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Ennis church engages Southeast Asian people group



Children at Tabernacle Baptist Church are valued as partners in the gospel task. PHOTO SUBMITTED

By Erin Roach | TEXAN Correspondent

ENNIS

Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis took the International Mission Board's challenge to embrace an unengaged, unreached people group by establishing an active church planting strategy among them.

"None of this would happen without Cooperative Program dollars and our church's heart for missions," pastor Todd Gray told the TEXAN.

See **TABERNACLE, 6**

SBTC Annual Meeting Nov. 8-9 will honor Richards, focus on God's faithfulness



Jim Richards

By **TEXAN Staff**

GRAPEVINE The 2021 Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting Nov. 8-9 at Flint Baptist Church, just south of Tyler, will focus on a short yet powerful theme: "But God," two words conveying the majesty and power of the heavenly Father in the midst of human struggle.

See **ANNUAL MEETING, 10**



Remote work here to stay

By **Tammi Ledbetter and Bonnie Pritchett**
TEXAN Correspondents

As the deadly effects of COVID-19 wax and wane in the United States, employers who shuttered the high-rise offices and sent their employees home to work are calling them back to the office—back to in-person collaboration, office intrigue, traffic jams and dress codes.

But some employees are balking. Recent studies reveal a significant number of employees have grown accustomed to working remotely—family relationships grew stronger, work hours became flexible, and clocking in meant rolling over in bed, opening the laptop and logging in.

See **WORK, 11**

Zealous for good works

[He] gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).

I plan to complete my 2021 columns by highlighting four distinctives, denominational virtues really, that I've observed in the SBTC. Some of these are a tribute to the convention's founding generation and some are advantages of being the newest of the Southern Baptist state conventions. The first I'd highlight is zeal.

As I said, there are some advantages relative to energy that convey to new organizations. A new restaurant or a new church can gain momentum just by not being that "same old thing." The SBTC has benefited from that, but we've also seen that being new is an entrée, not the foundation of a long-term mission. There's a church near us called "Brand New Church." I don't know how old they are, but they've painted themselves into a corner if being new is their thing. People have to see something more than sparkle when they stick their heads in the door. After more than two decades, the SBTC has developed some deep and stable traits related to zeal and energy.

One sign of long-term momentum is a commitment to the future rather than the past. You can see it in the staff members the convention has consistently raised up. The SBTC's leadership team has trended younger than those of other state conventions for most of its life. Trusting younger people with the apparatus of the convention is an act of faith but also signals an openness to innovation that inevitably follows when a new generation leads. It has been a good example to our churches as they also work through significant generational transitions.

The convention's zeal is also seen by the posture of reform maintained by its leaders throughout its life. After developing a ministry structure for the first 10 years—those years of growth

were an on-going reformation—the SBTC has been through two major restructures during the second 10 years. These were done in a denominational context that saw other state conventions driven to grudgingly downsize by declining Cooperative Program giving. Such crises in other conventions have often occurred as some pastors doubted their state leadership was forward-thinking and efficient. That has not driven the organization of the SBTC's staff. True, the COVID-19 year took a bite out of the convention's giving, but the concerns of that year provided the occasion rather than the cause of restructuring. The SBTC has been a work in progress but has not yet been driven by desperation. Convention leadership committed to timely responses to the needs of the churches has spared the SBTC those moments of panic we've seen in some larger and older state conventions.

But the purpose of this forward striving has not been for the sake of winning some contest or even the survival of the institution. The SBTC has been "zealous for good works," as detailed in its core values adopted in 1998. Always and ever, the convention leadership is thinking about how to serve the churches as they pursue their Great Commission ministry. That is our good work. The convention does not baptize people or start churches; churches do that. Neither does the convention disciple new believers or build up stronger churches. It's our privilege to help with those things, to provide resources and expertise that churches can call on as they grow the kingdom. The convention's mission statement refers to "facilitating" the work of the churches. I've never been in an SBTC meeting where that mission took a backseat to denomination for its own sake.

Call it "energy" or "zeal," the SBTC must maintain this drive into the future. This trait must remain a virtue of our leaders and part of our church culture.

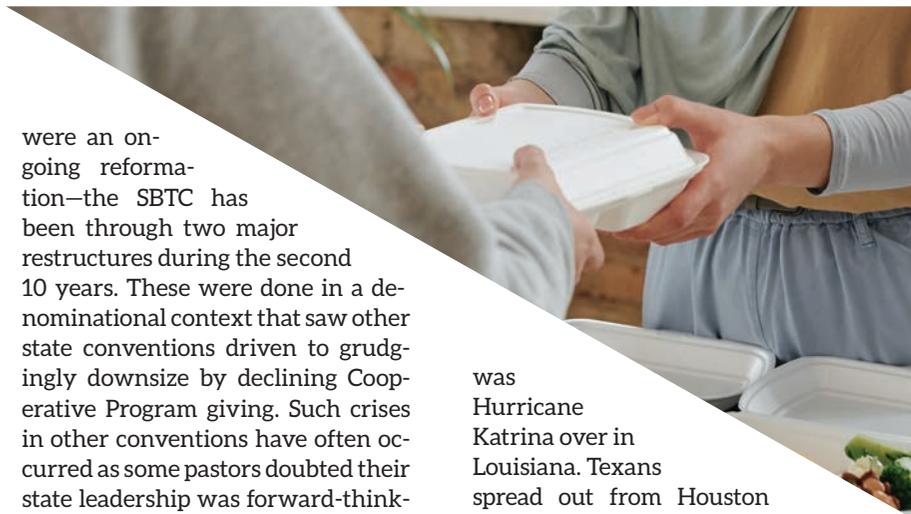
Two of the greatest natural disasters in recent American history occurred in a Texas context. The first

was Hurricane Katrina over in Louisiana. Texans spread out from Houston to Baton Rouge to not only restore our eastern neighbors but also to house, feed and comfort evacuees who came to Texas. I watched in an auditorium of Second Baptist Houston as thousands sat through a quick version of disaster relief training. Our fellowship of churches demonstrated a genuine commitment to good works that affected people in dire need.

The second event was Hurricane Harvey. This time, the Texas Gulf Coast was devastated by a hurricane that wandered leisurely up the coast, doing wind damage in some spots and bringing a record deluge in others. While we were heartened at the quick response of our neighboring states, volunteers slogged through flooded roads into Southeast Texas to find churches and church members already at work. The drive of our people was such that an organic disaster relief response was underway even while the water was still rising. Apply it in as many ways as you will, but that is the spirit I mean. Our fellowship of churches doesn't nearly have a lock on that, but this fervent desire for gospel ministry has been a characteristic of our convention from the beginning. I believe it comes from devotion to the Lord and a love for our neighbors.

The attributes of our state convention are not a "special sauce" that ensures an organization will succeed. Think of them as gospel virtues that follow from seeking the Lord in all things. Whether he finds us successful in all that we attempt, may he certainly find us faithful, earnestly pursuing good works to the glory of our God. 🙏

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September

Full calendar, use your phone's camera to scan QR code. →



02 55+ Adults Ministry Training Victoria Parkway BC, Victoria	19-26 Reach Texas Offering Week of Prayer
09 Children/Family Ministry Luncheon DFW	21 Evangelism Roundtable Online
09 55+ Adults Ministry Training Bay Area Church, League City	23-24 RevForum SBTC, Grapevine
15 SBTC Chapel Grapevine	24-25 Come Away Pastors' Wives Retreat Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre
16 55+ Adults Ministry Training Southcrest BC, Lubbock	30 Racial Harmony Panel Discussion, SBTC
17-18 Español Florece Retreat Riverbend Retreat Center, Glen Rose	

October

For more details on SBTC events visit sbtxas.com/events

1-2 Hombres de Impacto Riverbend Retreat Center, Glen Rose	
5 Pastors Masters Golf Tournament Tour18, Flower Mound	9 She Stands Women's Conference FBC, Forney
11 Disciple-Making Forum First Colleyville	12 Disciple-Making Forum Harmony Hill, Lufkin
12-13 Collegiate Send Summit Redeemer Church, Lubbock	
13 Disciple-Making Forum Bay Area Church, League City	14 Disciple-Making Forum Great Hills BC, Austin
16 Disaster Relief Phase 1 SWBTS, Fort Worth	20 SBTC Chapel Grapevine

All in-person events subject to change based on COVID conditions.

sbtxas.com/events



El Paso's Immanuel Christian School reaches record enrollment

At the end of a COVID-19 year in which the school taught both online and onsite, Immanuel Baptist Church, in El Paso, is reporting an enrollment increase of nearly 200 in their school for the 2021 school year.

Pastor J.C. Rico reports that the school is now the largest private Christian school in El Paso.

"God is great and we look forward to seeing his blessings upon our church ministry here at Immanuel as continue to do kingdom work with area churches," Rico told the TEXAN.

Immanuel Christian School registered 257 students in 2020. The 2021 registration is 444.

—IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, EL PASO

Lake Church, Arlington, to host apologetics conference

Based on 1 Chronicles 12:32, the Issachar Institute, hosted by Lake Church in Arlington, will examine how church members can understand and appropriately respond to the challenges of modern times. According to the church, "Lake Church will consider significant issues in our culture and how the Bible intersects these issues as well as how the local church can step into those spaces effectively."

Each week will feature a panel discussion with experts. Some weeks will have testimonies of redemption from those who have come out of lifestyles and addictions.

Weekly sessions begin at 5:00 p.m. and conclude at 6:30 p.m.

- ◆ **Week 1** - Aug. 22 - Engaging the LGBTQIA+ Community
- ◆ **Week 2** - Aug. 29 - The interwoven issues of pornography, sexual abuse and sex trafficking
- ◆ **Week 3** - Sept. 5 - Corporate Prayer
- ◆ **Week 4** - Sept. 12 - Marxism, the rise of progressivism and CRT/I, Part 1
- ◆ **Week 5** - Sept. 19 - Marxism, the rise of progressivism and CRT/I, Part 2

The institute is open to visitors and is free. Lake Church is located 2912 Little Road in Arlington.

—WWW.LAKECHURCH.NEWS/HOME

William McGregor, West Conroe pastor, dies of COVID-19 complications

William McGregor, 52, served as executive pastor for West Conroe Baptist Church before succumbing to COVID-19 on Aug. 8. McGregor served the church for 20 months after coming to that ministry from LifeWay Christian Resources, where he was a regional manager. McGregor and his wife, Misty, have five children.

The church held a prayer service for the family on Aug. 11 and announced a memorial service to be held in the church's chapel on Aug. 28 at 11:00 a.m.



SBTC DR & Texas Relief repair Levelland homes



Pastor Joe Smith of Liberty Church poses for a selfie with Rosemary and Nathan Mejia, with the new fence in the background. Liberty members are scheduled to repair another fence at a later date. PHOTO BY JOE SMITH

Volunteers with Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief helped repair homes damaged during a deadly July shooting in Levelland that killed one officer and wounded four others.

