

# SOUTHERN BAPTIST TEXAN

JULY 2023 | VOL. 22 | NO. 7

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**Churches take exciting steps to equip  
future leaders for kingdom ministry**

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## RISING UP TOGETHER

+ Lubbock's Redeemer  
was planted to plant—  
again and again and again

+ Cross City's SALT  
program is training  
servants to be the light

+ Seminary students get  
hands-on experience in  
rural church setting



# What can happen when we respond rather than react

A couple of years ago, my 15-year-old son started playing rugby. He has really grown and become a good player. But recently, he called me after his team lost a close match. He was upset and began pointing out all the things everyone did wrong during the match.

I let him rant for a few moments, then told him to take a deep breath and reminded him that there are always lessons to be learned—even in the losses.

“What lessons are there to be learned,” he asked?

I told him that leaders don’t react. They respond.

Reaction is usually a temporary emotion to a temporary situation. Responding is an action that can lead to substantial change. When it comes to life, ministry, business, and even sports, those who react will do so almost every time circumstances change. Leaders, on the other hand, respond with forward action.

As a state network that cooperates with our national Southern Baptist Convention, there are plenty of opportunities to react. All you have to do is spend a few moments on Twitter to see an unending display of emotional responses. As you scroll through all the gossip, slander, and half-truths, some may wonder why we cooperate.

I would rather encourage our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention network to respond rather than react. With the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting in New Orleans now behind us, here are some ways we can do that:

## Prayer

We can call our people to be prayer warriors. Our churches can commit to prayer that passionately seeks the heart of the Lord. What if our network was defined by our efforts to lead others in responding with earnest prayer?

## Evangelism

Rather than lament statistics about declining evangelism, what if our churches committed to leading the way

in sharing the gospel? Wouldn’t it be awesome if, while others share the negative statistics and create their own narrative, SBTC churches could see a greater number of people come to Christ than ever before?

## Making disciples

In a culture of chaos and confusion, we can re-engage our people and equip them to make disciples. Wouldn’t it be incredible to see disciple-making movements multiply across Texas and the world?

## Sending

More people live in our state than ever before. We desperately need to plant more churches and send out more missionaries. What if we committed to plant more churches than ever before? What if we covenanted together to call out the called and eagerly send our best to live out the mission as an extension of our church?

## Partnership

The SBC has plenty of ups and downs, but we are still the greatest national network of churches anywhere. We send 3,700 missionaries to the field and plant hundreds of new churches each year. It’s an honor to partner with our six seminaries and train more than 20,000 leaders each year. The Cooperative Program is the greatest missions-giving strategy in the world. What if the SBTC committed to leaning in together and seeing God expand our influence and impact because we were focused on expanding our partnerships?

So what happened when I challenged my son to respond rather than react? He agreed, committed to responding to adversity during his next match, and ended up scoring twice to help lead his team to victory.

Friends, let’s move forward and respond—rather than react—by being a stronger network of churches than ever before. We can set the tone and lead the way for others to follow a path of gospel-focused response. I love you and am honored to serve you.



Dr. Nathan Lorick  
SBTC Executive Director



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# Blessings are hidden in our mistakes

I want to tell you about one of the worst mistakes I've ever made.

When I answered a call to serve in vocational ministry, God blessed me with incredible mentors who, verbally and by example, helped equip me to serve the kingdom. Those men drilled into me an uncompromising duty to preach the inerrant Word of God. They taught me to sacrificially shepherd the people the Lord placed in my care. I watched and learned as they cast vision and executed strategy.

So when the Lord opened a door for me to serve as the lead pastor of a church after working as an associate pastor for several years, I felt like I was ready to minister from a pretty strong foundation. But there was a problem. Woven throughout my strong ministry foundation were hairline fractures caused by the stress of a few lies I had started to believe.

The first lie was that serving on a church staff would give me more time to spend with the Lord. The second lie took a similar shape: When God called me to serve as a lead pastor, I figured I wouldn't have to fight as hard for my time with the Lord like I did as an associate pastor. After all, my responsibility to study and preach the Word of God each week necessitated biblical proximity, right? The third lie might have been the most damaging of all because it sounded so noble: Giving up my time with the Lord was acceptable as long as I was doing something for the cause of ministry.

It was a devastating mistake for me to believe these lies. Before long, I found myself effectively ministering to others while simultaneously depleting myself. Spiritually, I was running on empty.

God redeemed this very difficult season in my life by teaching me truths I don't think I would have learned any other way. I learned that anything we do through the call of ministry for the cause of the kingdom must be an outgrowth of a personal, intimate walk with Jesus. To approach ministry any other way is to engage in spiritual battles in our own strength, and, friends, no human being can carry that kind of weight.

I hate making mistakes. They can be painful, frustrating, and embarrassing. But they are also gifts. God can redeem any mistake. Because of this, the older I get, the less I want to hear about someone's successes and the more I want to hear about the mistakes they've made and how the Lord used them in amazingly redemptive ways. I think the best stories—the real ones—recount how God can take what seems like the worst mistakes of our lives and craft them into something beautiful, something poignant.

Mistakes are rarely terminal and they aren't ornaments of shame hanging upon the boughs of our lives.

They are opportunities for God to grow us and teach us more about our need for Him—if only we will embrace them for what they truly are.



## FARMERSVILLE'S BARBER ELECTED TO 2ND TERM AS SBC PRESIDENT

Bart Barber, pastor of First Baptist Church of Farmersville, was reelected to a second term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 13 at the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting.

