

Denver Christmas Conference 2008

January 15, 2008 | For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:10



masterpiece

Masterpiece was the conference theme this year

| Prayer Requests |

- For all the students who were at DCC. Pray that they would have a passion to make Jesus their supreme satisfaction and treasure.
- For the outreaches to be launched this semester, like our partnership with the Gallup Organization and Strength Finders 2.0 (more on this next month).
- For our Spring Break trip in March (yes, it's right around the corner!) to Chicago to work in the inner city and with college students.
- For me, that I would stay focused on Jesus and continue to grow in knowing and treasuring him. Pray that my times with him in the Word and prayer would be enjoyable and fruitful.

| Conference Reflection |

During the entire week of DCC, I couldn't help but sense that God was knocking on the door of my heart. Every message, every song, every quiet time with him, I had this burning in my spirit to GO for Jesus. As I have been processing Ephesians 2:10, I cannot help but think of what God has prepared in advance *for me* to do. It's not enough to know that verse exists. What does it mean? I set that verse alongside James 2:18 which says, "But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from works, and I will show you my faith by *my works*." That means that without something to back up what I believe, my beliefs are pointless.

Most of you know, I have applied to and plan on enrolling in seminary next fall. During the week in Denver, I feel that the "burning in my spirit" was the Lord calling me to live and work for a year in South Africa, while putting off seminary for a year. I love Africa; my heart is for the people there. My faith is that God will do great things there. It's time to back up my faith and love for them by GOING and serving Africans and the Lord. Before the foundation of the world, God prepared for me a time in Africa to do his work.

With this prayer letter, I have included a one page story of this turn of events and some specific plans for the upcoming summer. God has a wild imagination and a month ago, I would have never guessed this would be on my table. Praise the Lord for his providence and sovereignty!

Conference in Denver expected to be catapult for second semester

- Twelve-hundred college students.
- Two-hundred staff members.
- Five gifted speakers.
- Two rockin' bands.
- One great Savior.

The Great Plains region of Campus Crusade for Christ gathered at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Denver, from January 2-7, to learn about how God is the Master and in us, he has crafted his masterpiece. The theme verse was Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his *masterpiece*, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." I feel like I learned just as much as the students! It was such a glorious week.

On the first night of the conference, Darryl Smith, National Director of Student Venture (Crusade's high school ministry) reminded us that we cannot read verse 10 of Ephesians 2 without reading verses 8 and 9, which say, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." Darryl said that we can do *nothing* to earn God's love and forgiveness. It's by grace alone. Even our good works have been given to us by the Lord. O, how this should bring us to our knees in worship of our great King!

Bryan Loritts was the keynote speaker for the week, preaching from the Bible each morning. Bryan is a pastor of a multi-cultural church in Memphis. Each morning, he challenged us to fall more in love with Jesus, letting everyone know that our passion is Jesus and not ourselves. Bryan did and said many things that stood out. Here are the top two:

- On the first day, Bryan was getting so excited, urging us to fall in love with Jesus, that he threw down his Bible as he walked the center aisle. He stood there and pumped his fist, "Fall in love with Jesus," he said. I'll never forget those words.
- On the third day, when he talked about helping the poor, he said, "Trying to explain materialism to an American is like trying to explain water to a fish. It's just where we live." I can't add any commentary to those words.

More than great speakers, the week was fruitful for me as I gave a seminar to students on how to study the Bible. Sixty-five students showed up and we had a good discussion on how to understand Scripture and some techniques to guide our interpretation of the Bible. I felt like a professor during this time! It was nice to be in control of a class for once. I have preached many times before in various settings, but this was the first time I had a role of teaching a seminar. It was so much fun and I feel like the students were edified from it. It was great to have some of them asking questions during the hour.

I appreciate DCC's coordinators for giving me the chance to teach about a subject I cherish.

One great story of the week was that I got to pray with a young man named Tony from Central Community College in Columbus, Nebraska. Before I prayed with Tony after one of the sessions, I had an older man come up to me and tell me about Tony. The man, also from Columbus, said that his son Alan is best friends with Tony. "He's struggling with homosexuality and he tries to defend it," the man said of Tony. "I don't think he gets it. He's at this conference, but he keeps making excuses." I just encouraged him to keep praying for and loving Tony. Then, not five minutes later, my roommate Chris came to me with a young man who was weeping. Chris proceeded to tell me that *Tony* has been struggling with *sexual sin* and wants Jesus to take control.

I was taken aback. How incredible this was! We prayed together and the Holy Spirit gave me so many Scriptural promises to pray over Tony. Some of the verses I didn't know that well. God provided in a huge way. After Tony left, I looked at Chris and asked, "Why did you come to *me*?" He said, "I prayed for him and wasn't satisfied. I felt God telling me, 'Go pray with James.'" Then, I told Chris about the conversation with the older man. Chris couldn't believe it. "We just witnessed a miracle," he said. Yes, we did, Chris. Yes we did.

After the students left on the 7th, we had a staff conference for two more days. During that time we had a seminar on launching movements. A movement is "God working through a team of like-hearted disciples to Win, Build, and Send people to fulfill the Great Commission." Personally, I feel like God gave me a wider lens to look through for this second semester in order to reach lost students for Jesus. I want to reach as many people as possible and in order to do that, some things need to be refined, such as discipleship and how broadly we spread the seed of the gospel. You will hear more about "movements" in the coming months.

Thanks for your partnership in the gospel! Without you, things like DCC could not happen. Your prayers and support are greatly appreciated.

Longing to walk in God's good works,

James



Students worshipping the Lord with Foolish Things, one of the bands at DCC

UNL students at a \$5 Prom after an evening session

