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OneDay03 perpetuates passion for following God

SHERMAN-Rather than spending Memorial Day weekend at beaches or amusement parks, nearly 30,000 college students and young adults sought God on a 400-acre ranch near Sherman.

OneDay03 encompassed the weekend, climaxing in seven hours of worship, teaching and prayer on Memorial Day.



Almost 30,000 college students converged on a ranch near Sherman over the Memorial Day weekend to participate in OneDay03, a nationwide "sacred assembly" designed to help them focus on God. (Leann Callaway Photo)

Led by Louie Giglio, founder and director of Passion Conferences for youth and young adults, OneDay included a number of well-known speakers, worship artists and other Christian leaders.

OneDay's purpose was to draw students into a "sacred assembly" dedicated to seeking God, reflecting the Old Testament passage Joel 2:15: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly."

The event's organizers maintained that focus by declining to release the names of speakers and musicians prior to the weekend. Yet students still came, which Giglio saw as evidence they kept their focus on God.

"They didn't come to see us," he said. "They didn't come to see people. They came to see the living God."

That's exactly what Giglio wanted for thousands of young adults who are defining how they will live the rest of their lives, he said.

"When a college student leaves their home, they leave their parents, the church of their youth, their community and their world that was known to them," he explained.

"They step into a completely new environment, which is challenging them intellectually, morally and spiritually, in every single way. Their life becomes redefined, and whatever is defined in those moments sets the course for the kind of person they're going to be, the kind of family they're going to have, the kind of business they're going to go into.

"I personally feel like it is the crossroads of our lives, and I want to be standing at that crossroads when those decisions are being made, when everything's being re-evaluated, when everything's being questioned. ... I want to be standing at that crossroads and saying: 'Look at Jesus. Think about Jesus. Listen to the words of Jesus. Accept the invitation of Jesus. With all these ideas and the whole range of opportunities, consider Jesus.'

"To see a student in that moment choose him and begin to see their life defined by him is one of the most rewarding things on earth."

A passion to see God drove students and leaders past many obstacles to arrive at a North Texas ranch for the weekend.

Groups drove or flew from across the nation and overseas to attend the weekend, many staying in campsites located across the ranch's rolling hills.



Bible studies began even as cars lined a country road to enter the ranch. (Hoganson Media Relations Photo)

"We believe (God) had something very specific to accomplish in each of these lives," said Beth Moore, a Houston-based

speaker and author who delivered one of the Memorial Day messages.

Moore and the other speakers challenged students to make their sole purpose living for God's fame.

Pastor and author John Piper of Minneapolis defined the day as "the gathering and the awakening of a generation passionate for the holiness of God."

Monday's speakers also included actor Kirk Cameron and Heather Mercer, a missionary captive under the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Cameron is best known for his character as Mike Seaver on the popular 1990s television series "Growing Pains."

"Most of you are probably wondering what Mike Seaver is doing up here with a Bible," he said as he took the stage.

Growing up in Hollywood, Cameron thought he had it all. But his life changed when a friend invited him to a church service. After hearing about sin and God's mercy, he became a Christian in his late teens. His fame had to die in order for him to be saved, he admitted. "Christ alone is the famous one."

Cameron instructed students to trust in Jesus the way they would trust in a parachute if they were jumping out of a plane at 25,000 feet.

"We're consecrating this as holy ground. The word of God has gone over this place, and we're saying this is sacred ground," he said. "We're calling for the God of holiness to come here. That's a frightening thing to me. God does not fool around, in his holiness, with sin and hypocrisy. The word of God has gone out over this field, and the Bible says that it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edge sword."

Giglio also discussed the importance of mobilization opportunities.

"The word 'mobilization' is a unique word," he explained. "Some people would use the word 'missions,' but we happen to like the word 'mobilization' because 'missions' has a little bit of a stigma, even in a Christian community."

"People think, 'Oh, you have to choose to be a missionary, which means you have to move to Africa and live there for the rest of your life.' We feel that

the better word is 'mobilization,' because the whole world has been created by God and the whole world has been created for God.

"Our desire is to share that with everybody on this planet. We know that whenever we're with God, and in the presence of God, that our heart is in turn going to beat with his heart. When your heart beats with God's heart, your heart starts beating for the whole world because God cares about the entire world.

"So, ... we just wanted to keep elevating God's heart for the nations: Not some pressured call to go and be a missionary because people need to hear the gospel, but just to keep hearing God's heartbeat and rejoice in what he's already doing.

"My prayer is not that a hundred students would find a way into the nations, but thousands of these students would find their way into the nations because of today."



Students gathered in "prayer triangles" to ask God for spiritual awakening in America (Hoganson Media Relations Photo)

Worship was a large part of the assembly, which not only included much singing but also involved Scripture, art displays, poetry and other forms of

praise.

Many well-known artists led worship, including Chris Tomlin, Charlie Hall and Matt Redman, who began the main session on Monday with "O Come, Let Us Adore Him." Similar hymns were used throughout the event, as were contemporary worship songs.

As students worshipped and listened to the call to live for God's renown, they were urged to take their passion for him to the ends of the earth.

Dozens of missions organizations gathered on-site to help students mobilize for international outreach.

For example, workers at the Planet 268 mobilization tent offered to prepare students for those opportunities. Marc McCartney, events director for the RightNow Campaign to mobilize young people in missions and ministry, managed the tent.

"A lot of awareness is taking place," McCartney said. "God's teaching them something, and the guides are here to help them understand how to activate what God's placed in their lives."

The RightNow Campaign will contact every student who visited the tent, McCartney said. "It may be 10,000 of them, and we're going to communicate with each one. We are going to keep taking them on that journey and communicating with them for as long as it takes—a week, a year or two years. The goal is to build conversations and help them move until they feel ultimately ready to go on one of these opportunities."

While many students were particularly attracted to missions or other aspects of OneDay, others simply enjoyed worshipping with so many Christians their own age.

One student from Duke University delighted in the unity of students from so

many places and denominations. "Not growing up around a lot of Christians, I was just overwhelmed with the magnitude and the amount of people that were there," she said.

OneDay03 leaders described the current generation of students as experiencing a special movement of God. Moore compared it to a "peppering" rain of the Holy Spirit. However, she also cautioned that students' zeal must be matched with true knowledge of God and his word.

Reported by special correspondent Leann Callaway and Ben Hines of Baptist Press

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