

Doers of the Word

Latin American NextGen Conference 2024

Sao Paulo, Brazil

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22)



From July 17th to 23rd of 2024, the first Conference of the Next Generations of Latin America was held. This conference was held in Brazil, at the “Mount of Olives” camp, thanks to the collaboration of UBF San Pablo. With fifty attendees from nine countries, God gave us the grace to gather and decide to be doers of the word.

Brazil exploded with joy to receive the “Conference of the Next Generations of Latin America.” There was so much excitement to receive the conference that the day before the conference (Wednesday, July 17th), we ran out of light in the church in San Pablo. But we had a

lovely evening eating pizza together with the collaborators of UBF San Pablo. On the day of the conference (Thursday, July 18th), we also ran out of light at the conference site, so we took the opportunity to do several of the activities, taking advantage of the natural light and the beautiful landscape of the “Mount of Olives” camp.

Nine countries represented the conference: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, the United States, and Venezuela. A total of fifty attendees participated, including members of the Committee of the following generations, members of UBF San Pablo, and some companions. Twenty-seven Next Generation members participated, not counting the Next Generation that were involved in organizing the conference. The ages of the participants ranged from 14 to 26 years.



With the title of “Doers of the word,” based on James 1:22, we study the Letter of James in its entirety. We divided the letter into four parts and shared meditation on two of the four days of the conference.

At this conference, we had a total of six messages, a symposium, and a workshop. Each of these words was chosen to emphasize that we are not only hearers of the word but doers of the word. Thus, the opening message was based on 2 Corinthians 3:1-3, “You are letters of recommendation of Christ,” by M. John Rhee (USA, Louisville). The first lecture was James 1-2, “Doers of the word,” by Sh. Jorge Rubí (Mexico, CU). The second lecture was James 3, “Who is wise?” by M. John Rhee. The third lecture was James 4, “Draw near to God,” by M. Ester Kim (Ecuador). The fourth lecture and Sunday worship message was James 5, “The Powerful and Effective Prayer,” by M. Moses Park (Brazil, Sao

Paulo).

M. Isaac Park (Mexico, Iztacala) served the closing message based on 1 Peter 2:9-10, with the title “A Royal Priest”. He reminded us that we are not ugly ducklings in the world, but we were called to be priests of the royal court of God. Therefore, we are blessed, especially by our Heavenly Father. We are not to fear the world but to challenge by following God's direction.

M. Goheun Park (USA, Louisville) hosted the symposium “God Before a Gold Medal,” where she presented the life of Eric Liddell. Liddell retired from the 100m race, which was his specialty, at the 1924 Paris Olympics, as the gold medal race would be held on a Sunday. Liddell participated in the 400m race, of which he did not have time to train well, and won the gold. But, instead of living with the glory of an Olympic winner, Liddell decided to go as a missionary to China, where he died during the Japanese invasion of China. Through Liddell's life, we learned to prioritize Sunday worship and serving God's work, even when it means missing out on opportunities that seem golden in our lives.

M. John Rhee served a workshop on how to pray with the Psalms. The point of this workshop was to encourage young people to enjoy the time of prayer alone before the Lord.

Thus, praying with the Psalms was given as a tool for starting to pray or for achieving prayer after struggling for a long time alone.

M. Edith Nájera (El Salvador), Sh. Eva Alemán (Mexico, Guadalajara), and Sh. Verónica García (Mexico, CU) guided the study groups of the four lectures. We thank God that they diligently prepared each of these words in order to reach the hearts of the young participants. We thank them for serving each of the members of their study groups with love in Christ.

Recreational activities were an essential part of our conference to have fellowship time. As a conference of the Next Generations, we wanted to provide an for them to live together and have a time of fraternity. The word is absolutely indispensable in the conference, but also the opportunity to get to know each other in order to grow together as brothers and sisters in Christ. So, M. Maria Cho (Bolivia, Santa Cruz 2) was in charge of seeking, preparing, and guiding our recreational activities. With Joao Han's (Brazil, Sao Paulo) collaboration, we had an enjoyable time doing both indoor and outdoor activities. (And we take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the yellow team for getting the most points in the games!)

