

Youth Advance 2014 – Belong to the Truth

The promotion for this event started with an image of tranquility on what looked like an old vinyl record sleeve; a picture of a large, diverse family sitting at a long picnic table having lunch together in full view of an expansive ocean front, situated beside a large oak tree offering them shade from the high-noon sun. The verse printed on this portrait reminded the viewer of the “great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God,” words taken from a series of letters written by John, an original disciple of Jesus. The picture was an invitation to *belong*, more specifically, an invitation to *Belong to the Truth*, the theme of Youth Advance 2014 at Bethany College.

As youth entered the College on Friday, January 31st for this annual three-day event, they were greeted



Stephanie Chase, George Hembury Emcees for the Weekend

by a school transformed to look and feel like a visit to “Grandma’s house,” a place of family and belonging. The hard work the students of the college put into this was striking. On arrival, high school students from across Western Canada attending this event, made their way through a living room, past a cozy bedroom, down a hallway with old family photos hanging on the wall next to an oak staircase and banister, and past the laundry room, which led them to the gymnasium and the weekend’s main stage.

First on the stage were Bethany students Stephanie Chase and George Hembury, who entertained the crowd with one-liners and funny quips as they introduced the event. Youth were then invited to savour a meal of chicken and roast potatoes, topped off with a deluxe chocolate cake dessert, intended to be reminiscent of Grandma’s home cooked meals. Following the meal, students were entertained by a dramatic presentation of “The Family Nobody Wanted” performed by Bethany students, and directed by Ministry Arts Director, Susan J Schmidt Goerz.

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Krystal Esau, Spencer Groenenboom, Josiah Fillmore in "The Family Nobody Wanted"



Sid Koop - Guest Speaker

Sid Koop, a well-known communicator to youth and the Director of Truth Matters Ministries, was the main speaker. Koop invited youth to “awaken to the truth of Jesus,” and to belong to Him, “the Truth.” Koop also hosted a workshop called, “Our Digital Reality: Following Christ in a New World,” a session intended to help youth understand the impact of technology on their lives, and to use technology to communicate the love and truth of Jesus to a broken world.

Joining Koop on the stage to lead singing, and for a late-night concert on Saturday evening, was the popular and three-time GMA award-winning band, THE COLOR. Originating from Winkler Manitoba, the band provided a solid background to the entire event, mingled with the youth, and presented a workshop called, “Band Stuff.”



THE COLOR - from Winkler Manitoba

The theme of the weekend echoed the spirit of Bethany College itself, a community of over 100 students building relationships and learning to follow Jesus through study and service learning opportunities. Likewise, the event was designed for youth to have fun, worship God, and to see hearts changed. As lead organizer of the event and Associate Dean of Men, Dave Carey, explained to the attendees, “it is my prayer that the lessons of this weekend – the amazing worship moments, chats with youth leaders, and the fun – would be stepping stones on your journey of transformation into the likeness of Jesus.” The event was an invitation to *belong to the Truth*.

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Bethany College Press Release
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Nurturing Disciples and Training Leaders to Serve

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