

Hispanic Baptists urged to renew passion for ministry

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WACO—In dark and stormy times, church leaders need to remember Jesus still is present and in control, a Waco-area pastor told participants at a Hispanic rally held in conjunction with Texas Baptists' annual meeting.

Hispanic Baptists from around the state joined for fellowship, worship and encouragement at the Nov. 17 rally held at First Woodway Baptist Church.

Tom Gutierrez, pastor of Viento Fuerte Church in Woodway, tied the story of Jesus calming the storm to the common problem of ministry fatigue.

There are times in life when it seems God is silent, Gutierrez said. Doors are closed. Sermons fall on deaf ears. Evangelism appears to have no impact. It is easy to wonder where God is during these stormy times, he acknowledged.

"Even though we're tired, even though we see the storm, even though it seems heaven is silent, Jesus is in the boat," Gutierrez said. "He's with you. He's telling you, 'Let's go.'"

"Church, I challenge you tonight, take that obligation, that privilege, because there are people that are coming who need what you have."

New sight, new vocation

Victor Rodriguez, Texas Baptists' Hispanic evangelism associate and discipleship specialist, encouraged pastors to meditate on the Apostle Paul's conversion when they feel their passion for ministry fading.

“Saul was a man who was after Christians and God’s church,” Rodriguez said. “He got to a point in life where he saw Christians die daily for the cause of Jesus. One day, God came face-to-face with this young man, and his life was never the same.”

Paul was motivated after his conversation by three things: new life, new sight and a new vocation, Rodriguez noted.

“Paul never forgot where Jesus found him,” Rodriguez said. “When did you last stand back and remember the day that Jesus came into your life and how He changed your life? No one can stand and say, ‘I deserve to be here.’ We’re here by the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

In conversion, Paul also received new sight and a new vision of Christ and his call.

“Pastors, how do you see your church?” he asked. “How do you see your calling? How do you see your community? How do you see your ministry? How do you see your life?”

He challenged pastors to ask God for new and fresh sight in order to renew their motivation to serve.

Finally, Paul’s new vocation compelled him to serve Jesus. Rodriguez encouraged pastors to reflect on their calling to ministry and the specific work and mission God prepared for them.

Rolando Rodriguez, director of Texas Baptists’ Hispanic ministry, closed the evening by calling pastors and their wives to the front of the room to celebrate a special recognition of Pastor Eliseo Aldape and the impact of his 60-year career in ministry.