Out of 11,014 messenger votes, Barber received 7,531 votes (68.38%), while Georgia pastor Mike Stone received 3,458 (31.40%). There were 25 ballots disallowed.

Barber was nominated by Jarrett Stephens, senior pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston. Stone was nominated by Florida pastor Willy Rice.

Barber has served as pastor of FBC Farmersville since 1999, as well as in a number of roles in the SBC and SBTC. He was on the SBTC's executive board from 2008 to 2014, serving as chairman and vice chairman.

—BAPTIST PRESS, TEXAN STAFF

## AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT FEMALE PASTORS MOVES FORWARD

A motion to clarify Southern Baptists' stance prohibiting women to serve as pastors was passed by messengers on June 14.

The motion, first brought last year by Virginia pastor Mike Law, received the required two-thirds vote by messengers. Another two-thirds vote of approval is necessary at next year's annual meeting to proceed with the amendment to Article III of the SBC Constitution.

The motion that passed was amended from its original version, which was referred to the SBC Executive Committee last year at the SBC Annual Meeting in Anaheim, Calif. Juan Sanchez, senior pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin, offered the amendment to Law's motion.

Article III lists five points that place churches within the definition of cooperation with the SBC. The amended motion calls for a sixth, adding churches that affirm, appoint, or employ "only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture."

—BAPTIST PRESS

## ABUSE REFORM TASK FORCE RENEWED FOR ANOTHER YEAR

A task force approved by the messengers to the 2022 SBC Annual Meeting reported progress to 2023 messengers on June 14. The eight-member Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force reported its activities over the past year to messengers and closed with a recommendation that messengers approve the renewal of the task force for another year.

Messengers approved continuation of the task force by a hand vote.

Highlights of the report included the creation of a MinistryCheck resource that helps churches vet candidates for leadership, provision of tools to assist churches in safeguarding people in their ministries, and resourcing and cooperation with state conventions as they seek to better protect their own churches and people.

"We want to see Southern Baptist churches across the country be the safest places for your children and your family to hear the gospel of Jesus," said ARITF Chairman Marshall Blalock, a pastor from Charleston, S.C., during his oral report.

—GARY LEDBETTER

## MESSENGERS UPHOLD REMOVAL OF SADDLEBACK, 2 OTHERS

Three churches that were disfellowshipped by the Executive Committee in February were denied their appeals to be reinstated to the SBC on June 13. The decision of the vote of the messengers to deem the churches not in friendly cooperation with the SBC was announced the following day.

Two of the churches—Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., and Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.—were removed because of their decision to call female pastors. The third church to appeal, Freedom Church of Vero Beach, Fla., was removed for failing to resolve concerns regarding an abuse allegation against its pastor.

After hearing the appeal of each church and a response from the Executive Committee, messengers voted by ballot to reject each appeal by majorities of 88% (Saddleback), 91% (Fern Creek), and 96% (Freedom Church).

—GARY LEDBETTER

## SBC RESOLUTIONS ADDRESS AI, OTHER TOPICS

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention approved nine resolutions on current issues. Resolutions are submitted by Southern Baptists and are also developed by committee members.

A resolution on artificial intelligence was the first ever for the SBC. The statement emphasized the Bible's sufficiency to answer ethical challenges presented by emerging technologies, as well as highlighting the centrality of human dignity.

The legacy and responsibility of women in fulfilling the Great Commission was the subject of another resolution. This one celebrates women who have served the convention as teachers, mentors, leaders, and missionaries. The statement also affirmed the worth and gifting of women for God's purposes.

Resolutions offer the messengers to express their opinions on current issues. While instructive, they are not binding on the convention.

—GARY LEDBETTER



# Miracles among the Masai

**A**s I write this article, I am flying back from a mission trip in the Masai Mara, Kenya. Thirty-two of us spent a week evangelizing, equipping church leaders, hosting medical clinics, constructing a new church building, and planting new churches.

It was a powerful week of advancing God's mission. We witnessed more than 400 people make professions of faith and laid the groundwork for two church plants in villages with no gospel presence. The most overwhelming part of the trip was the power of God that we saw on display in this largely unreached area.

This region is hugely influenced by pagan practices and witchcraft that have been present here for thousands of years. Our team encountered very real demonic activity and undeniable spiritual encounters that I have never seen in more than 25 years of ministry.

One of the pastors we work with here is named Jonathan Narasha. He was saved a little more than 25 years ago when a missionary came through preaching. Jonathan had never heard the gospel before that day, but it transformed his life. He immediately began to preach the gospel and start churches in a region where there were almost no Christians. Since Jonathan's conversion, there are now thousands of be-

lievers and he has personally planted more than 35 churches. Many of those who have accepted Christ have themselves planted dozens more churches.

Jonathan shared with our group the secret to his ministry success. It's no secret at all, but simply practicing what we find in the New Testament:

## **"I am a man of deep prayer."**

He told us prayer is the key to everything he does. He shared with us that after his conversion, he had no one to disciple or train him—not even a church to attend. All he knew to do was pray. He spends hours in prayer, dependent upon the Holy Spirit to guide him and give him supernatural power to proclaim Jesus. He also leads his church to pray. While preaching at his church, I was humbled by the fact that nearly an hour of their more than two-hour Sunday service was spent in fervent prayer.