Levelland emergency management contacted SBTC DR to request help for the homeowners. Kyle Sadler of Houston, SBTC DR task force member, opted to use area crews—a combination of credentialed SBTC DR and Texas Rebuild volunteers—to help restore the community.

"I couldn't imagine being in the crossfire of a standoff like [what happened in Levelland], with the exchange of fire going on outside my house," Sadler said.

"In the wake of such a tragic event we are grateful to serve the people of Levelland and Hockley County," said SBTC DR Director Scottie Stice.

Volunteer teams with SBTC DR's Texas Relief Rebuild worked Aug. 12-13 to repair fences and replace glass windows.

Members of the bilingual Liberty Church in Levelland were scheduled later to refurbish a chain link fence that once encircled the perpetrator's property and was torn down during the shooting. Joe Smith, Liberty pastor, said many from his church are construction workers who will rebuild the fence to provide security for the neighborhood. "We have been ministering in that neighborhood for the past five years. We are doing God's work. We are not allowing Satan to undo what God is doing," Smith told the TEXAN.

—SBTC DR



Houston's First Baptist partners with IMB for ministry partnerships conference

IMB's South Asia leadership and Houston's First Baptist Church will host two free missions mobilization events, An Intro to South Asia and Becoming a Sending Church, Oct. 4-5, to highlight the lostness in South Asia and how local churches can partner in the "no place left" vision.

As an epicenter for lostness, South Asia's need for laborers grows daily. These mobilization events offer local churches the opportunity to see how they can get involved.

At Intro to South Asia, participants will learn about the biblical foundation for missions as a priority, South Asia field realities, the IMB's Affinity of South Asian Peoples vision and strategy with stories from the field, and ways local churches can get involved through prayer, projects, partnerships, and pipelines for sending. Intro to South Asia will be held Oct. 4 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Houston's First Baptist Church.

Becoming a Sending Church will focus on biblical missiology, a brief overview of the South Asia vision and strategy, team structure in South Asia, a brief report of the progress of the core missionary task, gaps and needs, priorities for goers and senders including a pipeline case study, and a job fair. Participants can meet South Asia affinity leadership to discuss specific jobs. Becoming a Sending Church will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. on October 4 and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 5 at Houston's First Baptist Church.

Preregistration is required for both An Intro to South Asia and Becoming a Sending Church, and seats are limited. For information about how to register, email: asapconnecting@imb.org.

—INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD



Flint Baptist Church to hold missions conference

The GO Conference, hosted by Flint Baptist Church, near Tyler, Oct. 1-2, will highlight missions partnerships, team leadership and practical instruction for those who would live an "on mission" lifestyle.

SEND Relief president Bryant Wright will speak, as will Flint Baptist Church pastor Sam DeVille. Further training opportunities include six breakout sessions. Organizations committed to be on hand include:

- ◆ SEND Relief
- ◆ North American Mission Board
- ◆ SBTC Disaster Relief
- ◆ Mercy Ships
- ◆ Amazon Outreach
- ◆ Blessings International
- ◆ The Bucket Ministry
- ◆ Local Tyler Missions: PATH, Hand UP, Bethesda

Early registration is \$10 and includes lunch and breakfast. The church is located at 11131 FM 2869 in Flint. You can call the church at 903.894.7649.

To register, click on "Events" at flintbc.net.

—WWW.FLINTBC.NET



FORWARD TOGETHER



Nathan Lorick
Executive Director
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I love the fall. It has always been my favorite time of the year. Life seems to slow down from traveling and people get back to normal rhythms and routines. The weather begins to change, ushering in cool mornings and evenings. The kids are back in school and the conversations around the dinner table are full of energy. Yes, there are many things I love about the fall. My favorite thing, however, is what the fall brings with it: football.

There are few things in my life that bring me joy like watching my kids play football. Honestly, I have dreamed of it from the time I held my firstborn in my arms. I love the anticipation each week brings. I love the gameday environment and the spectators gathered with passion to watch their teams play. Simply put, there is nothing quite like watching a team come together and unify under one mission and

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THE SBTC IS A NETWORK OF ALMOST 2,700 CHURCHES. WE HAVE A RICH HISTORY OF MOVING THE BALL FORWARD TOGETHER.
”

purpose: to move the ball forward and cross the goal line. Yes, the overall mission is to win the game, go the playoffs, and perhaps win the championship. That's what is on the line every time the team takes the field. However, you really can't win the game if you don't move the ball forward. You really can't move the ball forward unless everyone on the team plays his part.

We are living in interesting days. Culture seems to be shifting rapidly before our eyes. Social media has made it possible to watch the world change in real time. Every day challenges arise that threaten the world to which we are accustomed. This is true in the Southern Baptist Convention as well. A network of 50,000 churches will always have challenges. However, like football, we must stay focused on the mission before us and be resolved to do our part and move forward together.

The SBTC is a network of almost 2,700 churches. We have a rich history of moving the ball for-

ward together. We stay focused and resolved to reach Texas and impact the world. The SBTC stays true to our values of being biblically based, kingdom focused, and missionally driven. That is who we are and who we will continue to be.

I am often asked questions like these: What are the priorities of the SBTC as we seek to serve churches? What really helps us to stay focused and unified on the mission? What drives us to reach Texas and impact the world? The answer is quite simple - our desire to move forward together. There are essentially three pillars for our network as we serve churches. The Lord put these pillars into my heart as he called me to serve the SBTC. These pillars serve as the foundation for all we do as a network of churches. These pillars keep us unified and help us to move the ball forward together. Let me share these with you.

- 1) Our theological agreement.** We are a network of churches committed to the inerrancy of Scripture. We believe the word of God to be absolutely true with no mixture of error. We have not and will not back up from this conviction. We are also a network that affirms the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as our statement of faith. The churches of the SBTC affirm this statement of faith and agree to operate within its parameters. This allows us to be a confessional fellowship of churches, unified in theological agreement.
- 2) Our missiological strategies.**

The SBTC believes the greatest way to reach Texas and impact the world is to partner together with churches, associations, conventions and entities to see the advancement of the gospel. The way in which we do this is through the Cooperative Program. Our desire is not only to see the gospel shared across Texas, but across the globe. The Cooperative Program allows us together to send missionaries, plant churches, strengthen churches and train the next generation of students in seminaries. This is an incredible opportunity the Lord gives to all of us through our partnership.

3) Our methodological approach. The SBTC believes that the headquarters of all missions is the local church. Therefore, the local church is our priority. While we cooperate with and serve alongside other institutions, our focus is on assisting the local church in carrying out the Great Commission in their communities. We love the local church and consider it a joy to serve in every way. This has been and will continue to be our approach.

As with any football game, to advance the score, you must move the ball forward. Amid an ever-shifting culture, it is my prayer that the churches of the SBTC be resolved to unify around the mission God has given us, stand firm on these three pillars, and see the gospel advance like never before. Let's go forward together to reach Texas and impact the world! I love you and am grateful for you! 🙏

Why We Fast Today



Kie Bowman
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The most literal translation of the Greek New Testament word for fasting could be, "no eat." The Hebrew Old Testament root word is even more direct: "shut mouth." Clearly, fasting is a discipline of self-denial at the most basic level of refusing to eat for the sake of deepening our relationship with God. Does that sound like the kind of sacrifice the average person will be likely to embrace? Perhaps the answer is no, but not just anyone is called to fast: Christians are called to fast.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expressed the expectation that his followers are to fast, so he gave some basic instructions on how we should

practice the discipline (Matthew 6: 16-18). In his most famous sermon, Jesus didn't say "if you fast" but said, "when you fast." He clearly expects us to incorporate fasting into our walk with him. He even modeled the necessity of fasting in his intense 40-day fast in the desert of Judea.

Later, someone confronted Jesus about why his disciples were not fasting, even though John the Baptist's disciples did fast. Jesus reminded them that he would soon go away and "then they will fast" (Matthew 9:14-15). When he predicted that a day would come when "then they will fast," he was referring to times like now. He is in heaven, seated on his throne awaiting his return, and we are here—behind enemy lines—needing every spiritual advantage we can get.

The early church practiced fasting as a part of their worship, too. In Antioch, for instance, Paul and other leaders fasted and prayed and the Spirit appeared in their midst to give them direction about world evangelization (Acts 13:1-4).

It is clear that fasting was part of the New Testament experience, and it can be traced through Christian history starting as early as the writings of the North African Christian apologist Tertullian, more than 100 years after the New Testament was completed and the last apostle died.

The question remains, should we fast today, and if so, why? The answer of course is yes, and the main reason should be obvious: Jesus expects it. Fasting is a spiri-

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[JESUS] IS IN HEAVEN, SEATED ON HIS THRONE AWAITING HIS RETURN, AND WE ARE HERE—BEHIND ENEMY LINES—NEEDING EVERY SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE WE CAN GET.
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tual discipline like prayer or Bible study given to us by the Father to strengthen our discipleship and develop our fellowship with Jesus.

In Scripture, fasting is closely related to prayer. The word prayer, for instance, or a derivative of it, occurs about 500 times in the Bible. The word fasting occurs about 50 times. Ninety percent of the biblical references to prayer do not include fasting but most references to fasting are related to prayer. Put another way, we can pray without fasting but we really can't fast without praying. Prayer connects us to heaven while fasting disconnects us from Earth. The joining of prayer and fasting, therefore, is the equivalent of spiritual spontaneous combustion. Something powerful always happens.

One noticeable benefit of fasting becomes obvious when we study the well-known fasts in Scripture. Fasting, we learn, pre-

cedes breakthrough. New works of God are often the result when God's people fast. For example, after Moses fasted, he received the Ten Commandments. After Nehemiah fasted, he led the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. After Ezra fasted, he safely led men, women, and children on a multi-month journey along a dangerous route from Babylon to Jerusalem. After Daniel fasted, he received a vision of the end of time. After Elijah fasted, he anointed kings and received a personal successor. After Jesus fasted, he began his public ministry. After Paul and Barnabas fasted, they began the first mission to take the gospel to the Gentiles and thus changed the world.

What if we fasted and prayed for a breakthrough of fresh works of God? Could prodigals be prayed back to the Lord? Could marriages be saved? Could churches baptize more new believers? Could local churches experience revival? Could we live to see the next great awakening in America? Why not?

Is God waiting for a passive, self-indulgent church to rediscover the ancient disciplines of prayer and fasting in order to grow strong in Christ and increase its ministry effectiveness? Perhaps the answer is embedded in an observation from the late A.W. Tozer: "Anything God has ever done He can do again. Anything He's ever done anywhere He can do here. Anything He's ever done with anyone He can do with you." 🙏



2021 M3 camps see 318 first-time professions of faith, 56 called to ministry

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention held five weeks of M3 student ministry camps this summer, hosting 81 churches and over 2,800 students at facilities across Texas and the Southwest.

