

Southern Baptist President Leads Thousands of Students in Prayer for Awakening

Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd asked over 15,000 attendees at the International House of Prayer Onething 2015 Young Adult Conference in Kansas City to kneel in prayer and ask God for an awakening. Floyd led the prayer after exhorting attendees that the nation urgently needed a spiritual awakening. His appearance at the conference stirred controversy among conservative online Baptist publications such as *Pulpit and Pen* and *The Reformed Report*.

"My being here isn't an endorsement of your theology or your endorsing my orthodoxy," Floyd told attendees. "If we're honest with each other, we know that thousands of us that are filling this convention center and thousands of us that are watching this online, we're not in total agreement about life, ministry or the Bible. ... Yet my being here is a clear indication that people must come together and pray."

Mike Bickle, founder of the International House of Prayer, said he invited Floyd to speak after hearing him urge Baptist leaders to pray and fast. "His (Floyd's) book is about prayer and fasting," Bickle said at the opening main session. "I thought that we needed to hear him."

During the four-day conference, Bickle had a private meeting with 25 bishops and leaders from the Russian-speaking world. One of the leaders, Bishop Boris Borickeriskiy, the director of the Russian Evangelical Churches, a network of 4,000 churches, and senior pastor of a church in Moscow, became a Christian at 18 years old under the Communist regime. "I was born in the Soviet era in a Christian family," Borickeriskiy said. "During that time we didn't have opportunity to preach

the gospel. Because we would not accept the communist idea, we were persecuted.

“Beginning of the '90s, God made a miracle because many Christians from around the world were praying for us because my parents received letters from Christians (who) were praying for us,” Borickeriskiy said. “In the beginning of the 1990s, the gospel came into Russia.” Borickeriskiy said that more than 100,000 villages and settlements in Russia don't have a church.

Bickle said he visited with the group for 2 1/2 hours. “We talked about God's purpose for Russia and the hunger. They represent 90 percent of the Protestants in Russia and they want to work together to form a prayer initiative in all of the Russian-speaking world that has singers, musicians and young people connected to pray for the salvation of Israel, revival in the church and a great harvest,” Bickle said.

Other main session speakers included Francis Chan (author of *Crazy Love, Forgotten God*), Reinhard Bonnke (international evangelist), and Daniel Kolenda, (president and CEO of Christ for the Nations) as well as guests such as Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, who greeted the conference attendees. Matt Maher, a Catholic musician who ministered with Pope Francis at World Youth Day in front of 3 million people, was one of the featured worship artists. Bethel artists Steffany Gretzinger and Amanda Cook also led worship. Conference attendees came from all over the world from different denominations.

“As a Catholic Charismatic, I wept tears of joy so many times this week as I had the privilege of worshipping the living God with so many diverse brothers and sisters in Christ,” Leslie Bertucci posted on the Onething app. Ryan Baptista also posted, “As a member of the Catholic Charismatic renewal, I've had a heart for what is happening at IHOP for many years and it was amazing to finally get out there and experience the prophetic worship and preaching firsthand. There was a

beautiful unity across denominations this week.”