

Flip flops. Bibles. Teenagers: YEC cultivates relationships with God

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FLIP FLOPS. BIBLES. TEENAGERS: YEC cultivates relationships with God

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DALLAS- Struggling through the teenage years can be difficult under ordinary circumstances, but for 13-year-old Raymond Lopez the road has been particularly painful — until now.

Just days before his youth group from Amistad Cristiana Baptist Church in Midland joined nearly 8,000 teenagers, adults and volunteers for the Youth Evangelism Conference June 29-30, Lopez' mother left him, his aunt moved to New York City and other family members remained thousands of miles away in Puerto Rico.



Families,
friends and
youth
leaders
prayed for
youth
missionaries
as they
prepared to
leave for a
Germany
mission
during YEC
2007

Joining students, parents and youth leaders from across Texas, Lopez and his youth leader, Ariana Chavez, prayed about cultivating relationships with others and with God. They praised and worshipped as Christian bands played and were inspired by keynote speakers, J.R. Vassar who recently started a new church in New York City, and youth evangelist Daniel 'Tiny' Dominguez, pastor of Community Heights Church in Lubbock.

Throughout the two-day event, the central YEC theme- Cultivate, based on John 4: 39-41 — began moving hearts and minds. The first night, Lopez made a profession of faith which left both he and his youth leader in tears. "It is awesome to see how God is working in his life."

"Now, I have found it doesn't matter what my parents do, I still have my Father in heaven. He 's going to take care of me," Lopez said proudly.

"God is doing amazing things. It's just kids are so ready to give life," Chavez added. "Our congregation is probably only 120 to 150 people, but we have a youth group of about 40, and three teens in all professed their

faith at YEC."

Cultivating relationships with each other and with God is the central theme of YEC 2007 and Super Summer 2007 — both are evangelism events coordinated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Leighton Flowers, director of BGCT youth evangelism, believes the mission ahead will be met through cultivation.

"The real emphasis is to cultivate relationships with the Father, then with others to introduce them to God," Flowers explained. Throughout the two-day event, participants saw video vignettes of how different groups are cultivating lives, and innovative ways to cultivate others for Christ. He encouraged young people and youth leaders to build relationships by cultivating campuses, homes, friends, communities and the world.

This year at YEC, 24 people made professions of faith, 42 recommitted their lives to God, and 16 made commitments to ministry. And, the cultivation continues this summer through 300 youth missionaries commissioned during YEC. The group is bound for Germany where they will witness through sports camps and Bible schools.

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