By Rob Collingsworth
TEXAN Correspondent

After having to cancel camps last year due to COVID-19, student associate Nathaniel Kuhns said the students were eager to gather again.

"It was a really good summer, seeing God move in the hearts of students. They were hungry for gathering together and really missed it in 2020," Kuhns said. "For most of these students it was their first time at an M3 camp."

According to Kuhns, the resurgence of COVID presented some challenges as the summer wore on, and attendance in 2021 was lower than in years past because of caps put in place due to the pandemic.

"It was hard, with more last-minute adjustments and pivots we had to make because of COVID," he said. "But camp was great this summer."

Overall, the five weeks of M3 saw 318 first-time professions of faith and 56 students called to full-time ministry, not to mention the countless others who walked the aisle asking for prayer or indicating that they wanted to renew their commitment to Christ.

This year's camps were held at Highland Lakes in Spicewood, Camp Zephyr in Sandia, Riverbend in Glen Rose and on the campus of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. Speakers included Ryan Fontenot, Lance Shumake, Caleb Turner, Tyler Riley and Dillon Chase.

According to Fontenot, an evangelist who partners with the SBTC as a strategist and event planner, the two weeks of camp where he served as a speaker stood out particularly due to the fact that the pandemic had precluded these types of events and the ability of students to gather together.



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ONE OF OUR BIG PRAYERS GOING INTO IT WOULD BE THAT GOD WOULD CALL STUDENTS NOT ONLY TO SALVATION AND LIFE CHANGE, BUT SPECIFICALLY INTO MINISTRY.

”

JEREMY RIDDLES, ROCK HILL BAPTIST STUDENT PASTOR

"One thing we saw was just an excitement from day one from the students. I think being back together was just massive for them, to be with other students and be back together after missing an entire summer of camp, there was this energy in the room," Fontenot said.

"The hunger of the students was real, and their response to the messages and to worship was like I hadn't seen in a long time. There was just this desire to seek the Lord, and each week we had massive responses to the gospel."

Jeremy Riddles is the student pastor at Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro, and this year he brought his junior high and high school students to two different camps.

"We didn't get to go to camp last year because of COVID, and this year we had different plans and ended up having to change plans, but it was just a huge answer to prayer that we even got to go to camp again," Riddles said. "We really believe in camp, and I really believe in Nathaniel [Kuhns] and what he does at camp. He tries really hard to get the right people there that love the Lord and want to make his name known and glorious."

"One of our big prayers going into it would be that God would call students not only to salvation and life change, but specifically into ministry. In the last few years we hadn't seen that, and that was something that was our prayer going in," Riddles added. "At junior high camp we had six students feel a call to ministry, and we had nine first-time professions of faith which was amazing as well, especially out of a group of 32 junior high students."

M3 stands for "Moment, Mission, Movement," and Riddles said that at both camps, the speakers "really owned that" to motivate the students.

"It was very challenging for our students, especially our high school students, who have been Christians for a long time and have been coming to church for a long time. They needed to be challenged that, now that they've had that moment, let's be on mission and pray that this becomes a movement." ❏



Todd Gray, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis, said the church seeks to help people overcome life's emptiness through a deeper relationship with Christ. PHOTOS SUBMITTED

TABERNACLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

About 10 years ago, IMB helped Tabernacle identify an unengaged people group—one with no access to the gospel—in Southeast Asia.

"We not only went there and found the people group and interacted with them, we found out real quick that we couldn't do it on our own—just a bunch of White Americans going to that part of the world," Gray said.

"It's one of the hardest places to get to. There's a reason they're unengaged. These last people groups that are unengaged, it's not that way on accident," the pastor said. "Either they don't want you there, or it's very hard to get to. All that proved true with these people, and we realized a local Southeast Asian would do much better than we would, so we started looking for a local missionary that we could partner with."

After meeting with God-centered connections for a year and a half, Tabernacle found Danny, "a young man who already had a passion for that people group."

"He said, 'If you don't support me, I'm going on my own,'" Gray recounted. "He had a bold vision."

Tabernacle didn't want to diminish its strong Cooperative Program giving in order to support a local believer, so they developed Project 138 based on Mark 1:38 where Jesus said, "Let's go somewhere else and preach the gospel there also, for that's what I came to do."

God used the endeavor to change the DNA of the church, Gray said. Tabernacle challenged 100 people to give \$38 per month to support the Southeast Asian missionary.

"That has supported us going over there many times, finding Danny, paying Danny," Gray said. "Danny now has a wife and two children and a coffee plantation and a ginger farm, and he uses all of that as a platform to reach that people group," Gray said.

The people group, Gray said, has been moved by IMB from the unengaged list to the unreached list, meaning it still has less than 2 percent of the population identifying as Christian, but the situation is improving.

"It's miraculous that a little church in Ennis, Texas, got to be a part of penetrating the darkness," Gray said.

"They're no longer unengaged. We are engaging them, and there is a church planting strategy, and we have a missionary that we support with the assistance of the International Mission Board, but really the dollars of those at Tabernacle Baptist Church have supported him and our missions movement 100 percent from the beginning."

As the church dove into the missions task instead of just giving to missions, people started getting excited about doing ministry, the pastor said.

"You start going to other countries and sharing the gospel, and all of a sudden there's boldness to come back home and start sharing the gospel," Gray said. "I think they work together. That's why it's not just a global vision, it's a *glocal* vision—a global and local vision working together that helps on the other side of the world and here. That's why Acts 1:8 is one verse and not four different verses."

Tabernacle now reaches the lost "not just in Ennis or Texas or America but to the ends of the earth" simultaneously, Gray said. "We've lit-

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**YOU START GOING TO OTHER COUNTRIES
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TO COME BACK HOME AND
START SHARING THE GOSPEL.**
”

TODD GRAY, PASTOR OF TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH IN ENNIS



Tabernacle Baptist Church works to reach the nations for Christ, and they're motivated to reach people in their local community at the same time.



Tabernacle Baptist Church is a multigenerational congregation reaching people with the hope of Jesus.

erally gone to the ends of the earth together."

Gray has been pastor of Tabernacle nearly 10 years, and the church partners with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in part because they believe it's important to affirm the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, he said.

For Gray, a highlight of being involved in the SBTC is the Young Pastors Network that meets several times each year, including at annual meetings. Not long ago, the group traveled to the IMB in Richmond, Va., to meet with leaders and see how work is done there.

The group was especially supportive during the early months of COVID-19, Gray said, when pastors

didn't know how best to handle protocols and were able to share a text thread about decisions they were making.

"All those basic questions, it was just nice to have other people that you trusted theologically to give you practical advice and know that their motivation was right," Gray said.

Tabernacle's vision is to be a biblically-rooted church that wants to help people overcome life's emptiness through a deeper relationship with Christ and a connection to a family that cares, Gray said.

Still amid the pandemic, "there are new challenges, but we're laser-focused on what God wants us to be about." ❧

David Dykes closes out 30 years at Green Acres, Tyler

TYLER Sunday morning, Aug. 15, marked the last sermon Pastor David Dykes would preach as pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler. Dykes has served as pastor there for 30 years. He preached a sermon many in his congregation requested, called "Lifting High the Name of Jesus."

"That's the unusual nature of the Word of God, it doesn't ever go out of style or out of date," Dykes said in the sermon. "Say it with me, 'Jesus! Do it again, 'Jesus,'" the congregation responded.

Tyler's KLTV quoted long-time member Jeanine Grimes as saying, "The love of God just weeps from him all the time, and his love for Jesus is so genuine and very, very real."

Dykes' retirement was marked by a "passing the mantle" service on Aug. 29. ❧



Iglesia local se compromete con un grupo de personas del sudeste asiático



About 500 people gather weekly at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis to worship God and live out the Great Commission. PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Por Erin Roach
Corresponsal del TEXAN

La Iglesia Bautista Tabernáculo de Ennis aceptó el desafío de la Junta de Misiones Internacionales de abrazar a un grupo de personas no alcanzadas estableciendo una estrategia activa de plantación de iglesias entre ellos.

“Nada de esto sucedería sin los fondos del Programa Cooperativo y el corazón de nuestra iglesia para las misiones”, dijo el pastor Todd Gray al TEXAN.

Hace unos 10 años, la IMB ayudó a la IB Tabernáculo a identificar un grupo de personas no alcanzadas, sin acceso al evangelio, en el sureste de Asia.

“No sólo fuimos allí y encontramos al grupo de personas e interactuamos con ellos, sino que descubrimos rápidamente que no podíamos hacerlo por nuestra cuenta: sólo un grupo de estadounidenses blancos yendo a esa parte del mundo”, dijo Gray.

“Es uno de los lugares más difíciles de alcanzar. Hay una razón por la que no han sido alcanzados. No es por accidente que este último grupo de personas no hayan sido alcanzadas”, dijo el pastor. “O no quieren que estés allí, o es muy difícil llegar a ellos. Todo eso resultó ser cierto con estas personas, y nos dimos cuenta de que personas locales del sudeste asiático lo haría mucho mejor que nosotros, así que empezamos a bus-

car un misionero local con el que pudiéramos asociarnos.”

Después de reunirse con conexiones centradas en Dios durante un año y medio, la Iglesia Tabernáculo encontró a Danny, “un joven que ya tenía una pasión por ese grupo de personas”.

“Me dijo: ‘Si no me apoyas, me voy por mi cuenta’,” relató Gray. “Tenía una visión audaz”.

La IB Tabernáculo no quería disminuir sus fuertes donaciones al Programa Cooperativo para apoyar a un creyente local, así que desarrollaron el Proyecto 138 basado en Marcos 1:38 donde Jesús dijo: “El les dijo: Vamos a los lugares vecinos, para que predique también allí; porque para esto he venido.”

Dios utilizó este esfuerzo para cambiar el ADN de la iglesia, dijo Gray. La Iglesia Tabernáculo desafió a 100 personas a dar 38 dólares al mes para apoyar al misionero del sudeste asiático.

“Eso nos ha ayudado para ir allí muchas veces, encontrar a Danny y apoyarlo financieramente”, dijo Gray. “Danny tiene ahora una esposa y dos hijos, una plantación de café y una granja de jengibre, y utiliza todo eso como una plataforma para llegar a ese grupo de personas”, dijo Gray.

El grupo de personas, dijo Gray, puede pasar de la lista de no alcanzados a la lista de ‘no alcanzadas por el momento’, lo que significa que todavía tiene menos del 2 por



People at Tabernacle Baptist Church are committed to supporting missions and ministry through the Cooperative Program.

ciento de la población que se identifica como cristiana, pero la situación está mejorando.

