

More than 1,600 Hispanic Baptists gather for evangelism conference

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By Nora Frost

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HOUSTON—Tears fell like the emotional and spiritual baggage people carried to the Hispanic Evangelism Conference, sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas Feb. 1-2.

Conference participants crowded in front of the altar and into the aisles each night to make spiritual decisions. People embraced and prayed for one another and for non-Christians around them as they professed Christ as Lord.

Featured preacher Alberto Mottesì encouraged Hispanic Texas Baptists to show compassion.



More than
1,600
participants
joined in
praise and
worship at
the Hispanic
Evangelism
Conference
in Houston,
sponsored by
the Baptist
General
Convention
of Texas.
(Photo by
Nora Frost)

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“The world is tired of religion,” Motessi said.

The best two ways to combat society’s apathy toward religion is by demonstrating loyalty to Christ and holiness before God, he said.

“Evangelism is a mandate from God,” said Roy Villarreal, a member of Iglesia Bautista Mount Horeb in McAllen. “This conference has prepared us and reminded us of that mandate. It has also helped re-establish the need for knowing the Bible.”

Though the Hispanic Evangelism Conference drew a large number of Hispanic leaders from churches, it also attracted about 300 future leaders in its student sessions.

Josh Fernandez, 15, of Katy, said he appreciated the contemporary worship and English workshops geared towards youth because he is able to relate and learn more from that culture.

Participants at the conference raised \$5,700 as a love offering for the Asociación Bautista Latino América for rebuilding efforts in Mexico following Hurricane Dean.

Fueled by the conference's Acts 4:33 theme, the more than 1,600 people in attendance said they were refreshed by the messages they heard, as well as the people they met.

"It was a great blessing to be able to learn from our brothers and sisters," said Juanita Montoya, a member of Iglesia Bautista Hispana in Brookshire. "Plus, it has been great getting to know the great leadership that is around us."

Workshops covered topics such as effective community outreach, new models for missions, personal evangelism and ministering to families along the border.

"This conference is a result of the diversified needs of Hispanic churches in Texas," said Frank Palos, BGCT director of Hispanic evangelism. "It was resolved that Hispanics needed a conference to address the various types of needs in the church."

Though the conference featured mainly Spanish workshops and worship, Palos said the conference was meant to serve the diverse cultural needs of Hispanic Baptists—Spanish- dominant, English-dominant and bilingual congregations.

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