

“But Seek First His Kingdom”

Joint DuPage/NIU UBF Summer Bible Conference Report

DuPage/NIU UBF held a joint Summer Bible Conference on July 24th to the 26th 2009, at the beautiful campus of McDonald’s corporation. The conference was held in the Hyatt Lodge. The title of the conference was “*But Seek First His Kingdom*” based in Matthew 6:33. The intent was for all attendants to decide to stop seeking worldly treasure and to decide to seek Jesus and the Kingdom of God as top priority in their lives. God blessed our two ministries to co-work well and God sent 50 attendants, 17 through NIU and 33 through DuPage. The conference was graceful and powerful, giving each of us clear life direction.

The conference site was so beautiful. It was the site of Hamburger University, the place where McDonald’s trains its managers. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hamburger_University.jpg) There is 80 acres of forest, trails, sculptures, and two lakes filled with giant carp. The rooms were 4 star hotel rooms. The food was restaurant style. It was local, in Oakbrook Illinois and a great environment to relax and focus on the word of God. We thank God for providing such an environment.

Part I: Pre Conference Co-working

The work of God began about two months before the actual conference. We came up with the program and the messengers. For one month we met together for Friday meetings, alternating chapters. Our messengers shared testimonies and delivered before each other, humbly accepting constructive criticism. The drama team and the praise teams met regularly. Msn Susanna Hajek created a vibrant invite card. Julie Jesmer used her conference planning talents to secure the site at a great price. We were in constant communication. Indeed much of the work of God happened before the conference.

Part II: The Messengers

Each main message was introduced with group Bible study. God raised up six groups. There were “age appropriate” groups for the elementary and middle school students. All groups were well attended. Almost everyone wrote testimonies. Each group raised up one testimony sharer for the Saturday evening program.

The opening message was delivered by Tim Sagel, a 3rd year E/E student of NIU UBF. His message was entitled, “*Jesus Calls His First Disciples*” based on Matt 8:18-22. He revealed that Jesus called the first disciples from a meaningless life of simply surviving, to a meaningful life of being a fishers of people. He thanked God for saving him from a life of being a failed student and a part-time dog walker, to being a shepherd for college students. His message was clear and painful with lots of practical applications. Tim prays to be a source of blessing at the up coming European Summer Bible Conference.

Jon Greene from DuPage UBF, delivered the morning devotional. His message was called “*Three Different Kinds Of Heart Soils*” based on Matt 13:1-23. Through his message we discovered that God wants us to pull out the thorns in our lives and cultivate our hearts so that the seed of the Word of God may grow. Part of seeking God’s kingdom first is to cultivate our hearts. He revealed how Jesus helped him to pull the thorns from his own heart and allow faith to grow strong. Jon was full of spirit through the whole conference. He prays to be as a blessing at the European Summer Conference.

Kevin Jesmer, pastor of NIU UBF, delivered the main message. The title was “*But Seek First His Kingdom*” based in Matt 6:19-34. In the message he revealed that Jesus cares about the condition of our hearts and wants us to seek his kingdom and his righteousness and not the perishing things of the world. God will provide all we need for life and ministry and eternal life keep our priority. He shared his own personal testimony of how God blessed his life of faith when he made decisions of faith, at crucial moments, to seek God’s kingdom first. He urged all attendants to do the same, though it may require sacrifice at times.

That evening, Hannah Kim, a member of DuPage UBF and a recent graduate from Wheaton College, delivered a message entitled, “*The Wise And Foolish Builders*” based on Matt 7:24-29. She encouraged us to, seek God’s kingdom by taking the extra time and effort to dig deep and lay the foundation of our lives on the word of God. It may seem to take more time and effort, but it is all worth it, for we can stand in the face of all storms of life. Hannah shared very joyfully. She led the grade school kids as well.

Sunday morning, Jennifer Jesmer, a high school student in grade 10, delivered a message, entitled, “*The Greatest Treasure Is Jesus*” based on Matt 13:44-46. She stated that there are small, fine pearls, that people seek in this world. They think these things are “good enough” and are content with small pearls. But God has a pearl of great value and a treasure of great worth for anyone who gives everything they have to get it. She confessed that her life is filled with things that seem good enough, but they are distracting her from the great treasure of the Kingdom of God. She repented and re-dedicated her heart to Jesus. She prayed that her message would touch the heart of her two friends who came, Payton and Heather.

The main message on Sunday was delivered by Jeremy Hajek, a PhD student at IIT and a leader at the DuPage UBF. His message was entitled, “*Go And Make Disciples Of All Nations*” based on Matt 28:16-20. Jeremy encouraged us all to go beyond just learning about Jesus but, under the authority of Jesus, put our faith into practice and go and make disciples of all nations. He stated that we are blessed to be a blessing. Jeremy prays that he and his co-worker, Susanna, can be a blessing to the young people of COD. The message was made practical through the mission report of Msn Andrew Yoon of Yabatec University in Lagos Nigeria. Our Thanksgiving offering will be dedicated to Yabatec pioneering work.

Part III: World Mission Vision

God planted world mission vision in our hearts. On Sunday, Msn Andrew Yoon delivered a “Yabatec University” mission report with accompanying power point and video of Lagos Nigeria. Lagos seems so difficult a mission field, but there is a small taste of the Kingdom of God at Yabatec University. God is helping them to renovate an 18 room former maternity hospital into a Bible house. Msn Rebecca Yoon shared her life testimony where she testified that through her struggles with boys and the “whip” of life, she was able to draw near to Jesus and be his missionary. We heard beautiful testimonies from their two young girls, Sarah and Becky. They were full of life and vitality. Sarah even spoke English with an African accent. Msn Joshua Kim, from SNU 3, in Korea, shared his life testimony. Hope and Sarah Jesmer prepared a power point presentation of India UBF pioneering work and then NIU UBF performed an India dance showing the conversion of Hindu people through Bible study and prayer.

Part IV: Supporting Programs

The music team glorified God. The Jesmer kids sang “The Brave Apostles 12”. Sarah and Hope Jesmer sang, “The Stones and the Sea.” Hannah and Esther Kim and Isaac Bahn sang, “When We Rise.” Julie and Jennifer Jesmer sang, “Who am I?” Msn Gideon Bahn sang, “He Lives.” Matthew Monroe played a Euphonium solo. All of the songs worked together to highlight the messages well. The joint praise team worked hard to create a spiritual atmosphere through praise music. They are indeed maturing as musicians who can lead congregations to Jesus.

Shp Kevin wrote and directed the drama. It was a drama about the conversion of Levi to Saint Matthew. Despite of summer classes, all the members committed to practice and produced a very joyful drama, clearly revealing the agony of Levi, when he lived to solve his money problems. It showed the joy of his changed life when he decided to seek first God’s kingdom by following Jesus.

Msn David delivered the closing prayer topics. He encouraged us all, that when we go back to our mission fields, that we will seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness, as of first importance, in many practical ways. We gathered for historic picture taking. That after noon co-workers stayed behind to enjoy baseball, tennis, swimming and hiking. Later, NIU served some people McDonald’s food and others went to Korean restaurant. We pray that God may bless further co-working in serving the student of the western suburbs of Chicago.