“Es milagroso que una pequeña iglesia de Ennis, Texas, haya conseguido ser parte de esta misión de ser luz en la oscuridad”, dijo Gray.

“Ya no están no-alcanzados. Los estamos alcanzando, y hay una estrategia de plantación de iglesias, y tenemos un misionero que apoyamos con la ayuda de la Junta de Misiones Internacionales, pero realmente las donaciones de la Iglesia Bautista Tabernáculo lo han apoyado a él y a nuestro movimiento misionero al 100 por ciento desde el principio.”

A medida que la iglesia se sumergió en la tarea de las misiones en lugar de sólo dar a las misiones, la gente comenzó a entusiasmarse por hacer ministerio, dijo el pastor.

“Empiezas a ir a otros países y a compartir el evangelio, y de repente hay audacia para volver a casa y empezar a compartir el evangelio”, dijo Gray. “Creo que trabajan juntos. Por eso no se trata sólo de una visión global, sino de una visión ‘glocal’: una visión global y local que trabajan juntas y que ayudan al otro lado del mundo y aquí. Por eso Hechos 1:8 es un solo verso y no cuatro versos diferentes”.

El Tabernáculo llega ahora a los perdidos “no sólo en Ennis o en Texas o en América, sino hasta los confines de la tierra” simultáneamente, dijo Gray. “Hemos ido literalmente a

los confines de la tierra juntos”.

Gray ha sido pastor de la Iglesia Tabernáculo durante casi 10 años, y la iglesia se asocia con la Convención de Bautistas del Sur de Texas en parte porque creen que es importante afirmar la Fe y Mensaje Bautistas del año 2000, dijo.

Para Gray, lo más destacado de estar involucrado en la SBTC es la Red de Pastores Jóvenes que se reúne varias veces al año, incluso en las reuniones anuales. No hace mucho, el grupo viajó a la JMI en Richmond, Virginia, para reunirse con los líderes y ver cómo se trabaja allí.

El grupo fue de especial apoyo durante los primeros meses de COVID-19, dijo Gray, cuando los pastores no sabían cómo manejar mejor los protocolos y pudieron compartir sobre las decisiones que estaban tomando.

“En todas esas cuestiones básicas, era agradable tener a otras personas en las que confías teológicamente para que te dieran consejos prácticos y saber que tu motivación era la correcta”, dijo Gray.

La visión del Tabernáculo es ser una iglesia con raíces bíblicas que quiere ayudar a la gente a superar el vacío de la vida a través de una relación más profunda con Cristo y una conexión con una familia que se preocupa por ellos, dijo Gray.

Aún en medio de la pandemia, “hay nuevos retos, pero estamos centrados en lo que Dios quiere que hagamos”. ❧

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BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

STUDENTS HEAD BACK TO CAMPUS FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING

By Jane Rodgers | Managing Editor

As college students head back to campus this fall throughout Texas and the U.S., many will again encounter the now familiar norms of social distancing and COVID protocols. Still, in-person learning is on the agenda for many schools, including the Texas Southern Baptist institutions featured here.

The TEXAN interviewed representatives of Criswell College, Jacksonville College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and its undergraduate institution, Texas Baptist College, to see what's new on campus for fall 2021.

CRISWELL COLLEGE: NEW RESIDENCE HALL AND PROGRAMS

The new campus year will mark the first fall semester and first academic year with the Mary L.A. Stanton-Lance Ouellette residence hall occupied by students, said Luis Juárez, Criswell dean of students.

"Having a residence hall on campus means students have a better opportunity to get to know one another and our faculty and staff," Juárez said, adding that plans for students include "regular spiritual and social gatherings and community service projects" to "represent the gospel in the heart of Dallas." An added bonus: community kitchens on each floor of the hall will provide opportunities for students to prepare and share meals.

This fall will also mark the second year of Criswell 360°, a curricular and non-curricular program that equips every student to be an "ambassador, cultivator, peacemaker, problem-solver and professional," Juárez said. For example, the Sophomore Summit retreat at the beginning of the school year will culminate in a service and learning experience in the Middle East at year's end.

The school's student government is expected to remain active, Juárez said.

Among academic societies, 2021-22 also marks the first full year on campus for Psi Chi, the national honor society for psychology and counseling students.

In addition to Juárez becoming dean of students, changes in academic leadership include the appointment of Sarah Spring to direct the Associate of Arts program, and Jeffery Campbell to direct the Master of Divinity program, said Kyle Hamby, head of admissions.

January 1 will mark the launch of a new campaign to reach students outside Texas, also, Hamby said.

Meanwhile, COVID protocols remain at the ready.

"We have been intentional and safe about COVID since quarantine began, and after opening campus with no campus spread since," Juárez said, adding that the college would monitor rising cases and act appropriately to ensure the safety of students and staff.

"At this time, since vaccines are readily available, we have asked our staff and students to take back the primary responsibility for their safety—meaning we foresee no requirement for masks or social distancing in the coming year. Of course, we encourage vac-



The new Stanton-Ouellette residence hall will house Criswell students this fall. PHOTO SUBMITTED.

HAVING A RESIDENCE HALL ON CAMPUS MEANS STUDENTS HAVE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER AND OUR FACULTY AND STAFF.

LUIS JUÁREZ, CRISWELL COLLEGE DEAN OF STUDENTS

cines for everyone, and masks, good hygiene, and distance for anyone with concerns for themselves or others," Juárez said.

"The pandemic taught us the value of online engagement," Hamby said, noting that enrollment in

Criswell's online graduate programs has increased dramatically. Hamby described the success of the promotional video unveiled at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting, adding that a virtual tour of the campus is in the

works. Meanwhile, as admissions staff meets with prospective future students, they have practiced social distancing and careful interactions.

Juárez said he hopes the new academic year will bring about the "best" opportunity yet for Criswell students to "serve one another, the churches we support and the community in which we learn."

"Post-COVID education is a real thing ... and [will be] an ongoing process," Hamby added. "My hope is to continue maximizing new ways to recruit this generation that has been through high school and middle school for a year now, learning remotely online. ✨"

JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE: NEW PRESIDENT, RENOVATED CAMPUS

Joe Lightner's first day as president of Jacksonville College was July 16. The school's former vice president for executive affairs, who succeeded retiring president Mike Smith, hit the ground running—or hammering—in his new role.

The summer proved to be a time for campus improvement through the college's 52-Day Campaign: Rebuilding for Fall, the new president said.

Summers have long been the occasion of getting ready for fall, Lightner explained, as staff and volun-

teers have pitched in. But summer 2021 saw an increase of volunteer help as staff, alumni, community volunteers, churches and other partners sent teams to assist.

Lightner said about 150 people throughout the summer donated their time.



Jacksonville College's Buckner Chapel was among the facilities renovated this summer in preparation for the new campus year. PHOTO SUBMITTED.

The response to the college's online posting of opportunities was both surprising and gratifying, he said, adding that future plans for more structured work camps that groups and churches can sign up for are in the works.

"This summer's campaign was designed to renovate and prepare space for beds, classrooms and offices that will accommodate the highest projected fall residential enrollment in recent history," Lightner said. "We are prepared to be at full occupancy."

Lightner added that the "majority of the summer work was subsidized by the SBTC's generous grant recently given to the college."

With COVID-19 still a challenge, Lightner said

the increased space created by the 52 Day Campaign will enable the college to make adjustments needed to manage the pandemic in the fall.

Students coming to Jacksonville College in the fall will find the Collins women's residence hall completely renovated. Work has been done on Buckner Chapel and renovation begun on Meadows Hall, traditionally a classroom space, but in the process of being converted for dual use for instruction and housing.

Lightner said the college will focus on its essential principles—the 5 Ps: programming, processes, people, partners and property, as Jacksonville prepares for the next two decades.

"Since 1899, God has drawn students to the college from all over our state, nation and world to receive a quality education and experience spiritual transformation," Lightner said. "The immorality of today's culture is a reminder of the relevance of our college's vision to capture the mind and heart of students for Christ."

Remaining the same will be JC's "robust" participation in a dozen men's and women's NJCAA sports, where the Jaguars compete in the Region XIV against the likes of Tyler Junior College, Trinity Valley, and others. The school also offers several clubs and organizations for students. ✎

SINCE 1899, GOD HAS DRAWN STUDENTS TO THE COLLEGE FROM ALL OVER OUR STATE, NATION AND WORLD TO RECEIVE A QUALITY EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION. THE IMMORALITY OF TODAY'S CULTURE IS A REMINDER OF THE RELEVANCE OF OUR COLLEGE'S VISION TO CAPTURE THE MIND AND HEART OF STUDENTS FOR CHRIST.

JOE LIGHTNER, PRESIDENT OF JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

SOUTHWESTERN AND TEXAS BAPTIST COLLEGE: NEW FACULTY, NEW DEGREES

"The Lord is doing a fresh and marvelous work here on Seminary Hill," Adam Greenway, Southwestern president, told seminary trustees during their spring meeting.

According to information provided by the seminary, the new academic year brings a new budget for 2021-2022 of \$34.4 million, an increase of 11.5 percent over the prior year and 5.3 percent more than 2019-2020.

New faculty coming to Southwestern this fall include Ian Buntain, associate professor of missions and director of the World Mission Center; Mark McClellan, professor of missions and director of Hispanic Programs; Ashley Allen, assistant professor of women's ministries; Jonathan Okinaga, assistant professor of biblical counseling; Jacob Shatzer, associate professor of Christian ethics; and Travis Trawick, associate provost and assistant professor of theology.

Also new this fall will be a partnership between Southwestern and Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, which will permit participants in the Prestonwood Internship Program

to earn up to 26 hours of academic credit toward three different degrees at the seminary.

This fall marks the first semester of Texas Baptist College as the new name of the undergraduate school of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. A new vision statement was also announced: "Texas Baptist College exists to glorify God by providing trustworthy Christian higher education for more faithful Kingdom service," as well as three core distinctives: Christ-centered, Scripture-driven and student-focused.

About the new name, Greenway said, "When others run away from our Baptist identity and distinctives, we're going to run toward and embrace these things because we believe being Baptist means something valuable."

In January, educator and pastor Benjamin M. Skaug was named dean of the school. Four new TBC faculty recently appointed include M. Todd Bates, professor of philosophy and associate dean; Blake McKinney, assistant professor of history; Joshua M. Philpot, assistant professor of biblical studies; and Justin



WHEN OTHERS RUN AWAY FROM OUR BAPTIST IDENTITY AND DISTINCTIVES, WE'RE GOING TO RUN TOWARD AND EMBRACE THESE THINGS BECAUSE WE BELIEVE BEING BAPTIST MEANS SOMETHING VALUABLE.