## **"We believe in going out to evangelize."**

He said the gospel must be proclaimed to everyone and that it is our responsibility to go and share everywhere we go. He spends the majority of his week going from village to village and house to house sharing the gospel. The reason there are so many people coming to faith in this region is not because of the ministry programs his church offers, but because they mobilize the good news of Jesus.

## **"I expect God to perform miracles and ask Him for them."**

Jonathan said he believes God is still able to perform signs and wonders to display the power of the gospel. They have seen people healed, demons cast out, and spiritual strongholds in villages broken. He said the reason we do not see the supernatural more than we do is because we do not ask God for it, nor do we expect it.

I am overwhelmed by this experience. My desire is to see God do this in the state of Texas. I am convinced the power of the Holy Spirit that is working among the Masai is the same power that wants to work among us! Let's be people of prayer, people of evangelism, and people who ask for and expect miracles!



# Who is Southwestern?

At Southwestern Seminary, we have recently reaffirmed the core values that guide our work and ministry. We are grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused, and globally engaged. These values guide everything we do.

Learn more at [swbts.edu/corevalues](https://swbts.edu/corevalues).



• LIVE YOUR  
CALLING •

# 'We all make mistakes'

Ahead of his Equip keynote, Lifeway's Ben Mandrell talks about the beauty of using blunders for our betterment



*Lifeway Christian Resources President/CEO Ben Mandrell will be the keynote speaker at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Equip Conference on Aug. 5 at Sagemont Church in Houston. Mandrell gives vision and strategic leadership to the 132-year-old organization that provides ministry resources for churches in more than 160 countries on six continents. He also hosts the ministry podcast, The Glass House, with his wife, Lynley. Mandrell recently spoke with the Texan about a topic he will speak on at Equip—mistakes.*

## **What's one of the biggest mistakes you've ever made in a ministry context?**

**Ben Mandrell:** One of my biggest mistakes was I told my church plant [in Colorado] I was going to be there forever. [The church] wanted to know if I was going to plant this church, get it up and running, and move on to the next city. At that moment in my life, I was a 100% convinced I was in Denver for life. I told them I was going to be buried next to Buffalo Bill, because he was famously buried in that area. But Scripture is just so clear about [not] predicting your own future. As much as I wanted to comfort my flock and encourage them that I had no intentions of leaving, what I was really doing was pretending in some weird way that I was sovereign over my life or that I could decide where I was going to be buried. I've learned that it's really good to give people hope and encouragement, but it's not good to make promises you can't keep.

## **Generally speaking, what are some of the biggest mistakes ministry leaders make?**

**BM:** I feel like a lot of pastors—and I've been in this boat—we worry so much about how we're being perceived by outsiders when the ultimate measure of our success is how we are respected by the insiders. There's an old saying that is so true: you can tell the skill of



the shepherd by the condition of the sheep. It doesn't matter to me how big a church is or how fast it's growing. There are a lot of things that cause a church to grow. What's really the best way to tell if a church is healthy is to go inside and look at the condition of the sheep. If they're attended well, if they're fed, if they're cared for, it's a healthy environment. I heard somebody say once, "Success is when the people who know you best respect you the most." That's a definition of success that I think is more biblical than the one that we have, which says that success is when you have the most followers on social media. Most of those people who are following you really have no clue who you really are.

**For pastors, the nature of their calling frequently thrusts them into positions where the decisions they make, which can sometimes lead to mistakes, are often very public. What advice can you offer to pastors to help them navigate those rocky waters a little more smoothly?**

**BM:** I think one of the hardest things to do is publicly apologize for a mistake. Yet when people observe somebody owning a mistake, there's something so endearing about that. It makes you feel connected to that person and [leaves you thinking], "Man, I'm so glad he said that. That makes me feel better about the seven mistakes I made this week!" I don't know what it is about us as spiritual leaders, but we want to give people the impression that we don't need grace, that we don't need forgiveness, that we don't need anyone to put up with us because we blow it sometimes when that's exactly what the gospel says.

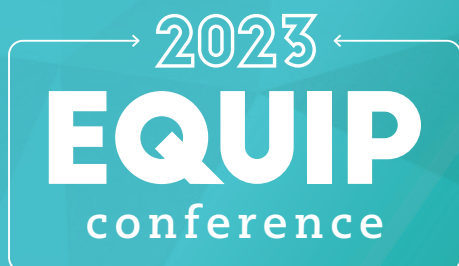
The healthiest pastors I know often say things like, "Look, I don't know if we're doing this right, but we've got to do something, so here's the path we're going to take."

And when they communicate things like that, it's always done in a spirit of [acknowledging] we've never been here before. You often don't know [what to do]—you're just doing your best to manage a tricky situation. The decision you're making may be the right decision, but it may not be. Time will tell.

**Why are we so afraid—especially in ministry contexts—to make mistakes, and what are some ways we can process our mistakes in a healthier way?**

**BM:** In ministry, I'm either beating myself up for something I should have seen coming or I'm catastrophizing what could happen if this thing gets out of hand. Neither one of those things is healthy. Just like Peter, we all make mistakes. We betray the name of Christ. We blow it, and the Lord—because He's gracious—restores us. I don't think Jesus wanted Peter to spend the rest of his life punishing himself for that one night, and I don't think the Lord wants me to spend the next 10 years lamenting some decision that I made in year one at Lifeway.

