

IHOP Hosts Final OneThing Conference, Shares What's Next

After 19 years of hosting one of the largest young adult gatherings in the world, the International House of Prayer Kansas City (IHOPKC) is taking a hiatus from its annual OneThing conference to refocus on strengthening relationships internally and recapturing the singular devotion to Jesus exemplified by Mary of Bethany.

"We're going to do IHOP, but where we're really weak is building relationships with people," IHOPKC Founder Mike Bickle told *Charisma*. "We're focusing on relationships with people versus hosting conferences. But we want that to come out of radical, heartfelt love for Jesus."

The annual conference attracted over 20,000 people from all over the world and generated millions of dollars for Kansas City's economy. This year, a dramatic shift began when over 1,000 Chinese pastors and leaders who experienced severe persecution hosted services at the Forerunner Church in Grandview, Missouri, in early September (Forerunner is the local church family for IHOPKC). The Chinese believers were part of Dr. David Demian's team that travel around the world hosting "Homecomings" at churches. Dr. Demian is a leader with Watchmen for the Nations ministry based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Bickle and IHOPKC staff were profoundly impacted by the love and relationships these Chinese Christians had with one another.

"One thousand Chinese believers who represent 20 million believers hosted what we called a 'Convergence,'" Bickle told attendees at a session at the last OneThing conference on Dec.

28 through Dec. 31. The series of meetings were held at the Forerunner Christian Fellowship over several days.

“IHOP has been radically changed. We’re deficient in flowing together as a family. The Lord used them to wake us up. We reset our entire vision to include a homecoming dimension.”

Bickle’s wife, Diane, said, “Seriously, the Lord surprised us. He did this at the ‘Convergence meetings’ with the Chinese. Seeing their strength and ability to cover one another when most of them were persecuted, betrayed by family, incarcerated and tortured and intense suffering forged a brotherhood and sisterhood of true love.”

Mike recounted part of IHOPKC’s prophetic history, including a notable vision given to him in the 1980s by Bob Jones, a prophetic minister. In the vision, Jones described Asian believers holding “unplugged TV sets” while watching praise and worship coming from Grandview, Missouri.

“Bob Jones said, ‘I saw them all over Asia with unplugged TV sets in their hands watching singers and musicians on Harris Truman’s property in Kansas City while standing in rice paddies,’” Bickle said. Bickle was pastoring a church in Leawood, Kansas, with 500 young adults at the time. “I looked at him [Jones] like a deer in headlights. I didn’t understand anything he was saying. Nobody did, for decades.”

When Jones gave Bickle the prophetic word, he said he didn’t have a desire to host a 24 hour, 7-day-a-week prayer or worship ministry or to reach Israel, and this was all before smartphones. Eventually the property that Harris Truman’s family owned in Grandview was donated to IHOPKC. The nation of Israel was formed under President Harry Truman’s administration, which was a prophetic connection, Bickle explained. IHOPKC was founded in a group of trailers in 1999 and hosted its first OneThing in 2000 with 5,000 attendees in Kansas City’s Municipal Auditorium.

For the final OneThing, the conference followed the format of the earlier "Convergence" meetings, with a looser structure over each three-hour session. The conference had a general schedule but didn't list speakers, worship leaders or breakout sessions. Main session speakers included IHOPKC leaders Allen Hood, Mike Bickle, Dean Briggs and guests such as Francis Chan, Lou Engle and Dr. Demian. The list of speakers and worship leaders wasn't published to encourage attendees to shift their focus from human personalities to God.

The sessions included times of repentance, intercession, worship and short teachings. One session focused on prayer for China. "Our No. 1 connection is with Chinese believers," Bickle told attendees. "They believe it (the vision of 24/7 prayer) even more than we do." Lou Engle, founder of TheCall, said, "TheCall has ended, and IHOP is resetting. IHOP is stepping into the realm of the Father heart of God. The first 20 years, we saw an unbelievable impact but God isn't just making us lovers of God, but also lovers of people." Engle and Bickle started ministering together in the late 1990s.

Past OneThing conferences have brought together ministries such as Youth With a Mission in an official partnership. Past speakers among others included Todd White, Reinhard Bonnke, Dr. Michael Brown, Ronnie Floyd. Worship leaders and artists such as Delirious, Matt Maher, Misty Edwards, Kari Jobe, Jesus Culture and Bethel ministered at the gatherings.

Dean Briggs, vice president of messaging, said, "We feel this reset has so many implications. There has been an internal restlessness for 2 to 3 years as the Lord has faithfully driven us back to our authentic core. We want a gut-level return to the first and second commandment, but also to be faithful messengers in this hour of history. In other words, talk to God, talk to one another, and talk to the world. That's our mandate, so that's the reset. We believe the prayer movement must be a voice and not an echo."