ADAM GREENWAY, SOUTHWESTERN PRESIDENT

Wainscott, assistant professor of Christian ministry and director of discipleship and campus ministries.

Two new associate and bachelor's degrees have been added to the college academic program: Associate of Arts in Christian Studies and Associate of

Arts in Humanities; Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies and Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. Altogether, the college offers 10 different degree programs, including three combination bachelor and master's degrees, which may be earned in five years. The college recently

awarded its first prize in the Christian Worldview Scholarship Essay Contest to Jack Hickman from Denton, who won the Presidential Scholarship, receiving full tuition, room and board, and books for his essay answering the question, "Why should a Christian study at a distinctively Christian college?"

The fall semester began Aug. 16. Semester events at Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College will include a return to chapel worship two days each week; Global Missions Week, Sept. 13-17; Preaching and Teaching Galatians Conference, Sept. 27-28; Preview Days, Oct. 22-23; hosting events related to the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting being held in Fort Worth, Nov. 16-18; and Fall Commencement, Dec. 3.

Concerning the pandemic, the seminary provided this statement to the TEXAN, "At press time, Southwestern Seminary is evaluating options in response to an increase in COVID-19 cases in Tarrant County, with an announcement expected before the beginning of the semester."

Greenway has indicated there are no plans to require vaccinations for students, faculty, and staff, although he has strongly encouraged vaccination, unless personal medical reasons dictate otherwise. ✎



ANNUAL MEETING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While the phrase occurs at the beginning of Ephesians 2:4-10—the Scripture for the annual meeting—“But God” appears hundreds of times in the Bible, Jim Richards, SBTC executive director emeritus, told the TEXAN. “Many of these references point us to the assurance that God can change anything regardless of the circumstances. Even when the situation does not change, God can change us,” he added.

SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick echoed his predecessor's thoughts: “Over the last few months there have been many moments when people felt hopeless and weary. However, as difficult as this season has been for so many, God has continued to show himself faithful.”

Indeed, “in the midst of our difficult moments, when all seemed chaotic and uncertain, there have been many ‘But God’ moments,” Lorick added. “This is our heart for this meeting, that we would be ever mindful that in our trials, God will be faithful,” he said.

For Richards and Lorick, the annual meeting will be a celebration of the many “But God” moments in the prior year: a reminder that, as Richards said, “when we face future challenges ... God is in control.”

Monday dinner to honor Richards

Monday evening, Nov. 8, will kick off with a celebratory dinner honoring Richards and conclude with a reception welcoming Lorick, both held at Flint Baptist Church, along with the opening sessions of the annual meeting.

The dinner honoring the ministry of Richards will begin at 4:45 p.m. The outdoor event will take

place under a tent erected for that purpose on the church property and feature special guests celebrating what God has done during Richards' lifetime of ministry. The event is free, but space is limited. Those wishing to attend should register as soon as possible.

The welcome reception for Lorick will follow the evening's program, which will feature messages from Richards and Lorick.

Tuesday highlights

In addition to the business of the convention, Tuesday will feature several special events.

The Tuesday morning schedule includes alumni breakfasts hosted by Criswell College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. That morning will also feature a panel discussion on “Persecution of the Church in America.”

SBTC President Kie Bowman, pastor of Austin's Hyde Park Baptist Church, will also deliver his address Tuesday morning.

Guests will grab boxed meals and attend breakout sessions at lunchtime. Bowman will moderate a panel entitled “Keeping the Basic: Evangelism and Prayer.” Tony Wolfe, SBTC associate executive director will moderate a panel discussing “After COVID: Rebuilding the Pastor and the Church.” Spencer Plumlee and Matt Boswell will lead a Young Pastors Network panel on worship.

Tuesday evening will include both a fellowship dinner and a dinner sponsored by Missional Ministries at which Jarrett Stephens will speak. A prayer service that night will feature Boswell leading in praise and worship.

Before the meeting

Prior to the annual meeting,

a Spanish session will be held Sunday, Nov. 7, at Primera Iglesia Bautista in Pittsburg. Additionally, SBTC en Español will host a Spanish lunch panel at Flint Baptist prior to the annual meeting events on Monday, Nov. 8.

Speakers for both Spanish-language events will be Rafael Rondón, Spanish associate pastor at Fielder

Church in Arlington; George Levant, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida en Jesus in Laredo, and Joshua Del Risco, founder of The Rock Ministries.

IPE—Interim Pastors Equipping—training will also be offered Monday.

Childcare will be provided.

Register at sbtcexas.com/am21. ☒

Former SBTC disaster relief leader dies of COVID-19

By TEXAN Staff

GRAPEVINE Edward “Gibbie” McMillan, the SBTC's first disaster relief director, died Aug. 17 after contracting COVID-19. McMillan served the convention from 2003 to 2006. He left the SBTC to be director of men's ministry and disaster relief strategist for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. He retired from the LBC April 30. He since became the pastor of Taylor Creek Baptist Church in Kentwood, Louisiana.



McMillan was the SBTC's DR director when Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana Gulf Coast in 2005. Shortly after that strike, Hurricane Rita tore through East Texas. Under McMillan's leadership, the convention trained thousands of new DR volunteers to serve in Louisiana, East Texas and in Houston, where many New Orleans

residents had evacuated seeking shelter and food. Volunteers served food and provided other types of relief at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

SBTC DR director Scottie Stice praised McMillan for his long service to those in need, “He set a foundation for SBTC DR to grow to over 100 units and 6000+ volunteers. We thank God for Gibbie's vision for disaster relief ministries and his compassion to serve disaster survivors.”

SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick was an East Texas pastor when McMillan served in Texas. “Gibbie McMillan was a choice servant of the Lord. His leadership in the disaster relief ministries in the early days of the SBTC helped to shape what it is today. Gibbie lived with utmost integrity, ministered with kindness and grace, and left a legacy that has impacted countless lives for eternity. The SBTC family is grateful to God for Gibbie.”

McMillan is survived by his wife, Katera, two daughters and three grandchildren.

A funeral service was held on Saturday, Aug. 21, at New Zion Baptist Church in Kentwood, Louisiana. ☒



ANNUAL 2021 MEETING

But God

EPHESIANS 2:4-7

NOVEMBER 8-9 FLINT BAPTIST CHURCH

sbtcexas.com/am21

Messenger preregistration is now open!

Session Schedule

Monday, Nov. 8: 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 9: 9 a.m., 2:10 p.m., 6:45 p.m.

President's Lunch Panels (Nov. 9)

Complimentary boxed lunch with 3 panel topics

Questions? Email aminfo@sbtcexas.com or call the SBTC office at 817-552-2500.

Hotels

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903-787-5899
Rate: \$109
Cutoff: 10/8
All King Rooms

La Quinta Inn

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Tyler, TX 75703
903-561-0863
Rate: \$89
Cutoff: 10/11

Fairfield Inn & Suites

309 W. Heritage Dr.
Tyler, TX 75703
903-561-3300
Rate: \$94
Cutoff: 11/1

Group Rates

Specify SBTC for group rates when making any hotel reservations.

Housing Assistance

Hotel cost assistance available to senior pastors with financial need.

Childcare

Available to those that preregister.

WORK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A study commissioned by the online collaborative platform Miro indicated 62 percent of parents with children under 18-years-old said their at-home work experience has improved their relationship. Forty-nine percent reported working from home improved their relationship with their spouse/partner (The study did not make the distinction between married and unmarried couples living together.)

And, if given the opportunity to work remotely full-time, 34 percent of those surveyed said they were “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to move to be closer to family and friends. Another third said they’d stay put.

A May 25 Wall Street Journal article details how some major corporations are trying to accommodate new employee demands while keeping an eye on their bottom line. For example, Sabre Corporation, a travel-technology company with its global headquarters in Southlake, Texas, surveyed its employees and managers about workplace options.

The result? The company will trim its use of its four-building campus to one building. About 25 percent of the company’s 7500 employees will return to office, the WSJ reported. The remainder will work remotely full-time or flex their time between the office and home.

How much should either side press to get what they want? What are employers’ responsibilities regarding their employees’ new-found appreciation of the work-from-home life? What is an employee’s obligation to comply with a return-to-the-office demand?

The TEXAN asked three men who have been employers and employees



“
WELL, YES, QUALITY AND QUANTITY TIME WITH THE FAMILY IS IMPORTANT, BUT THERE ARE SOME MEN WHO WOULD HAVE DONE MUCH BETTER TO HAVE SPENT MORE TIME AT WORK.
”

MARK COPPENGER, MANAGING EDITOR OF KAIROS AND RETIRED PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS AT SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

“
WORKAHOLISM IS A DANGER, WHETHER AT THE OFFICE OR AT HOME. AT HOME, IT MIGHT INVOLVE NEGLECT OF A SPOUSE AND CHILDREN BY SPENDING LONG HOURS AT THE COMPUTER OR ON THE PHONE.
”

ART TOALSTON, JOURNALIST AND FORMER BAPTIST PRESS EDITOR

about the office-home work paradigm.

Remote working or telecommuting is nothing new to Norm Miller, a veteran communications leader currently serving with Yellowstone Christian College.

“As one who advocated for and was the first to complete a successful trial of telecommuting at a former job, I enthusiastically extol the benefits of working from home for a variety of reasons,” Miller said. “Money saved in gas, tolls, car maintenance,

clothing, and meals are immediate practical and economic benefits that mitigate for the telecommuting employee.”

More significantly, Miller believes working from home “provides the opportunity to increase and enrich a family’s time together.”

Mark Coppenger, managing editor of Kairos and retired professor of Christian philosophy and ethics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, agreed with Miller, to a degree.

“I know that extra help from the hybridizing spouse in dealing with little Johnny could help,” he said. “But the Lord can equip and fortify the child-tender to deal with such domestic challenges, just as he can suit and strengthen the outside-workplace spouse to cope with the ‘Johnnies,’ young and old, in the office.”

Parents can also set a godly example by leaving home each day to go to work.

“There is, I think, abroad among well-meaning Christians, the notion that the more time spent at home the better,” Coppenger said, offering the example of the well-known trope: “No man on his deathbed says, ‘I wish I’d spent more time at work.’” Coppenger continued: “Well, yes, quality and quantity time with the family is important, but there are some men who would have done much better to have spent more time at work.”

He cautioned parents not the “cast work in the world as merely a job instead of a contribution” to society. He credits Martin Luther with recognizing the “high calling” of what, to some, might seem trivial contributions to the workforce: “the conscientious bus driver who gets his wards from A to B promptly and safely; the guy who wades into a sea of poultry to load the truck, ultimately providing us Chick-Fil-A nuggets for our church fellowship.”

Christian employees and employers must remember their responsibility to God and each other when pressing for flex time or requiring office time.

