

Conclave speakers urge youth ministers to remain faithful to divine calling

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David Platt, pastor of the Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., told youth ministers as long as they have the word of God and the Holy Spirit of God, they have all the tools necessary to make a difference in the lives of students.

Conclave speakers urge youth ministers to remain faithful to divine calling

By John Hall

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ARLINGTON—Following God's leadership in youth ministry can be difficult, but it's well worth it, keynote speakers told participants at the Baptist General Convention of Texas Youth Ministry Conclave.

The time constraints, pressures, and ups and downs of youth ministry can cause burnout and push leaders to question if they should continue serving, said Ralph West, pastor of the [Church Without Walls](#) in Houston. But that comes with the territory.



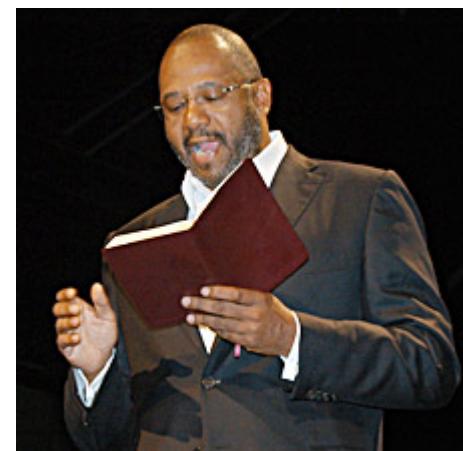
West, whose congregation is among the fastest-growing churches in the nation, asked conference participants to stand if they were considering quitting vocational ministry.

About one-fifth of the 600-person audience stood and allowed others to pray for them. Some individuals standing put their face in their hands. Others fell to their knees. Tears streamed down the cheeks of some.

West reminded youth ministry leaders that according to her diary, Mother Teresa served people who were poor, sick or orphaned in Calcutta, India, nearly 50 years without hearing from God. Even so, she continued following God's original call in her life.

West encouraged conclave participants to continue following God's call upon their lives faithfully like Mother Teresa. At times, that requires waiting. At others, it demands following a leader without question. Above all, trust in God is needed, he insisted.

"You need faith in ministry," he said. "You need deep trust in ministry."



Ralph West, pastor of the Church Without Walls in Houston, used the story of Mother Teresa to challenge youth ministers to stay true to their calling, even when God feels distant from them.

David Platt, pastor of the [Church at Brook Hills](#) in Birmingham, Ala., affirmed that Jesus is worthy of "all of our trust," "all of our plans and dreams" and "all affections."

He described his recent experience in East Asian underground churches. Christians—who constantly are being threatened with violence by a cult in the area—sat on small stools for 12 hours a day to listen to him teach about the Bible, he reported.

They prayed for hours, with tears rolling down their faces and forming puddles on the dirt floor beneath them.

“They love the word” of God, Platt said. “They risk their lives to study it.”

Platt encouraged conclave participants to continue ministering, saying they had all the necessary tools to make an impact in people’s lives.

God honors their commitment to him and will work through them, he insisted.

“As long as you’ve got the word and the Spirit, you’ve got everything you need to change the lives of students,” he said.

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