

'Divided' Film Banned From Youth Ministry Conference

Divided, a documentary film that raises probing questions about dangers associated with modern youth ministry, has been thrown out of a major conference. Having gone viral with over 100,000 online views, *Divided* has generated an enormous response in the blogosphere since being released on .

The film's message—that churches should follow the Bible's pattern of ministering to young people, not disregard it—has been deemed as too controversial by organizers of the D6 Conference. That opinion prompted conference organizers to disinvite the film's co-producer, the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches, from attending its annual family ministry event in Dallas this week.

Ron Hunter, executive director and CEO of Randall House, the sponsor of D6, made the decision because he thought NCFIC's presence at the conference would "cause tension." In an Aug. 29 letter, Hunter wrote: "The New DVD *Divided* does not fit the D6 Conference venue, created for sharing conversations about various biblical methods. Bringing together different biblical models requires grace and acceptance, as we share the path of generational discipleship." Hunter also stated that the NCFIC is the first group D6 has ever disinvited, even as he admitted that he had not viewed the film *Divided* before coming to his decision.

"Many of the exhibitors say they advocate a position," says Peter Bradrick, the producer of *Divided*. "For some reason, only the NCFIC is not allowed to talk about their position. The stated purpose of the D6 conference is to explore biblical discipleship solutions that address the mass epidemic of today's youth leaving the church and abandoning the faith. This is precisely what our film *Divided* does."

Doug Phillips, founder of Vision Forum Ministries who briefly appears in *Divided*, says the film's detractors have sent a clear message to the church: "they will accept virtually anything from evangelicalism, except the position that says that the discipleship of youth should be directed in a family-integrated context, and that the youth-driven 'Youth Ministry' is toxic; this position will not be tolerated."

As NCFIC Director Scott Brown sees it, the opposition the film has garnered illustrates one of its core messages: the church today cannot relate to what was the established pattern of biblical church life. She has drifted away from Scripture and toward modern culture for her answers.

"The resistance is understandable when you consider how difficult it is to change youth ministry and how much money is involved in the whole age-segregated superstructure that undergirds modern church," says Brown, likening the scorn toward *Divided's* perspective on youth ministry to the conflicts during the Protestant Reformation as the church was embracing "Sola Scriptura."

"Our message is simple: 'Trust God's Word alone; it is sufficient.'" Sadly, this view is looked on with great suspicion today," Brown says. "Things have gotten bad when a leading Christian conference rejects even a discussion of what the Bible clearly teaches!"