“In both cases, one can be tempted, for example, to do less than his or her best at home or at work, violating the words of Christ in Luke 16:10-12 and Paul’s admonition in Colossians 3:23-24,” said Art Toalston, journalist and former Baptist Press editor.

Toalston noted a drawback of working from home is the temptation to always be at work.

“Workaholism is a danger, whether at the office or at home. At home, it might involve neglect of a spouse and children by spending long hours at the computer or on the phone,” Toalston said.

They all warned against one temptation that presents itself, uniquely, in the office.

“Concerning office dynamics, this era of sexual freedom and expression runs rampant,” Miller said. “Therefore, a decrease in how much time people spend together also decreases the possibilities of immoral indiscretions and the negative ramifications they bring. Workplace affairs have ruined families, careers, lives, and sometimes the very business wherein the illicit attractions began.”

Returning to the office for the first time in over a year can provide employees the opportunity to establish new boundaries, especially when it comes to work relationships with colleagues of the opposite sex. Coppenger championed the Billy Graham Rule as an effective preventative measure. The rule, named for the famous evangelist who coined it, encourages men and women to avoid meeting individually with each other for prolonged periods. This self-imposed rule helps co-workers avoid the temptation for intimate engagement or even a hint of impropriety.

Toalston put it in even more fundamental terms.

He said, “At the office, it might involve the temptation of too chummy a relationship with a co-worker of the opposite sex. Memorizing and adopting a simple daily reminder for work and all of life is in the Beatitudes, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.’”

The massive workplace shift during the pandemic affirmed, on a large scale, Miller’s promotion of the feasibility and desirability of telecommuting.

“The data are in and have been for decades. They are unassailable, and the statistics and other results are staggeringly in favor of telecommuting,” he said.

The trend will only increase according to a study by Gartner, Inc., a U.S.-based research and advisory company. Their polling indicates that by the end of this year 51 percent of knowledge workers worldwide are expected to be working remotely, up from 27 percent in 2019.

Gartner defines knowledge workers as those involved in “knowledge-intensive occupations, such as writers, accountants, or engineers.” Hybrid employees spend at least one workday on site while “fully remote” employees work from home.

In the meantime, Christians—whether employer or employee—should strike a conciliatory attitude toward one another, the men said.

“In all, flexibility is required from employee and employer,” Miller said. “The employee must recognize that telecommuting is a privilege and not a right. And the employer must recognize that telecommuting proves that a happy employee is also a more productive one, measurably.”

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PRESTONWOOD AND OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD:

To the ends of the earth

By Jane Rodgers | Managing Editor

PLANO Like thousands of other congregations of all sizes, the multi-campus megachurch Prestonwood Baptist will be ready for Operation Christmas Child's 2021 National Collection Week, Nov. 15-22. Prestonwood has partnered with Samaritan's Purse and OCC since the shoebox ministry's earliest days.

OCC began in summer 1993 when, according to the organization's website, a friend in the UK asked Franklin Graham if Samaritan's Purse would fill shoeboxes with gifts for children in war-torn Bosnia. Graham agreed under the condition that Samaritan's Purse could share the gospel with every child receiving a gift. Some 28,000 shoebox gifts made their way to the Balkans.

Samaritan's Purse has never looked back. Neither has Prestonwood, considered a legacy church with OCC because of its early involvement.

Pastor Jack Graham learned about OCC in 1994 from his friend Franklin Graham. The pastor was visiting Billy and Ruth Graham when Franklin filled him in on the outreach. In a Prestonwood publication a few years ago, Deb Graham, Pastor Graham's wife, recalled her husband's enthusiasm: "Jack came back and showed me the shoebox and he said, 'I want us to do this.' He got Ross [Robinson] and me together—at that point, we'd never done anything like this before—and soon we were handing out empty shoeboxes."

To date, the church has supplied more than 200,000 boxes bearing gospel booklets in the children's own languages and filled with toys, clothes, books and school supplies.

Ross Robinson, OCC senior ministry strategist in church partnerships and a former Prestonwood staff member, said each shoebox provides additional gospel opportunities as children share their gifts and stories with others, generating evangelism, discipleship and multiplication opportunities.

"I love the missionary adage I heard long ago that is so fitting for the heart of our Prestonwood family: 'The light that shines the furthest shines brightest at home.' And I think Operation Christmas Child encapsulates it very well," Jack Graham said in comments to the TEXAN.

"Operation Christmas Child is truly one of our favorite things to do each November as it encourages people of all ages to pack shoebox gifts for children, which above all provides an opportunity to share the gospel. Many of these children have never received a gift. These shoeboxes filled with gifts and packed with love, let them know that they are not forgotten.

"As for our church, it complements what we are already doing through our missions ministry and it provides a wonderful way to engage more of our members and guests in ministry—serving the local church and helping fulfill the mission of God's church ... to the ends of the earth."

OCC at a glance

Filling the shoeboxes is something individuals, small groups and entire families at Prestonwood enjoy delivering the boxes to Prestonwood Cares collection stations.

The church, like many others, will start promoting OCC in the fall, perhaps showing one or more of the free videos—including "How to Pack a Shoebox"—downloaded from the OCC website at samaritanaspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/ with additional videos available at video.samaritanaspurse.org/channel/operation-christmas-child/.

Promotional materials are furnished at no cost to participating churches and organizations. The OCC's familiar green and red cardboard or plastic boxes may be purchased online in bulk from Samaritan's Purse.

Churches and groups collect the gift-filled boxes and transport them to drop-off locations the third week of November annually. The boxes are then taken to one of eight

national processing centers.

Boxes collected in Texas wind up at the Samaritan's Purse DFW processing center in Coppell, where volunteers inspect and prepare the shoeboxes for international shipping, stopping work every hour to pray for the children who will receive the gifts.

The shoeboxes are then distributed to kids in more than 100 countries. Even before this happens, OCC National Leadership Teams have trained pastors and leaders in these countries in how to host the child-friendly evangelistic events at which the boxes will be distributed.

OCC carefully works with like-minded, biblically-based, Christ-centered churches in the host countries, Robinson said, explaining the international process: "The gospel is shared through the local church. They have a children's event. Unchurched children are invited by their friends from that church. The events are festive, with singing, clowns, puppets, balloons."

The shoeboxes are distributed at some 75,000 such events yearly.

“

A SMALL SHOEBOX IS A SIMPLE GIFT, BUT THE BLESSINGS ARE ETERNAL.

”

JACK GRAHAM

Many children also receive materials to participate in a 12-lesson discipleship program called "The Greatest Journey" that has been used with more than 26.5 million children since 2009, resulting in 12.5 million decisions to trust Christ. The program is taught through the local church.

Online options

While traditional collection and distribution is the most popular, OCC also offers people, churches and groups the opportunity to build shoebox gifts online, Robinson said. Samaritan's Purse can even help churches set up goal pages on an OCC website free of charge.

For only \$25, plus an optional extra \$6 for the addition of "The Greatest Journey" material, anyone can assemble a box online by visiting the Operation Christmas Child website and clicking on the "Build a Shoebox Online" link.

An additional benefit to online assembly: these shoeboxes go to some of the most unreached countries across the globe.

Since 1993, more than 188 million children in more than 170 countries and territories have received an OCC shoebox. "The Lord uses the gifts to pull on their heartstrings to receive the gospel," Robinson said.

For information on how to participate in Operation Christmas Child, contact Ross Robinson at RDRobinson@samaritan.org.

Prestonwood continues missions legacy

Prestonwood continues to add to its missions legacy. In July, the church presented the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention with a CP gift of just over \$208,000.

On Aug. 1, in a Sunday service, Pastor Jack Graham presented the IMB with the \$1 million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering as a special donation for use in reaching predominantly Muslim areas.



All-church benefits

OCC is not just for big churches, said Jim Harrelson, OCC vice president, applauding Prestonwood's partnership: "Prestonwood's deep commitment to Samaritan's Purse over many years, among many other local and global ministries, is a very strong example for churches of any size to follow."

Churches often discover that participating in OCC can benefit their communities and congregations, fostering a spirit of unity and excitement that strengthens the body, whether the church is a veteran OCC participant or is using OCC as a first missions outreach, Robinson said.

Parents find teachable moments as they introduce their children to the joys of giving and evangelism. The outreach even enhances cooperation with other churches in the community as groups band together to fill the shoeboxes.

"The people of Prestonwood have been blessed beyond measure over the years to be part of this life-changing ministry," Jack Graham said, sharing the story of a young girl who hosted an annual packing party for several years, collecting about 500 boxes each year, starting early and inviting friends and family members to do the same.

Another long-time member included her name and address in a shoebox gift, Graham recalled. Little did she know the one box would be divided among several boys in a Christian boys home in Uganda. The boys wrote to thank her. She and her husband developed a relationship with the boys and even visited them.

"The blessing received by another member was truly full circle," Graham said. "She was a teenager living in a Christian orphanage in Peru when she received an OCC shoebox, and a woman shared the gospel with her." The girl and her sisters were adopted by a missionary family who became involved with a ministry distributing OCC boxes, so she helped hand out shoeboxes to children.

Later, she later became a missionary herself, and with her husband and two children eventually ended up in the Dallas area. They joined Prestonwood, where the whole family participated in packing shoeboxes.

"A small shoebox is a simple gift, but the blessings are eternal," Graham said. 🙏

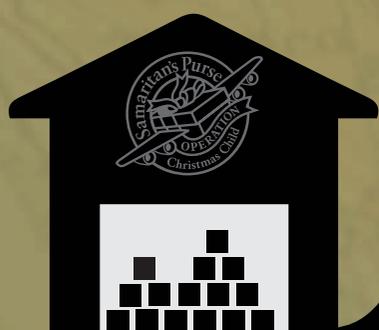
In its "last complete year" of service pre-COVID, Prestonwood provided more than \$7.5 million to nearly 70 ministries in countries on five continents: "More than 1,500 members of the Prestonwood community served on nearly 75 short-term mission teams all over the world," Graham told the TEXAN. "And the light shined brightly at home, with more than 10,000 members serving in the North Texas community."

Through The Hunger Project, the church provided more than 1.25 million meals in the last 18 months to North Texas families facing food insecurity. 🙏



SHOEBOX GIFTS GO EVEN WHERE THERE IS NO ROAD

God's Word is being proclaimed in some of the world's most remote and hard-to-reach places through Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse.