That doesn't mean I don't want to cash in on the experience and be better next time because of it. So I think one of the things I'd recommend is surround yourself with people to help you sort out [the different parts of your ministry]. Have a leadership team that has the freedom to challenge you and to speak into your processes. Let people speak into your life who have the gift of discernment and wisdom. That is an invitation into intimacy. ... I think having people you trust speak into your pastoral ministry is a rare thing. I just don't see a lot of pastors doing it. A pastor who thinks he's got it all [figured out on his own] is sunk. He needs people around him to round out his gifts—but it takes a certain amount of self-awareness to get there.



**Saturday AUGUST 5**

Sagemont Church *Houston*

**SBTEXAS.COM/EQUIP**

# CROSS TRAINING

*FBC Watauga is doing kingdom work by mentoring the church leaders of tomorrow*

## WATAUGA

**F**irst Baptist Church in Watauga was founded by four Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students in 1939.

“They came out to Watauga, which was a small, rural community north of Fort Worth at that point, and they decided they were going to plant a church here. They laid the groundwork for it,” said Dennis Hester, pastor of FBC Watauga.

The students had a goal of having L.R. Scarborough, the seminary’s president at the time, fill the pulpit on the first Sunday.

“So they went into his office and told him that the Lord had told them that he was supposed to preach the first sermon at this new church plant,” Hester said. “He did.”

In the years following its founding, FBC Watauga was a small church where seminary students served as pastors. The average tenure of each pastor was two or three years, and no pastor had been there more than four years until the Hes-

First Baptist Church in Watauga was started by four Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students in 1939. The church is still sending out ministers.

FBC WATAUGA PHOTO



ter's predecessor, who stayed 14 years. Hester has been there 18 years.

"The church was hurting when I came, and my heart is to love the local church," he said. "I just loved the church and preached the gospel and we saw the church begin to take off."

One of the most exciting ways God has moved recently has been through giving the church a ministry of raising up the next generation of leaders. In a slight shift from its history of having seminary students as pastors, FBC Watauga now has Hester serving as a mentor to ministers.

"We have a plethora of interns regularly, and this has really happened over the last eight or 10 years," he said. "What we see the Lord doing now is [allowing us to mentor] young men and women who are going off into the ministry in other places."

The church sees between 150-200 people in attendance on Sundays and has a handful of interns. One is a young woman interning as a chaplain while her husband interns as a young adult pastor. The church has a couple of worship interns as well.

On the staff, the student pastor grew up in the church and recently finished a master's degree, while the worship pastor is pursuing a degree at Texas Baptist College.

"Both of those guys are young men that we're raising up," said Hester, who has been in ministry 30 years, pastoring in May, Texas, before Watauga.

In recent years, Hester earned a doctorate in pastoral ministry at Southwestern. "It has given me a lot more tools in my toolkit to mentor these young men and women," he said.

"They need a place where they can come and be mentored and disciplined because, obviously, if we're not raising up the next generation of pastors and chaplains and worship ministers from a theologically sound and biblically firm foundation, we're not going to have

[biblically conservative] ministers," Hester said.

FBC Watauga aims to make Scripture the foundation for everything, particularly worship and preaching, the pastor said.

"What we see is that even some of the young adults who have come through our church that went maybe to a university where the vast majority of their professors were very liberal and did not hold to the inerrancy of Scripture, they were able to stand firm," Hester said.

Another ministry God has blessed the church with is praying for the lost. After the pandemic, FBC Watauga wasn't seeing many people baptized.

"We start meeting, whether it's half a dozen or two dozen people meeting, on Tuesday nights at 6:30. We write down the names of lost friends or family members," Hester said. They split into groups, pray over the names, and then hand them off to the staff for prayer the following day.

"Not long after we did that, we started seeing God move and save souls," he said.

A 27-year-old man who had not been in church stepped into a worship service and was saved the same day, the pastor said. A retired veteran in his 60s had been attending regularly but went forward during the invitation, broken and with tears in his eyes, to receive Christ as Savior.

The church has built relationships with people in the community through being involved in the town's civic organizations, through back-to-school supply efforts, and through the pastor serving as a local police chaplain.

"They see us loving people and caring for people," Hester said.

An emphasis on biblical fidelity is helping students hold fast to the truth when they encounter other worldviews at secular universities, pastor Dennis Hester (bottom left) said.

FBC WATAUGA PHOTO





# 'A SEASON OF EQUIPPING'

*Cross City's SALT program is creating a leadership pipeline to equip people to serve the church*



## EULESS

**W**hen John Meador arrived as senior pastor of Cross City Church (then First Baptist Euless) in 2006, he brought something extra: SALT, an intensive discipleship program that he says is “unparalleled” in its preparation of teachers.

SALT—or, Servant Approach to Leadership Training—is the brainchild of Eddie Rasnake, discipleship pastor at Meador’s previous church, Woodland Park Baptist of Chattanooga, Tenn. The SALT Institute remains a vital ministry of that church.

“When I came here, the search team asked me to bring the material,” Meador said, explaining that Rasnake and Woodland Park had developed the course even before Meador had become pastor of the Chattanooga congregation.

“There is a high level of expectation. It is a seminary-level course,” Meador said.

Church member Sharon Smith echoed her pastor’s words. Smith and her husband, Claude, have been members of Cross City for 37 years. She was a Bible study leader at the church when Meador came. As a veteran Precept group leader, Smith had significant experience with inductive Bible study methods and was



The 2023 SALT graduating class at Cross City reflects “the generations and the multiethnic identity of our church,” according to SALT teacher Sharon Smith. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

pleased when Meador recruited her to participate in the pioneer SALT class at Cross City in 2007.

