

‘Tiny’ Dominguez tackles big job of bridging generations

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LUBBOCK—Daniel “Tiny” Dominguez understands the challenge of honoring tradition and embracing change.

His first calling to ministry focused on youth ministry, but after 12 years as pastor of Community Heights Church in Lubbock, he recognizes his role as bridging the older and younger generations and helping them understand each other.

“You are not the church of tomorrow; you are the church now,” Dominguez tells students.



Daniel “Tiny” Dominguez (right), pastor of Community Heights Church in Lubbock, has been a frequent speaker at youth events and conferences.

In turn, he advises adult church leaders, “You must give them the space to participate now.”

Before he became pastor at Community Heights, Dominguez already had

extensive ministry experience as a speaker at various youth camps, rallies and student events. He will speak at Congreso, an annual event for Hispanic teenagers and young adults, April 18-20 at Baylor University.

Many of the young people at those events were the sons and daughters of first-generation immigrants from Latin America, he noted.

Since then, Dominguez said, he has worked to help teenagers find their own identity between the world their parents came from and the world where they are growing up.

Because they live between two cultures, Hispanic teenagers may need help finding their own voice, he said.

As a pastor, Dominguez has seen how important it is for churches to open spaces for young men and women to serve. He rejects the idea that youth ministry is just about investing in the church of the future. Rather, it involves being present with students right now, he said.

Dominguez understands his role in the church requires him to help people of all ages understand Christ's call to serve others. Based on his experience, he believes many young men and women are ready to serve.

"A lot of them are the most giving, but they do not give without a reason," he said. "They already want to serve, so we need to support them."

Teenagers and young adults already want to participate in the church, but if older Christians are not willing to collaborate with them, give them space to grow, and mentor them, then churches are not doing all they can to disciple others, he insisted.

"Discipleship is about giving people the tools they need," Dominguez said. "When we are not willing to give them space to grow, then we are limiting them."

Dominguez explained he believes churches that are open to listening to younger generations and willing to let them lead are churches that help them grow in discipleship.

“We want to walk with them as they find the identity Christ wants them to have,” he said.