To learn more, visit [SAMARITANSPURSE.ORG/OCC](https://www.samaritanaspurse.org/OCC)

Church Positions

PASTOR

- Labelle BC in Beaumont is actively seeking a FT pastor. Candidates should be SBC by conviction, seminary-educated, biblically-qualified and experienced. Recommendations and resumes accepted through September 17 and may be sent to the pastor search committee at Labellebc@sbcglobal.net or to Labelle Baptist Church, Pastor Search, 9400 FM 365, Beaumont, TX 77705.
- Memorial BC in Spring seeks a FT senior pastor. Submit resume to memoribcsearch@gmail.com.
- East Mountain BC near Longview is seeking a FT lead pastor. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 315 E Mountain Rd, Gilmer, TX 75645 or embcpastorsearch@gmail.com.
- Fairview Baptist in New Fairview is seeking a pastor. Please submit a cover letter and resume to kendall.lyons@gmail.com.
- New Life Church in Borger is a growing church seeking God's man for a FT associate pastor to become pastor. Email resume to newlifepastor@cablone.net.
- New Hope Fellowship in Ingram, a small community in the Hill Country, is seeking a FT or bi-vocational pastor. Average attendance 40-50. Traditional service. No parsonage. Email resume, references, and brief answer to the following items to newhopefellowship405@gmail: Why are you interested in this position? Share your salvation experience and vocational call. Explain the message of the gospel.
- West End BC in Beaumont is seeking a FT or bi-vocational pastor. Financially secure, loving congregation of 50 average attendance, traditional worship service. We are affiliated with the SBTC. Send resume to webcbeaumont@gmail.com.
- Faith BC in Hamilton is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to Faith Baptist Church, 110 CR 404, Hamilton, TX 76531.
- Elm Creek BC in La Vernia, a small rural church in a country setting, is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Please pray and send resume to Elm Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 425, La Vernia, TX 78121, if the Lord is leading you to our church.

MUSIC

- Calvary BC in Bastrop is seeking a FT pastor of worship arts. Email resume to stephen@cbcfamily.net.
- Antioch Georgetown Church is seeking a FT worship pastor to lead multiple services utilizing contemporary/modern worship style with a full band. To apply or for more info, send resume and video links to info@antiochgt.com.
- FBC Vernon is seeking a FT worship pastor. Email resume to brooks@fbcvernon.org.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT worship minister with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is a domestic and international church planting network. Other cities are available. Please email a video of you leading worship to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.
- West Conroe BC is accepting resumes for a minister of worship arts to coordinate with the senior pastor and

technical manager for the planning and administering of church-wide worship services and special events. This person will also lead a large group of paid staff and volunteers to execute each part of the worship arts ministry. Email william.mcgregor@wbcb.com.

- Westside BC in Corsicana is accepting resumes for a PT music minister for Sunday morning and evening. Email resume to westside.church@sbcglobal.net or mail to Westside Baptist Church, 1522 N 24th St, Corsicana, TX 75110.
- Northside BC of Highlands is seeking a PT worship leader to guide us in inter-generational worship experiences that help us connect with God and bring glory to him. Our church is currently experiencing revitalization and growth; we are pursuing a pastoral leader with a heart for shepherding people towards authentic expressions of worship. Send resume to jared@northsidehighlands.com.
- New Hope Community Church (SBC) in Venus is searching for a worship pastor with a blended worship experience on Sunday mornings. The right candidate must be energetic, play piano or guitar (or have a spouse that can play), and have a heart for worship! It is possible to merge this opportunity with a youth and/or outreach responsibilities. Email resume to mark.mcdaniel@icloud.com.
- FBC Crowley, TX seeks a PT worship minister. Send resume to aaron@fbccrowley.org.
- Audubon Park BC in Garland is searching for a PT worship leader to lead a blended worship service for a small congregation. Please email resume to apbcstaff@att.net or mail to Audubon Park Baptist Church, PO Box 495277, Garland, TX 75049-5277.
- Frost BC, an hour south of Dallas, seeks a PT minister of music to lead worship for a small ranching/farming community. Send resume to frostbaptist@gmail.com.
- Marsh Lane BC in north Dallas is seeking a bi-vocational worship leader. Send resume to scott@mlbc.org.
- Northside BC of Highlands is seeking a PT worship leader to guide us in inter-generational worship experiences. Our church is currently experiencing revitalization and growth; we are pursuing a pastoral leader with a heart for shepherding people towards authentic expressions of worship. Email resume to jared@northsidehighlands.com.
- FBC of Crockett is seeking a PT worship leader who is a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The compensation is \$18,000, includes housing and a scholarship to SWBTS, which covers tuition, books, and fees. The church is elder-led and is involved in church revitalization. Send resumes to Pastor Keeney Dickenson at prayeridigm@gmail.com.

STUDENTS

- FBC, De Leon, is accepting resumes for a FT minister of students. Send to Minister of Students Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 228, De Leon, TX 76444, or email to fbdeleon@cctc.net.

- FBC Borger seeks a FT pastor to families with students, responsible for partnering with families in seeing students, 6th-12th grades, come to Christ, grow in conformity to the image of Christ, and form a biblical worldview. Must minister to both students and their families. Resumes to shana@firstborger.com.
- FBC Edom is searching for a FT associate pastor of student ministries. Email resume to Alli Lloyd at fbcedom@gmail.com.
- Boyd Baptist in Bonham is searching for a FT student pastor. Competitive salary plus 4 bedroom/3 bath parsonage included. Please send resume, cover letter and a link to at least one sermon preached to students to mike.allred@gmail.com.
- Sherwood BC in Odessa is seeking a FT minister of youth to introduce young people to Christ, teach them to become spiritually mature followers of Christ, and equip them to become disciplinarians. Send resumes to: personnel@sherwood.church.
- FBC Farwell is prayerfully searching for a FT student pastor to join our ministry team. Send resume to studentministersearch@fbcfarwell.org.
- Temple BC of Gainesville is seeking a FT minister of students. For more information visit tbcgainesville.org/jobs.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT student pastor with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is an international and domestic church planting network. Other cities are available. Email resume to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.
- New Hope Community Church (SBC) in Venus is needing someone to establish a youth group who is an innovator, thinks outside the box, and can involve himself in our community to build trust and relationships with youth in our community. Applicant must be a self-starter and have a heart for evangelism and discipleship with young people. It is possible to merge this position with our need for worship and outreach. Email resume to mark.mcdaniel@icloud.com.
- Frost BC is searching for a minister of youth to lead church in ministering to youth grades 6-12 and to their families. Email resume to frostbaptist@gmail.com.
- FBC Alto is accepting resumes for a PT minister of youth. Must affirm the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. Send resumes to: fbcaltopastor@gmail.com.
- FBC Whitewright is seeking a PT youth minister in a healthy and growing church with excellent facilities and resources. Must love students and student ministry, be energetic, a good communicator, a self-starter, humble, responsible, and teachable. Experience preferred. Email resume to dawndabradley@gmail.com.
- FBC Mixon, in the Tyler area, is seeking bi-vocational/PT youth minister. Send resume to James Goforth at first.mixon@gmail.com.

CHILDREN

- FBC Crowley seeks a PT childhood minister. Send resume to aaron@fbc-crowley.org.
- The Grove: FBC is searching for our next PT children's minister. Salary de-

pendent upon experience. See reachthegrove.com/staff for application and job description. Send resume and cover letter to thegrovefbc@gmail.com.

COMBINATION

- FBC Argyle is seeking our next FT student & young adult pastor. Parsonage 3 bedroom/2 bath on 1 acre in Argyle ISD included. Send resumes to pastor@fbcargyle.org.
- Wedgwood BC in Fort Worth is searching for a FT adult discipleship and outreach pastor. Bachelor's degree is required, Master's preferred, minimum 3 years' experience. Email resumes to jeff@wedgwoodbc.org or mail to Jeff Laster, Wedgwood Baptist Church, 5522 Whitman Ave, Fort Worth, TX 76133.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT kids and family minister with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is an international and domestic church planting network. Other cities are available. Email resume to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.

OTHER

- FBC Wichita Falls is searching for a FT pastor of business administration. Email resume to kameel@vanderbloemen.com.
- Telemed Village in Houston is now hiring FT bivocational pastors. Instead of working for a secular company, earn a great income with our team serving the Lord. We are the only telemedicine "company that helps churches fulfill the Great Commission. Send resume to will@telemedvillage.com.

Paid Classifieds

Big Creek Baptist Church is seeking a FT pastor. Please mail resume to 13186 Black Fork Rd. Heavener, OK 74937 or email bigcreekbaptistok@gmail.com.

Baker Book House pays cash for pastoral and academic religious libraries, large or small. Email quotes@bakerbookhouse.com or call 866-241-6733.

Caregiver for disabled young man: two positions open. Night nurse, 4 nights per week, 40 hours per week, minimum LVN license. LVN wages. Personal attendant caregiver, daytime hours, 3 days per week, \$11+/hour. Beginning in August. Male preferred (due to the need to do transfers) but all applications will be considered. Both positions located in Fort Worth. Contact Doug at dheims7@sbcglobal.net.

Sandia Baptist Church in beautiful Albuquerque (SandiaBaptist.org) is searching for a FT minister of worship

- Prestige Learning Institute in Houston is hiring two FT ESL instructional coaches to play a vital part in equipping ESL teachers and empowering immigrant and refugee families. Both are support-raising positions. Email resume to michael@prestigeinstitute.org.
- South Euless BC is searching for a PT secretary 3 days a week (8 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday). Experience in Excel, Publisher and Word needed; \$15.00 per hour. No benefits. Send resume to tom.goodson@att.net.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT lead planter with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is a domestic and international church planting network. Other cities are available. Please email resume to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT pastor of community engagement with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is an international and domestic church planting network. Other cities are available. Email resume to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.
- Iglesia Bautista La Vid is seeking a PT bilingual pastoral administrative assistant for a growing church in Hurst. Basic office tasks, Computer savvy (MS Office). Pay is \$13-15/hr, 12-15 hours a week. Send resume to plevant@yahoo.com.
- First Colleyville Church is seeking a FT pastor of spiritual development with CrossCreek Network in Colleyville. CrossCreek is an international and domestic church planting network. Other cities are available. Email resume to Sarai Harding at saraih@firstcolleyville.com.

Terrific staff and church. Competitive salary and benefits based on experience. Blended worship style with a vocal team and praise band. Wonderful facilities. Send resumes to rcooksey@sandiabaptist.org.

FBC Purcell, Oklahoma is accepting resumes for a full-time worship music and educational minister. Submit resume, job history and references to fbcpurcellminapp@gmail.com.

Seeking a director of worship arts at First Southern Baptist Church, Lawrence, Kansas. Job description posted at www.fsbcfamily.com. Resumes should be submitted to search@fsbcfamily.com.

First Baptist Church in Ruston, LA is seeking a full-time college minister. The applicant needs to be passionate about college students and seeing life changes in those students. We are located within 5 miles of two colleges. Send resume to Ed Colvin at ed@fbcruston.org.

ALL THINGS ALL PEOPLE
1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

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Majority of evangelicals now support the COVID-19 vaccine, poll shows



Support for the COVID-19 vaccine has increased double digits among White evangelicals and most groups in the United States, according to a new survey by Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) and Interfaith Youth Core.

