**MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**LARRY GOLDSMITH**

Hi everyone! I'm so happy to see all of you today. The very fact that you are here, interested, and ready to listen and think about the different ways **YOU** can get involved with your families, friends, and community to make this world a better, safer, happier place for all of us is a great beginning! We all hear the news.... whether we want to or not (**Wait for the laugh**)... we all feel the mood that is around us... we know that in so many parts of our lives our parents, friends, and teachers struggle to find answers to problems that don't seem to be getting better, but I promise you, (**point to several different members of the audience and say**) if **YOU**.... and **YOU**... and **YOU**... and everyone here today can see the importance of **all of us** coming together to form a strong team to help cancel out the bad stuff going on, I **KNOW** we can make a positive difference in our world... and imagine this... imagine there are other youth summits going on right now... today... in other churches in similar kinds of towns, cities, and communities around some or all of the states in our great country...just picture all of the positive, hopeful, constructive "vibes" we can make... imagine how strong we can all become... if we start young and work **TOGETHER**... that's called a "critical mass" and it takes ALL of us to be involved together with the goal of making this a better place in which to live.

Do you think you have what it takes to make this world a better place? I **KNOW** you do!! There's three little words that express what I think of this group... **YES. YOU. CAN!!** And yes you **WILL**.... with care and courage, and respect for your families and friends and elders, we can... and will... make a positive impact on this world. If I just pointed again... to **you**... and **you**... and **you**... to make a difference alone... as an single person, we can understand that would seem really hard if not impossible... but to be able to get together and face our future as a **TEAM**... a team in which each one has special strengths... a team in which everyone shows respect... a team in which the entire group is so much stronger than it's parts... **THAT'S** when life gets interesting! For those of you that love sports... you know one-on-one challenges help you to practice and improve your skills.... but AHHHHHH.... get into a full on game and **THAT'S** when the fun starts!! Someone once said, "A group is a bunch of people in an elevator, but a **TEAM** is also a bunch of people in an elevator, but the elevator is broken!" (**Wait for the laugh**). I know of someone who told me about the time she went to visit New York. She was in an old building in Manhattan visiting a friend. It was late in the evening and they were in a very tiny elevator... it fit maybe 3 or 4 people... there was NO extra room. Guess what? In between the tenth and eleventh floors the elevator got stuck. It wouldn't move for anything. UH. OH. There were four people. My friend, her friend.... and would you believe... one of the others was a doctor... and the other man was the manager of the building... the guy whose job it was to fix broken elevators... **THAT'S** the kind of team you want with you!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

In so many ways, we are living life in a "broken elevator" and we have to work with each other to find ways to "fix" the problems facing our youth and grown ups today. At this summit we will explore the issues surrounding education and social justice, social media, race relations, school violence... I **KNOW** it's a lot to to think about but if we all come together... which we have... and we all work together to help each other figure out how to get through the tough times... which we WILL... remember... **YES.. YOU CAN**... as a team you have the potential to be **UNSTOPPABLE**.

I'm pretty sure that by now each one of you has seen someone or some people act in a way that you find scary, threatening, disrespectful. And you might think that it's better to take the simplest way out... to turn and run away... from say, someone that might be a bully. But did you ever consider that maybe the "tough guy" or the bully is just a big, scared, baby? Maybe he or she does bad things for attention... part of what we all have to practice is realizing that someone's bad behavior has to do with **THEIR** problems...**NOT YOURS**.. Raini Rodriquez said, "Sometimes it's easy to see the negative side or question why people bully you. You could think, 'Maybe they're right. Maybe I'm not worth it..... ' But **THAT'S** when you should fight the **hardest**.... not physically... but **MENTALLY.**"

The purpose of this summit is very simple. It is so that **YOUR** voice can be heard. (**Point to several kids again... different ones this time**) I mean **YOU**.... and **YOU**.... and **YOU**. We want to hear about what bothers you. We want to hear about situations and problems you have faced or might be facing. We want to hear about your concerns.... and then as a team we will come up with ideas on how to make things better. We will make plans. We will see what we can do on our own and in groups... family... friends... community... to make the world a better place. We will learn that we are important, we matter, and each one of us gets to express ourselves and our thoughts... and then we get to learn what needs to be done to work on the issues that hold us back. We will make realistic plans and set achievable goals... we will start small and build our confidence for positive good will and impact in our world and we will teach others by our example... what it means to be good, do good, as you, our future, prepare to inherit your legacy. Some of you might have your doubts that all of this is possible, but this is just the beginning. We have to start **somewhere**. I know each one of you has what it takes to have a bright and promising future and most of all, never forget ... **YES. YOU CAN**.