

College Students Worship, Pray, Serve at Passion 2010 Event

✖ College students from 1,500 campuses and 37 nations raised more than \$668,000 to support social justice projects and gave some 70,000 pairs of socks to area homeless as part of a worship and prayer event held in Atlanta this week.

During the Passion Twenty-Ten Conference, which began Saturday and ends Tuesday, some 22,000 students packed more than 100,000 meals for hungry children, funded nearly 300 small business loans to lift women out of poverty in Haiti and gave more than \$80,000 to help rescue women from sex slavery in Nepal.

Encouraged to bring socks and towels to give to the homeless, the youth also were able to donate roughly 70,000 pairs of socks and 15,000 towels to Atlanta-area shelters.

“Whether they know what Passion is all about or not, they will know that followers of Christ have been here,” said Passion founder Louie Giglio of the people receiving the donations.

The four-day Passion conference—the first U.S. event in three years—brought students together in small breakout

sessions and large groups to worship, pray and hear teaching from Christian leaders such as Beth Moore, John Piper, Francis Chan and Andy Stanley.

Also participating were worship leaders Chris Tomlin, David Crowder Band, Charlie Hall, Matt Redman and Hillsong United, whose I Heart Revolution also encourages youth to engage in social justice and compassion ministry.

As part of Passion's Do Something Now campaign, which launched in 2007 and seeks to mesh worship with justice, students were encouraged to support 12 global projects through giving and participation, with a goal of raising more than \$500,000 in international aid. By Tuesday morning, they had raised more than \$668,000.

Cheryl Bell, director of events for Passion Conferences, said some of the organizations met their goals halfway through the conference and began directing students to support the other ministries.

"It's what does the kingdom of God look like," Bell said. "To see these guys really pour into and partner and give to other organizations is pretty amazing."

The Passion movement began in 1995 to unite college students and churches in prayer and worship. In the last 15 years, Passion has held seven conferences in the U.S., as well as large-scale OneDay prayer events that drew tens of thousands of students.

In 2008, Passion embarked on a 17-city world tour through Kiev, Ukraine; Paris; Kampala, Uganda; Cape Town, South Africa; Manila, Philippines; Tokoyo; Sydney, Australia; Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Giglio said organizers hoped the 2010 conference would awaken students. "There's a heartbeat here and that heartbeat is that you and I would awaken to the same thing-that it's good to trade something small for something huge," Giglio told the crowd Saturday night. "And that something small is lives that you and I 'run' and that we would trade that in for a life that is part of a grand epic that is God."

Bell estimated that 80 percent of those attending this year's conference were participating for the first time. And though she said college students are ever changing, Passion's message remains the same.

"It's just presenting that same message to a new group of people-what does it look like to leverage your life for the glory of God," she said. "And that is different for each and every individual, but people have got to fall in love with who God is, realize who God is, have a relationship with Jesus Christ before any of that happens."