The poll, conducted in June and released in late July, shows 56 percent of White evangelicals either have received the vaccine or say they will get the vaccine soon. That's an increase of 11 points since March, when 45 percent of White evangelicals answered that way.

Similarly, acceptance of the vaccine among Hispanic

Protestants increased from 43 percent to 56 percent, and among Black Protestants from 49 percent to 66 percent.

"Vaccine hesitancy has decreased among all Americans, including across all religious and demographic subgroups," PRRI said in a news release.

More than 70 percent of Americans have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

People of faith are more likely to accept the vaccine when they hear members of their own community backing it, the survey found.

"Faith-based approaches have

been and will continue to be effective in convincing Americans to receive a COVID-19 vaccine," said Interfaith Youth Core founder and president Eboo Patel. "As we examine exactly what it is that is working in encouraging Americans to get vaccines, it is clear that community-based interventions are critical. By working together to encourage vaccination among hesitant populations, we are saving lives."

The survey involved 5,123 American adults.

— PRRI

Senate committee passes bill forcing women to register for draft



A U.S. Senate committee passed a groundbreaking proposal in July that would force young women to register with Selective Service and be eligible for a future draft.

Current law requires men to register with Selective Service when they reach the age of 18. Selective Service keeps a list of all men ages 18-25 eligible for the draft.

But under the proposal passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee, young women, too, would be required to register. The proposal passed as part of the National Defense Authorization Act.

Penny Nance, president of Concerned Women for America, criticized the proposal.

"American women are free to serve and proud to serve, but they shouldn't be forced to serve," Nance said. "Young women today need to know they are respected for their female status and the many essential roles women embrace in all seasons of life as workers, wives, mothers and caregivers. Setting women up to be sent to war shouldn't be one of them."

"The selective service is not a social experiment," Pence added. "Women do not need to be conscripted to fight on the frontlines of war to prove their worth. Nor should we be denied the respect of our intrinsic value based on the inherent physical differences we embody. God-given distinctions between the sexes have everything to do with military readiness in wartime."

Seminary president Albert Mohler also denounced the idea, saying drafting women would have been unthinkable "throughout most of our nation's history."

"A society that will send its women into war is a society that, to some significant extent, is at war with itself and at war with nature," said Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

—THE HILL, CWFA, ALBERTMOHLER.COM

Israeli archaeologists uncover evidence of biblical earthquake mentioned in Amos, Zechariah



Israeli archaeologists have discovered what they say is the first physical evidence in Jerusalem of an earthquake referenced in the biblical books of Amos and Zechariah.

The earthquake took place some 2,800 years ago

after the reign of Solomon and during the time of the divided kingdom.

It is mentioned in Amos 1:1, which says Amos lived "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." It also is referenced in Zechariah 14:5: "And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah."

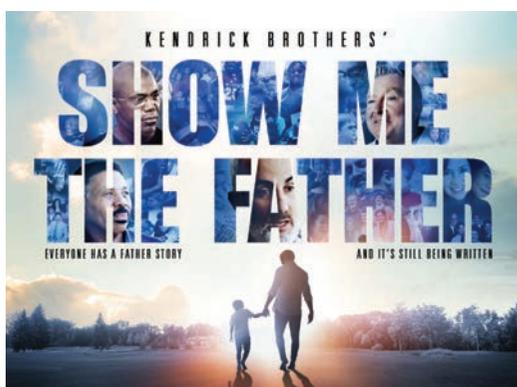
Archaeologists with the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) say they found broken vessels, bowls, lamps and jars. The discovery was made in the City of David National Park.

"When we excavated the structure and uncovered an eighth-century BCE layer of destruction, we were very surprised, because we know that Jerusalem continued to exist in succession until the Babylonian destruction, which occurred about 200 years later," IAA excavation directors Joe Uziel and Ortal Chalaf said.

"We asked ourselves what could have caused that dramatic layer of destruction we uncovered," the two archaeologists said. Examining the excavation findings, we tried to check if there is a reference to it in the biblical text. Interestingly, the earthquake that appears in the Bible, in the books of Amos and Zechariah, occurred at the time when the building we excavated in the City of David collapsed."

—THE JERUSALEM POST

Kendrick Brothers' 'Show Me the Father' opens in theaters Sept. 10



The Christian filmmakers behind the hit movies War Room and Courageous will release a theatrical documentary in September that will explore a subject at the core of Scripture: fatherhood.

The film, Show Me the Father, will open in theaters Sept. 10 and feature inspiring stories about fathers interwoven with biblical truths about the fatherhood of God. Alex and Stephen Kendrick served as executive producers.

The movie includes interviews with Texas pastor Tony Evans, Focus on the Family's Jim Daly and former NFL coach and player Sherman Smith, among others.

It is the first documentary by the Kendrick Brothers, who also made War Room, Courageous, Fireproof, Overcomer and Facing the Giants.

Stephen Kendrick called it a "dream project." He and his brother interviewed multiple people and "compiled about five of the best stories that are tied to the fatherhood of God together," he said.

"It is an emotional roller coaster. It's engaging from the opening scene all the way to the end," Kendrick said. "This is an evangelistic, edifying, theological, emotional journey."

—SHOWMETHEFATHER.COM, SOUTHERN BAPTIST TEXAN

Facebook introduces prayer button to social media platform

Facebook added a prayer button to its platform this summer as part of an effort to support the faith community with new tools.

The button, available only within Facebook Groups, allows the user to click an "I Prayed" button in reaction to a post. Facebook Groups are popular within the wider church community.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic we've seen many faith and spirituality communities using our services to connect, so we're starting to explore new tools to support them," a Facebook spokesperson told the Associated Press.

Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, endorsed the new feature.

"Facebook and other social media platforms continue to be tremendous tools to spread the gospel of Christ and connect believers with one another—especially during this pandemic," he told AP. "While any tool can be misused, I support any effort like this that encourages people to turn to the one true God in our time of need."

"As long as these companies initiate proper precautions and protocols to ensure the safety of religiously marginalized communities, people of faith should jump on board supporting this vital initiative," he said.

—ASSOCIATED PRESS

Disney Junior's 'Muppet Babies' features cross-dressing Gonzo

The controversy over gender roles this summer reached the children's channel Disney Junior, when an episode of Muppet Babies showed Gonzo wearing a dress and calling himself "Gonzo-rella."

The episode was applauded by LGBT groups and opened with two female characters—Miss Piggy and Summer Penguin—wanting to hold a "royal ball," similar to the one in the story of Cinderella.

Hearing the story of Cinderella, Gonzo tells his friends, "I'd love to wear a dress like that to your royal ball." Summer Penguin responds, "But Gonzo, Piggy and I are the princesses. We wear the dresses." Miss Piggy agrees and adds, "According to the royal handbook, the girls come as princesses, and the boys come as knights."

Soon, though, a magical "Fairy Rat-Father" transforms Gonzo's outfit into a blue dress, complete with slippers. Gonzo attends the ball without revealing who he is.

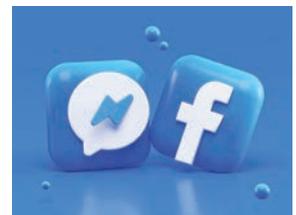
In the episode's final moments, he tells his friends he was the one wearing the blue dress.

"I don't want you to be upset with me, but I don't want to do things just because that's the way they've always been done, either. I want to be me," Gonzo says.

Piggy apologizes and tells Gonzo, "It wasn't very nice of us to tell you what to wear." Piggy then says she wants to make a new "royal handbook" which will include new rules.

The episode closes with Summer Penguin declaring, "And in our new handbook, everyone can come to the ball dressed however they like."

—CHRISTIAN POST, CHRISTIAN HEADLINES



EQUIP 2021 attendees challenged to focus on Great Commission



By Gayla Holt
TEXAN Correspondent

HOUSTON The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's 2021 EQUIP conference Saturday, Aug. 14, at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, drew 1,400 registered attendees plus 110 speakers and panelists, and staff. The day featured 275 breakout sessions on a variety of topics pertinent to all ages and types of church ministries. The event was geared for pastors, teachers and leaders.

Ronnie Floyd, president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, delivered a powerful keynote message based upon the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

"When I come to churches like yours in Texas, we are a people who believe in the authority of the

Holy Scripture. We get our marching orders from this book called the Word of God," Floyd told the crowd.

Reminding listeners that we "live in a bad news climate," Floyd observed, "If there's ever been a relevant moment where we ought to be able to really give good news, it's right now in America," reminding all of the ultimate good news of salvation: that Jesus died for our sins and "the sins of the entire world."

Drawing from a variety of biblical passages, including Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15 and John 21:21 in addition to Matthew 28, Floyd urged "You can't really have a true Great Commission Sunday School class and a true Great Commission church if you're not going, and you're not baptizing, and you are not teaching people how to live like Jesus lives."

He also described the six strategic actions of the SBC's Great Commission initiative, Vision 2025, adopted in June at the SBC annual meeting in Nashville: sending 500 more missionaries abroad, adding 5,000 congregations across the U.S., "calling out the called," reversing the decline in baptisms of children and teenagers, increasing Cooperative Program giving and prayerfully endeavoring to eliminate all incidents of sexual abuse and racial discrimination in SBC churches.

In closing, Floyd challenged attendees to refocus their vision, reset their mindset and renew their commitment to the Great Commission.

EQUIP's breakouts and panel discussions engaged participants and energized presenters.

"People left inspired, mo-

tivated and equipped to go back to their local church to reach people for Jesus and make disciples," Mark Yoa-kum, SBTC EQUIP consultant, told the TEXAN.

Scottie Stice, director of SBTC Disaster Relief, and his team of volunteers prepared and served breakfast tacos as guests arrived at EQUIP.

Jeff Lynn, SBTC senior strategist for Church Health and Leadership, expressed the attitude of presenters: "How encouraging and exciting it was to be part of 'equipping' saints for the work of the ministry," adding that he was "praying for all of these churches to excel in Great Commission advance."

Coleman Philley, a speaker in the men's ministry sessions and pastor of First Baptist Katy, summed up the excitement of all who

were glad to return to an in-person event: "Considering the past 18 months, it was extra encouraging to be in the same room with ministry leaders."

Last year's EQUIP was held online, via Zoom.

Joy Brutas, who has been involved in children's ministry at River Life Church in Austin for the past three years, said she was excited to be part of this year's EQUIP for the first time.

"It was a great refresher course. It was so good to hear people with their ideas and be able to share input," Brutas said. Brutas, who worked in children's ministry for 22 years in Pennsylvania before coming to Texas, said she plans to attend EQUIP next year and encourage others to join her.

EQUIP 2022 is scheduled for Aug. 13, 2022, in the DFW area. ❧



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