

Holy Spirit Pours Down on Ottawa

As Michael W. Smith sang “Healing Rain,” thousands stood, feet soggy and freezing, but still in awe of what God did despite a cold and rainy Rock the River in Ottawa on Sunday.

“I am soaked to the bone,” said volunteer Julie of Metcalfe, just south of Ottawa. “But if only one person came to Christ this weekend it was so worth it.”

To those watching Sunday’s live webstream of Rock the River Ottawa, the comment seemed perhaps a little obvious.

“Healing rain. Perfect,” posted Paul through his Facebook login.

Yes, a steady rain that alternated from slow drizzle to near-downpour, coupled with temperatures plummeting in the low-50s (11 degrees Celsius) made less-than-ideal conditions for an outdoor event.

But this is Canada. Cold weather is a relative term. And the umbrella-yielding, poncho-wearing crowd wasn’t about to miss a landmark night for **evangelism** in their city. Even if their socks were soggy and toes numb.

Shaking and shivering, there were **salvations** at stake.

So, as Smith finished up a festival that featured a dozen musical sets over two days, his 2004 hit “Healing Rain” seemed all the more fitting.

“It kind of give a whole new meaning to ‘Healing Rain,’” said Will Graham, giving the final invitation of the night, just before the fireworks.

Hundreds of hearts were changed over the weekend and many

others mended as the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed and the **Holy Spirit** poured down at Ottawa's Britannia Park.

"Selfishly I prayed this morning that the Lord would stop the rain," Julie said. "But then I realized as much as He sacrificed for me, the least I can do is stand out in the rain for a few hours.

"I'm just so honored to be a part of this."

The reach of Rock the River this weekend was not limited to the banks of the Ottawa River.

That thousands came and hundreds accepted Christ as Lord and Savior was an answer to so many prayers in the Ottawa-Gatineau metro area.

But around the world, logging into a live webstream, hundreds more made decisions by watching the artists, testimonies and Gospel message from Franklin Graham.

Thousands of people watched Rock the River in over 70 countries, from as far away as Malaysia, Phillipines, Hong Kong, Finland and Singapore.

"Thank you for this opportunity. God Bless! From Brazil." Neidi said.

"I just got up and I'm watching from Bali," Anita said.

All over the United States people were tuning in, from Ohio and Indiana, Alabama and New Jersey and 40 other states. And across Canada, on computers, iPads and smartphones, people throughout North America came together online and in spirit.

"Yes, I prayed," Suzy posted through her Facebook account.

Shortly after **Franklin Graham** preached in the rain on the value of your soul, the front stage area was filled with Canadians coming forward to make a decision for Christ. Here's

just a few of the lives that were changed:

- Jenny, a woman in her early 20s originally from the Philippines, rededicated her life to Christ. “She was so tender hearted and so sincere,” Susan, 62, her counselor, said. “She felt how much God loved her and said she was very thankful for His mercy.”
- Brenda, a counselor in her 50s, had the opportunity to share Christ with two girls—Mikayla, 12, on Saturday and Emily-Grace, 6, on Sunday. Both accepted Jesus into their hearts: “I think she really understands what Franklin Graham was saying. She was a very bright little girl,” Brenda said of Emily-Grace. “I think Lacey (Sturm’s) testimony really makes an impact with these younger girls.”
- Josia, a teenage counselor, noticed a “very tall” guy from Saturday night come to his Sunday morning youth group, where Rock the River emcee Nick Hall was a guest speaker. The estimated 6-foot-8 teen seemed to “really be convicted” to what Hall was preaching, and Josia went up after and asked to pray for him. About 10 minutes later, he found out the tall teenager accepted Christ into his life. “I don’t think he was ready on Saturday night, but God did something to his heart.”

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