NAD YPAC News GODencounters Conference Gives Focus to Grace!
GODencounters Conference Gives Focus to the Rhythms of Grace

by A. Allan Martin, PhD, CFLE

“GODencounters has been an amazing experience and has led to a spiritual recharge in my life,” shared 33-year-old city planner, Alberto Mares. “Before, I felt like I was ‘running through the motions’ and now I’m excited to wake up each morning and pray, asking for GOD’s guidance in my life…This conference came along at just the right time in my life. Thank you GOD. Your timing is always perfect!”

Such were the sentiments of many young adults who attended the 2011 GODencounters Conference, held September 15-17 in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex of north central Texas. Over 1500 attendees from across the country convened at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church to give focus to living lives in sync with Christ, His grace, and His Sabbath.

“GODencounters challenged me to have a real relationship with God in the midst of my hurried life,” offered Kris Bryant, a 26-year-old licensed professional counselor from Oklahoma City, OK. “I am learning what it means to live and breathe the rhythms of grace.”

“Before GODencounters, I didn't know too much about the whole grace thing,” admitted Danielle Quaye, a student from Kennedale, TX. “[The conference] taught me to stop trying to be perfect, focusing on my mistakes, but rather focus on who Christ really is. It made me a lot closer to GOD.”

Dr. Matthew Gamble of Vagabondservant International was the featured presenter joined by recording artists Maria Long, Elia King, and the Younger Generation Church worship band. Including the international viewing audience of the live online broadcasts, conservative estimates suggest over 3500 in attendance.
“Matthew Gamble and GODencounters were an amazing blessing in my life,” remarked Danny Coello, a local small business owner. “Matthew’s biblical ability to bring an effective and meaningful twist to familiar subjects was outstanding. I’m appreciate how GODencounters is helping me, personally, in my spiritual journey.”

Registered nurse, Lisa Foster spoke of her husband, Rob, and her experience, “We loved it because GODencounters presented straight from the Bible and made it so clear…The impact it had on our relationship with GOD was to make it more REAL!”

“Matthew Gamble was such an awesome speaker,” echoed Diane Trujillo. “I learned so much from him and he put things in such a simple way that even I could understand it. He made me stop and think about the way I view my relationship with GOD.”

Following the worship sessions, the encounters café afforded attendees a relaxed atmosphere to enjoy meaningful conversations, inspiring music, and opportunities for building relationships. Additionally, a highlight of the conference was an experiential prayer room called KNEEL. It was open around-the-clock during GODencounters, and attendees arrived at all hours to share sacred time with GOD in prayer.

“The KNEEL prayer room was a blessing worth going through,” shared Diane, “Taking time to commune with GOD in the quiet was more spiritual than anything I’ve experienced before.”

“KNEEL was a huge blessing!” exclaimed 37-year-old Kari Huffman, who was in the midst of a battle with cancer during the time of the conference. “Very Spirit filled, and it allowed me to express my love for GOD in different and unique ways.”

“When I was in KNEEL, a realization that I was not satisfied with my relationship with GOD hit me like a ton
of bricks,” confessed Jascilyn Same, a 17-year-old high school student from Arlington. “The impact that it’s made on my life has changed the way I treat every situation…I thank GOD for allowing the opportunity for this wonderful conference.”

Culminating the conference, recording artist Kristian Stanfill held a worship concert, of which Kari commended, “I felt the presence of GOD through Kristian’s music…it was the perfect ending to my Sabbath!”

Yet GODencounters strives to not end at the conclusion of a conference. It aspires to be a vibrant, ongoing movement of new generations seeking a 24/7 experience of the living GOD. Through online media like facebook [www.facebook.com/GODencounters] and Twitter [www.twitter.com/GEtweets], the movement continues to offer young adults ongoing ways to walk with Christ.

Beryl Quaye, biology major at the University of Texas at Arlington, put it powerfully:

“GODencounters was a great experience. It was an eye-opener for me. I was baptized several months ago, but in my walk with Christ, I still yearn for more, for a deeper relationship. During GODencounters, one of Matthew Gamble’s messages highlighted the fact that Paul, one of the greatest men of GOD of all time, called himself a wretch and the chief of all sinners. Upon hearing this, I had an epiphany. I suddenly realized that on my own, I am horrible. I am evil. I am sinful. I fail at all my attempts to be good and to keep the law. But with Jesus and the grace HE can bring into my life, I can be full. And as His grace changes me, I will begin to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Now, I am indeed seeking a 24/7 experience with GOD, asking Christ to come into me and change things dramatically for the better. Largely because of the messages I heard at GODencounters, my prayer today and every day now is for Jesus to become everything to me.”

More on the GODencounters movement can be found at www.GODencounters, and expressed in a Pacific Press published book, GODencounters: Pursuing a 24/7 Experience of Jesus
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