“I was blessed to be included,” Smith said. “We did SALT for two years. I loved it, absolutely loved it. It began a season of equipping for our church. After the success of the initial launch, we added a morning ladies’ class, which I led. It was a great decision which led to several graduating classes of women.”

Although the church experimented with shorter versions of SALT over the years, the basic course continues to require a two-year commitment. With Rasnake’s



Sharon Smith (right) took the first SALT class offered at Cross City/First Eules shortly after Senior Pastor John Meador's arrival. Smith has taught the curriculum for years and today is the SALT class coordinator. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

permission, Cross City adapted the course somewhat, but essentially, its SALT classes follow his curriculum for four semesters, Smith said.

"The purpose is to equip people who are called to be pastors, teachers, [serve] in full-time ministry, or those who have a burden to teach or serve in the local church," Smith said. "Pastor John says that Jesus made it clear that leadership in the kingdom is different than leadership in the world."

### A life-changing course

Meador taught SALT in the early years, then stepped away to spearhead the church's Can We Talk? evangelism outreach based on materials he authored. When the pandemic changed the nature of door-to-door evangelism, and following the death of longtime Cross City SALT teacher David Crome in 2022, Meador stepped back into the SALT teaching role. He shares those duties with Smith—who acts as course coordinator and facilitates the class when Meador is absent.

Cross City members wishing to take the course go through an application process to ensure they have a grasp of basic Christian doctrine and understand the requirements of the two-year commitment.

"There's homework every week. There's Greek involved. This is not for those looking for a light Bible study," Smith said.

Regular attendance is expected, with classes held for two hours on Wednesday evenings each semester. Anticipation rises as each two-year course draws to a close and enrollment begins for the next. Classes run around 10 students, and all must enroll at the beginning. There are no mid-program additions during the two years.

To date, 102 Cross City students have completed SALT. Most are serving as teachers and Bible study leaders at Cross City, at other churches, or in their communities. Some have gone on to seminaries or become full-time pastors or ministry leaders.

The recent 2023 graduating class reflected "the generations and the multiethnic identity of our church," Smith said, calling the group "a beautiful picture of heaven."

Matt Tyson, now of Shreveport, La., called the SALT experience "transforming." Tyson, then a corporate healthcare finance executive in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, took the course a decade ago. Called to ministry, Tyson left his career to become executive director of Meador's One Conversation evangelism ministry, then became a pastor in Louisiana, and today pastors 3:18 Church serving the homeless in the Bayou State.

"SALT transformed my thinking, transformed how I studied the Word," said Tyson, who since has earned a master's degree in theological studies from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Smith and Meador say those are the kinds of ways God is using the SALT program.

### SALT by semester

The SALT curriculum, which can be purchased online, is now published in four manuals. Semester one covers a biblical philosophy of ministry, Smith said. Subjects include the ministries of the church, with ministers from the youth, children's, preschool, and other departments presenting their philosophies of ministry.

Semester two focuses on handling the Word accurately. This features a section of teaching in which students learn to use Greek study tools effectively. Semester three deals with how to handle difficult subjects and includes an in-depth study of the book of Acts.

Semester four features application skills, as students use what they have learned to create a biblically based message to present to the class.

"It's just astonishing to see what they come up with after all they have learned," Smith said. "We celebrate big time at each graduation."



new city  
CHURCH

# PLANTED TO PLANT

*Redeemer Lubbock has used its residency program to train leaders and help 24 new churches spring to life*

## LUBBOCK

**R**edeemer Church started as a plant of Southcrest Baptist Church in 2008 and within two years was planting churches itself. By 2023, the family of churches planted by Redeemer—known as the Redeemer Network—consisted of more than two dozen congregations.

One might say Redeemer was planted to plant.

“By fall 2023, some 24 churches were planted by us or by our ‘grandchildren,’” said Brandon Gilbert, Redeemer Lubbock senior ministry director of college and residency. Already an elder, Gilbert came on staff full time in 2020 when the church shifted its focus to planting in college towns.

Brandon Gilbert, with microphone, celebrates with the New City team that will launch a church plant in Austin in 2024. PHOTO BY SARAH DAMRON

Recent plants soon to launch in conjunction with the Redeemer Network and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) include New City in Austin and Doxa Church in Tucson, Ariz. New City, in particular, has benefitted from partnership not only with the Redeemer Network, but also with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention’s church planting partnership with NAMB called Send Network SBTC.

“We love the SBTC. We love NAMB. Our missions align, and when we can, we partner,” Gilbert said, adding that sometimes other congregations partner with Redeemer Lubbock on specific plants. For example, Coastal Community Church in Galveston is extensively involved in the new Tucson church plant pastored by Chris Cummings.

Such partnerships provide resources and funding to help plants get going. NAMB’s assessment process to screen potential planters





Since 2019, Redeemer Lubbock has shifted its church planter residency focus to collegiate church plants. This prayer board reminds viewers of the need and of the 24 plants started so far by the Redeemer Network.

PHOTO BY SARAH DAMRON

complements that of Redeemer. “There’s not a lot of differences,” Gilbert said, “but the two assessments allow for different sets of eyes. We want to create the healthiest church plants we can.”

### The program

Potential church planters who qualify for Redeemer’s program are invited to spend two years at Redeemer Lubbock or another network church as church planting residents. There is no charge for the program, but residents must raise support for living expenses.

During the residency, participants live near the network church they serve. A few are bivocational; most raise support or save money to enable them to serve without other obligations. Generally, no more than two residents are assigned to a church: ideally, one first-year and one second-year resident serve a single congregation at the same time.