On Saturday night, we made a campfire. We shared a quiet time singing, chatting, and eating roasted marshmallows. Although the humidity made it a little tricky to light the campfire, by combining the ingenuity and experience of the young people, we were able to overcome that minor problem.



Some of the young people who participate in the Proverbs Bible Reading Club shared their life testimonies during the conference. Most were writing their life testimony for the first time, so M. Goheun helped them by encouraging and guiding them to write a testimony where they could present the grace, they received in their lives through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to Abigail Ibarra (Mexico, CU), Andrea Rubí (Mexico, CU), David Rodríguez (Colombia), Diana Rojas (Colombia), Frida Reséndiz (Mexico, Cuautitlán), Samantha Ramírez (Venezuela), and Samuel León (Mexico, Guadalajara) who shared their life testimonies. They are young people who are facing the world and struggling to keep their faith in the Lord. Although they have lost some battles, they have recognized that the Lord has always been with them through thick and thin and through the worst. And the Lord has always shown them His abundant love. We pray that the Next Generation's young people may mature firmly in the faith, reflecting Christ in their lives to the glory of our God. We are convinced that if they continue in the struggle of faith as they have done so far, God will give them the final victory in the spiritual war.

First of all, we must thank God for allowing this first conference for the Next Generations of Latin America. We also have to thank all the collaborators of the UBF San Pablo chapter in Brazil. We are very grateful to all the pastors and missionaries who served us before and after the



conference by picking us up and taking us to the airport, opening their houses so that we attendees could sleep, and they also served us meals. We are especially grateful to M. Moses Park, M. Sara Kim, M. Joshua Park, M. Peter Park, M. Ester Cho, Vanessa Balbino, Joao

Han, Diogenes Santos, and Isabel Ahn who served us at the conference and on the trip to Rio de Janeiro. We thank them for their sacrifice and for their passion to serve God's work.

We also thank M. Isaac Park and the coordinators of Latin America. We thank them for their unconditional support for this conference. And we thank them, especially for their vision and prayers for the ministry of the Next Generations.

Without a doubt, the Next Generations have great potential. They have an excellent example from their parents, who pray for them and give their example of faith. They have their pastors, who are extra support for their growth and strengthening in their life of faith. They have their church, who are their family of faith in Christ. Even if some of them live in small ministries where they are alone, or maybe there are one or two other families, they should know that they are not totally alone. First of all, our Lord will always be with them. Secondly, they have a lot of people to lean on. Thirdly, as if that were not enough, they have their friends, and more than friends, brothers in faith. Now more than ever, technology brings us closer to each other. While it will never be the same as being in person, technology has made the world smaller. We pray that they may use technology wisely to strengthen and encourage each other.

They all have potential to be leaders. Although there were times when they expressed their disagreement in certain situations, they also showed their total obedience to the directions of the conference organizers. Thanks to this attitude, we did not have any accidents or problems at the conference. Several members of the staff personally expressed their concerns to me about guiding such a large group of young people. But all of them behaved impeccably, which surprised everyone. Leadership is required to support positively those who are leaders at the moment.

Our Next Generations have a good understanding of the word. Through their life testimonies and meditations on the words studied at the conference, they manifested that they understand the word of God and strive to live it out. They are all still very young. However, they have a good attitude and a fighting spirit to live by faith. They need continuous support until they reach spiritual maturity in Christ.

Personally, I had a lot of uncertainty and concern when I was organizing the conference. However, the participants' behavior and spiritual maturity encouraged me to believe that they will undoubtedly be good leaders and collaborators in God's work. We must continue to pray for

them. It is not that they have already reached spiritual maturity. However, just as the Twelve Disciples became the Apostles of the early church, our Next Generations have that potential. If we continue to pray for them and support them according to their spiritual needs, they will undoubtedly be the teachers of the Bible for their generations and those to come. Let us pray that our Next Generations will continue to listen to the word of God and be doers of the word.

Honor and glory to God forever and ever!

In Christ,

John Rhee