of our goals: to help the church work together to impact a community," the Edmonton Journal said.

Weiss also expressed pleasure that the event will bring together young people together in faith. The first Rock the River tour took place last year and some tens of thousands came to the series of daylong Christian concerts that were held along the Mississippi River.

Tim Neufeld, lead singer of Starfield said of the concert, "My hope always is that Jesus is the star and that it's an event that points people toward Him and mentors people in that relationship. I think the Billy Graham Association has done a great job of that over the years. And if that's what's happening and people are coming to Christ and lives are being changed because they were able to come to this event, I'm all for it," Edmonton Journal said.

Of Christian music in general Neufeld said, "It's never going to be the cool, accepted music of the culture. It shouldn't be, I don't think. It's not designed to be. The Gospel is supposed to be offensive and it's supposed to dig (at) and annoy people. And if it's not doing that, then it's probably not truly Christian music," the Edmonton Journal said.

Neufeld does see music as a way to convey one's faith journey more realistically. He says, "I think it's an inaccurate one-dimensional representation of what Christianity is about if it's just all happy, happy, joy, joy all the time, because it's certainly not my experience," the Edmonton Journal said.

According to Neufeld, Christian music is evolving and getting more risky in the topics of songs, choosing themes that are culturally relevant. "Christian music is a niche. And it's not ever going to be accepted as the cool...but I think it can do a great job at what it is," the Edmonton Journal said.

For tickets go online at RocktheRiverTour.com. The cost is \$10, the Edmonton Journal said.