There are boundless opportunities for participants to gain practical knowledge.

Residents meet weekly during the school year

in cohorts to go through the two-year curriculum. Twice a month, they gather to meet with Redeemer Lubbock Pastor Dusty Thompson in what Gilbert describes as a “free for all” session to ask questions of the senior pastor who himself was once a planter.

“There’s lots of job shadowing,” Gilbert said.

Summers see the residents serving in the church’s seasonal ministries. Residents do not meet with their cohorts over the summer but have one-on-one time with their supervisors at church.

Residents also attend four retreats over the length of the program: two with their spouses and two with other network pastors. The spouse retreats are “marriage intensives,” as church planting is a family commitment, Gilbert said. “The wife and family must be on board.”

### A more narrow focus with explosive gospel potential

Most churches in the Redeemer Network follow what Gilbert calls an “opportunistic” model of planting. He gave as a general example a planter who loves his hometown, receives training, and returns there to start a church as the opportunity arises. But since 2019, Redeemer Lubbock residents have focused specifically on planting in areas near colleges, as the network has realized the potential that exists in those settings.

“The college campus is the most strategic domestic mission field we can be part of in Texas, the South, and the Southwest,” Gilbert said. “Now we recruit church-planting residents who have the same heart to start college churches.”

Redeemer Lubbock intentionally approaches men who are already doing significant work in college ministry at churches, schools, ministries, or other organizations, Gilbert said.

“We recruit those guys to come to Redeemer, embed into the Redeemer staff, be part of everything our staff is part of, and work heavily with college ministry—preaching, discipling, and leading classes,” he said.

As the resident completes the program and heads to a college area to plant, Redeemer also recruits team members from its large base of Lubbock-area college students and recent graduates to help.

Justin Smith, pastor of the Send Network SBTC-supported New City Church plant in Austin poised to launch in 2024, said of his experience in the Redeemer Network residency program, “I learned a lot from doing a residency with Redeemer Network. More than anything though, I was taught how to be a healthy church planter, pastor, husband, father, and ultimately, a disciple.”

# From light to darkness and back again

**Pastor's personal struggles redeemed by God, used to open new ministry doors in community 'hungry' for the gospel**

## HUMBLE

**E**liel Diaz remembers clearly one of the lowest points of his life.

In 2016, following months of debilitating panic attacks that seemed to strike out of nowhere shortly after he was ordained as a pastor, Diaz checked himself in at a mental health treatment center. While there, the Lord used a counselor—armed with the words of Jeremiah 29:11—to remind Diaz that, although he found himself in a difficult situation, he should remember who he is in Christ and not stop fulfilling his calling.

It was a big challenge for Diaz: telling others about a God he was struggling to sense and a hope he wasn't feeling.

"I'll do what you are asking me to do, even though I don't want to," Diaz recalls telling God.

So Diaz began talking to people at the facility about Jesus and sharing the plan of salvation with them. After sharing the gospel with a man there, the man told Diaz, "I need that Jesus." Later, Diaz approached a woman who looked troubled and told her about Jesus as well. Her response was almost exactly the same: "I need this Jesus."

Their separate responses to the gospel message impacted Diaz greatly and served as a turning point. It reminded him that hope in Jesus is still real and that He is able to deliver people even from their darkest feelings. After that encounter, three days after he arrived at the facility, Diaz knew his time there was over and that a season of personal healing had begun.

Diaz, now the pastor of United City Church en Español in Humble, uses that dark time in his life—which he describes as his wilderness—as a springboard for ministry in one of the fastest-growing regions in Texas.

"I grew up in church, I served the Lord for many years, but I needed my wilderness, because even though we don't understand [these times], they are necessary," Diaz said.

## From light to darkness

Originally from Cayey, Puerto Rico, Diaz came to Houston in August 2012. He made the move with his wife, Sharon, after friends invited them to explore new opportunities in North America. Diaz and his wife made the move sensing the Lord was at work, but not knowing how.

Through his academic preparation at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico in jazz and Afro-Caribbean music, God opened doors for Diaz to become an instructor and Bible teacher at a music ministry training institute in Houston. As they continued their journey, they lost a baby and decided to find a





church where they would be able to “sit and heal,” Diaz said. That church was the Conroe campus of Champion Forest Baptist Church, where they found healing, fellowship, and a place to serve. In 2015, the church called Diaz to serve as its part-time worship pastor while he continued his duties at the music institute.

The next year proved to be bittersweet. In June 2016, Diaz was ordained as a pastor. At the same time, he said his mental health began to decline. He was at home one day sitting on his couch when suddenly he began to feel short of breath. The episode was so bad, he was rushed to the emergency room.

“I couldn’t speak, my hands were twisting, and I started experiencing panic attacks,” Diaz said.

The panic attacks progressed over the next six months. At first, they happened weekly ... then daily ... and then they began happening several times a day. Finally, around Christmas, he consulted with his pastor, Esteban Vazquez, and ultimately decided to admit himself into the mental health treatment center. He said he did not understand what was happening to him, nor could he see how God was going to use the outcome for good.

But as Diaz learned through his gospel encounter with the woman at the mental health facility, God was just beginning.

