

# Hispanic Baptist youth challenged to “get into Jesus”

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**By Eric Guel**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

HOUSTON—A Fort Worth pastor urged more than 2,500 Hispanic youth and singles at the Texas Baptist Hispanic Youth and Singles Congreso to “get into Jesus.”

“I’m here to ask you tonight: What are you into?” said Julio Guarneri, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Getsemani in Fort Worth. “We want to belong to a group, a community; we’re looking for meaning. I’m here tonight because I’m into Jesus.”

Julio Guarneri
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While urging the young people to direct their passions toward Jesus, he offered several clarifications, helping conference participants to not misconstrue the meaning of “getting into God.”

Guarneri warned of the danger of searching for a spiritual feeling, because when the feeling fades, people tend to blame the church and God.

“It’s not about getting into a feeling,” he said. “You know when you get goose bumps when you’re in a place of worship? That’s when you get a feeling. There’s nothing wrong with feelings, but what happens when the feeling is gone?”

He urged listeners to not equate religious activity with commitment to Christ.

“Activity is how some people measure their spirituality,” he said. “The assumption is that the less involved you are in activities, the further you are from God. I think activity can be an idol in our lives that takes the place of intimacy with God.”

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Guilt is not tantamount to spiritual growth, Guarneri explained.

“God’s purpose for putting conviction in your heart is to restore communion with you,” he said. “If you’re moving from guilt trip to guilt trip, you’re missing the point. He wants to lead you to repentance.”

The focus, Guarneri emphasized, should be a growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Get into Jesus as a person,” he said. “Get to know him, get to love him. He loves you.”

Congreso, sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, drew participants from more than 130 Hispanic Texas Baptist congregations.

“Our goal was to really push for the fact that we can impact our world,” said Tiny Dominguez, BGCT Hispanic student events coordinator. “Hispanics aren’t a missions project. We’re called to do missions to the world.”

Sabrina Perrazas from Christian Fellowship Church in Midland said Congreso changed her life.

“This was the first time I have really felt the Holy Spirit inside of me,” she said. “I’m going to live for Jesus.”

Perrazas’ experience was not an anomaly, Congreso President Victor Cuellar said.

“Quite a few people made decisions for Christ; we actually ran out of decision cards on Thursday night,” he said. “By that standard, it was an awesome weekend.”

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