

Daniel Mastin



It is one thing for one to go on a trip and meet a few people, share a few gourmet meals, sleep on goose down pillows and Egyptian cotton sheets then return home unbothered and with one more notch on your travel belt. However, it is a completely different and distinct blessing and honor to have a genuine experience that puts a notch on one's consciousness and in one's heart.

My attendance of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference through Allen Temple Global Ministries was without shadow of a doubt, the latter experience.

Prior to our departure for Norfolk, I and I am sure a few others had no idea what to expect from the Proctor Conference. I must admit, that indeed, I was a tad disgruntled about missing school and getting behind on school work to go to this conference that I knew so little about—in the cold and all the way on the East Coast. Nevertheless, setting my emotions aside, I boarded the plane and took off to Norfolk, Virginia. All apprehension disappeared at first step into the lobby of the Waterside Marriot Hotel. Rather than meeting awkward introductions and forced pleasantries, I was greeted with genuine, jovial hugs, handshakes, and hellos from a myriad of people, none that I knew, but all as brothers and sisters who had come together for a common cause.

From that moment on I had fellowship with people ranging from: concerned pew members to seminarians; theologians to famed preachers; civil rights icons to prophetic educators; and activists to world changers of all classes and creeds. As if the networking, diversity of people and variety of interaction were not enough, we had our minds expanded, theologies bent, twisted and challenged in the best ways possible. We had our eyes opened to a multitude of issues and causes in the immensely informative breakout sessions and classes. We had the opportunity to learn from local, national, and international leaders, preachers, and teachers.

I must say that in four days I gained a lifetime worth of experiences and knowledge but moreover, a charge to be a beacon of light within my own church and community. And, I received a refreshed theology template that will allow me to eliminate some of the prejudices and oppressive practices that the church has allowed to hurt and abuse people for so long.

Above all, the Proctor Conference gave me a renewed vision and purpose and a deep rooted investment in the progression of the world. I am most grateful.

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