### From darkness to light

After leaving the facility, Diaz began to rebuild his mental health by making a commitment to surrender his life completely to God. In January 2018, after recovering from his personal struggles, Diaz was approached by Ramon Medina, pastor of Champion Forest en Español, and Stephen Trammell, campus pastor of Champion Forest’s North Klein campus. The men told Diaz the North Klein campus was preparing to start a Spanish ministry and invited Diaz to serve as its pastor. Diaz accepted.

Diaz and his wife started the Spanish ministry at the North Klein campus with only a few family members and close friends. Their first service was held in August 2018, and for four years, the Lord blessed them with a thriving ministry. During this vibrant time, Diaz—now with a family of four—began to feel that a new season of ministry was coming.

One day, Medina was telling Diaz about all the ways God was moving on the North Klein campus. During that conversation, Medina mentioned that United City Church in Humble was looking for a pastor to lead a Spanish ministry it was starting. Though it was only a brief part of that conversation, Diaz couldn’t stop thinking about United City from that point on. Before the con-



United City Church en Español is building community through small groups, fellowship, and meeting needs in the community.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

versation ended, Diaz shared that he was sensing a new season of ministry on the horizon and asked Medina to be in prayer with him.

Some time later, after researching United City and praying about the opportunity, Diaz went back to Medina and asked him if he felt like he would be a good fit to lead the Humble church’s new Spanish ministry. The pastor said he did, and Diaz eventually connected with United City’s leadership. One of the things Diaz was excited about was that the church was located near the area where his family had lived when they first came to Texas from Puerto Rico. At that time, there were no Hispanic Southern Baptist churches in the area.

“God allowed us to live in that area and get to know the people, then come back to start a Spanish ministry,” Diaz said.

United City Church en Español officially launched in January 2023, shortly after Diaz was commissioned to lead the effort by Chris Kouba, United City’s lead pastor.

United City Church en Español has been intentional in building a community of leaders through small groups, fellowship, and meeting their needs.

“All of this is a miracle that only God can do,” Diaz said. “Northeast Houston was waiting for something in Spanish. They were thirsty. ... We want to see lives saved and build a church of imperfect people serving a perfect God—a church that embraces the community as it is so that it can be transformed by the gospel of Jesus.”



# De la luz a la oscuridad y de nuevo a la luz

**Dios redime luchas personales de pastor para abrir nuevas puertas ministeriales en una comunidad “hambrienta” del Evangelio**

## HUMBLE

**E**liel Díaz recuerda claramente uno de los momentos más oscuros de su vida.

En el 2016, después de meses de debilitantes ataques de pánico que parecían surgir de la nada y poco después de ser ordenado como pastor, Díaz decidió ingresar en un centro de tratamiento de salud mental. Mientras estaba allí, el Señor usó a un consejero, armado con las palabras de Jeremías 29:11—para recordarle a Díaz que, aunque se encontraba en una situación difícil, debía recordar quién es él en Cristo y no dejar de cumplir su propósito.

Era un gran reto para Díaz: hablar a los demás de un Dios al que le costaba sentir y de una esperanza que él mismo no tenía.

“Voy a hacer lo que me estás pidiendo, aunque no tengo deseos,” recuerda Díaz haberle dicho a Dios.

Así que Díaz comenzó a hablar con la gente del centro sobre Jesús y a compartir con ellos el plan de salvación. Después de compartir el evangelio con un hombre allí, el hombre le dijo a Díaz: “Yo necesito a ese Jesús.” Mas tarde, Díaz se



Eliel Díaz junto a su esposa, Sharon, y sus dos hijos. FOTO COMPARTIDA

acercó a una mujer con semblante decaído y también le habló de Jesús. Su respuesta fue casi exactamente la misma: “Yo necesito a ese Jesús.”

Sus respuestas separadas al mensaje del evangelio impactaron mucho a Díaz y le sirvieron como punto de inflexión. Le recordó que la esperanza en Jesús sigue siendo real y que Él es capaz de liberar a las personas incluso de sus sentimientos más oscuros. Después de ese encuentro, tres días después de llegar al centro, Díaz supo que su tiempo allí había terminado y que había comenzado una temporada de sanidad personal.

Díaz, ahora pastor de United City Church en Español en Humble, utiliza esa época oscura de su vida—que él describe como su desierto—como un trampolín para el ministerio en una de las regiones de más rápido crecimiento de Texas.

“Crecí en la iglesia, he servido al Señor durante muchos años, pero yo necesitaba mi desierto, porque aunque no los entendamos, son necesarios,” dijo Díaz.

## De la luz a la oscuridad

Originario de Cayey, Puerto Rico, Díaz llegó a Houston en agosto de 2012. Se mudó con su esposa, Sharon, después de que algunos de sus amigos les invitaran a explorar nuevas oportunidades en Norteamérica. Díaz y su esposa hicieron la mudanza sintiendo que el Señor estaba obrando, pero sin saber cómo obraría.

A través de su preparación académica en el Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico en jazz y música afrocaribeña, Dios abrió las puertas para que Díaz fuera instructor de música y maestro de Biblia en un instituto de entrenamiento para ministerio de música en Houston. Mientras continuaban su jornada, ellos perdieron un bebé y decidieron encontrar una iglesia donde pudieran “sentarse y sanar,” dijo Díaz. Esa iglesia fue el campus de Conroe de la Iglesia Bautista Champion Forest, donde encontraron sanidad, compañerismo y un lugar para servir. En el 2015, la iglesia llamó a Díaz para servir como su pastor de



United City Church en Español está construyendo comunidad a través de grupos pequeños, compañerismo y supliendo necesidades en la comunidad. FOTO COMPARTIDA

alabanza a tiempo parcial mientras continuaba con sus deberes en el instituto de música.

