

Rock the Lakes Event Inspires Hundreds

Hundreds of men and women—and boys and girls—made decisions for Jesus Sunday night at Rock the Lakes. The family-friendly evening attracted people of all ages, some 10,000 strong, for music from Canton Jones, The Charlie Daniels Band and Michael W. Smith, and a message of hope from Franklin Graham.

On the final night of Rock the Lakes in Milwaukee, the past and present converged in a way that only God could ordain. Diane from Kenosha, Wisc., came to Veterans Park clutching her copy of Billy Graham's autobiography, *Just As I Am*, believing that his son, Franklin, would sign the book for her.

When she was younger, Graham played a huge part in influencing Diane's faith. But a series of difficulties shook that foundation. Her son suffered brain damage after a drug overdose and she also struggled with substance abuse.

Through the hard years, her hope would stir when she visited her sister who had a copy of *Just As I Am*. Diane would read a few pages and find renewed inspiration as she worked to overcome her addiction. As she read, her walk grew stronger.

When Diane heard that Franklin Graham was coming this weekend to Rock the Lakes, she knew she had to come—and she dared to believe for a special touch from God. "I told my son that I was going to get that book signed by Franklin," she said. "I told him that God was going to do a big thing for us."

Diane recently inherited the treasured book from her sister.

During a video clip that featured Michael W. Smith talking about how he overcome substance abuse, she happened to share with a BGEA staff person standing near her how she once struggled with drugs. "That was me," she said, pointing to the screen.

The staff member noticed Diane's copy of *Just As I Am* and asked her about it. That's when the little miracle began to take place—and soon Diane had her book signed.

"I just knew it," she said with tears of joy running down her face. "I prayed God would do a big thing."

After the younger Graham shared the gospel using the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19:1-10, Diane came forward at the invitation and recommitted her life to Christ. "What happened with that book strengthened my faith," she said. "I really needed this."

Giving Back

Graham also played a role during Rock the Lakes tonight for Donna, a counselor from Waukesha, Wisc. She accepted Jesus as her Savior during the 1979 Billy Graham Crusade in Milwaukee. "That is why I am here serving," she said. "I wanted to give back to his ministry."

Donna found herself reliving that moment from 1979 as she spoke with a brother and sister who came forward, hand in hand, to accept Christ. "When I counseled the woman, who is 58 and nervous about changing her life, I was able to tell her my testimony," said Donna. "I overcame the same exact problem she is dealing with."

Hundreds of other men and women—and boys and girls—made decisions for Jesus tonight at Rock the Lakes. The family-friendly evening attracted people of all ages, some 10,000 strong. Music from Canton Jones, The Charlie Daniels Band and Michael W. Smith filled the evening air as kites danced on the lake breeze.

"We like the mix of music," said Daryl and Sherone, who brought their toddlers to the park. "And although there has been some violence in Milwaukee recently at other events, we knew there wouldn't be alcohol here. We weren't afraid to come."

Sherone especially enjoyed Michael W. Smith, who dusted off his hit, "Friends," for the appreciative crowd. "I just love that song," she said. "My husband and I met in college and connected because of it."

A visitor from Chicago was touched by Smith in a different way. Paul, 30, is spending the summer taking care of his 62-year-old mother, who is confined to a wheelchair. When she insisted on coming to Rock the Lakes to hear Michael W. Smith, he reluctantly agreed. "I heard of Charlie Daniels before, but that was it," he shared.

After listening to Smith talk about how God loves us better than any earthly father—and that He also likes us—Paul felt tears spring to his eyes. His own dad had abandoned him when Paul was just 5. During the final song of the evening, he came forward and decided to make "Abba Father" the Lord of his life.

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