El año siguiente resultó ser uno agri dulce. En junio de 2016, Díaz fue ordenado pastor. Al mismo tiempo, su salud mental empezó a deteriorarse. Un día estaba en su casa sentado en el sofá cuando, de repente, empezó a sentir que le faltaba el aire. El episodio fue tan grave que lo llevaron a urgencias.

“No podía hablar, se me torcían las manos y empecé a sufrir ataques de pánico,” cuenta Díaz.

Los ataques de pánico evolucionaron durante los seis meses siguientes. Al principio eran semanales ... luego diarios ... y después empezaron a repetirse varias veces al día. Finalmente, alrededor de Navidad, Díaz compartió lo que sucedía con su pastor, Esteban Vázquez, y finalmente decidió ingresar en un centro de tratamiento de salud mental. Dijo que no entendía lo que le estaba pasando, ni podía ver cómo Dios iba a utilizar todo esto para bien.

Pero como Díaz aprendió a través de su encuentro de salvación con la mujer del centro de salud mental, Dios apenas estaba comenzando a obrar.

### De la oscuridad a la luz

Después de salir de la institución, Díaz comenzó a reconstruir su salud mental al comprometerse a entregar su vida completamente a Dios. En enero de 2018, después de recuperarse de sus luchas personales, Díaz fue contactado por Ramón Medina, pastor de Champion Forest en Español, y Stephen Trammell, pastor del campus de North Klein de Champion Forest. Ellos le dijeron a Díaz que el campus de North Klein se estaba preparando para comenzar un ministerio en español e invitaron a Díaz a servir como su pastor. Díaz aceptó.

Díaz y su esposa comenzaron el ministerio en español en el campus de North Klein con sólo unos pocos miembros de la familia y amigos cercanos. Su primer servicio de adoración se celebró en agosto de 2018, y durante cuatro años, el Señor los bendijo con un ministerio próspero. En medio de este tiempo vibrante, Díaz—ahora con una familia de cuatro—comenzó a sentir que se acercaba una nueva temporada de ministerio.

Un día, mientras Medina comentaba con Díaz todas las maneras en que Dios se estaba moviendo en el campus de North Klein. Durante esa conversación, Medina mencionó que United City Church en Humble estaba buscando un pastor para dirigir un ministerio en español que estaba comenzando. Aunque sólo fue una breve parte de esa conversación, Díaz no pudo dejar de pensar en United City desde ese momento. Antes de terminar la conversación, Díaz compartió que estaba sintiendo que se aproximaba una nueva temporada de ministerio y le pidió a Medina que estuviera en oración con él.

Algún tiempo después, tras investigar sobre United City y orar sobre esta oportunidad, Díaz volvió a Medina y le preguntó si le parecía que él pudiese ser la persona adecuada para dirigir el nuevo ministerio en español de la iglesia de Humble. El pastor dijo que sí, y Díaz finalmente se puso en contacto con los líderes de United City. Una de las cosas que entusiasmó a Díaz fue que la iglesia estaba situada cerca de la zona donde vivía su familia cuando llegaron a Texas desde Puerto Rico. En ese momento, no había iglesias bautistas del sur hispanas en la zona.

“Dios nos permitió vivir en esa zona y conocer a la gente y luego regresar para iniciar un ministerio en español,” dijo Díaz.

United City Church en Español se lanzó oficialmente en enero de 2023, poco después de que Díaz fuera comisionado para dirigir esta obra por Chris Kouba, pastor principal de United City.

United City Church en Español ha sido intencional en construir una comunidad de líderes replicables a través de grupos pequeños, el compañerismo y atendiendo sus necesidades por medio de eventos para mujeres, hombres y matrimonios.

“Todo esto es un milagro que sólo Dios puede hacer,” dijo Díaz. “El noreste de Houston estaba esperando algo en español. Estaban sedientos ... Queremos ver vidas salvadas y construir una iglesia de gente imperfecta sirviendo a un Dios perfecto—una iglesia que abraza a la comunidad tal como es para que pueda ser transformada por el evangelio de Jesús.”

# Hablando el mismo idioma

**Iglesia de Brownsville inicia servicios en inglés y español para conectar brecha generacional**

## BROWNSVILLE

**A** medida que crece la población hispana en los Estados Unidos, surgen nuevos retos. Por ejemplo, cada vez más niños y adolescentes de hogares hispanos mejoran sus conocimientos de inglés, pero no desarrollan o incluso pierden sus conocimientos nativos de español.

Como resultado, en muchos hogares hispanos de EE.UU., los padres hablan poco inglés y sus hijos hablan poco o nada de español. Esta realidad ha creado un entorno en dónde muchos padres—y la iglesia—luchan por conectar con la generación más joven.

Estos retos son los que impulsaron a Manuel Martínez, pastor de la Iglesia Bautista Logos en Brownsville, a iniciar un ministerio hispano en inglés.

“A los jóvenes hispanos de segunda y tercera generación les cuesta conectar con las iglesias de habla hispana porque no dominan el español. Por eso muchos abandonan la iglesia justo después de la Escuela Superior,” dice Martínez, quien ha sido formado por la subcultura hispanoamericana.

Nacido en Matamoros (México), Martínez se trasladó a Carolina del Norte cuando tenía 6 años. Cuando empezó a ir a la escuela, el inglés se convirtió en su lengua materna, pero mantuvo su capacidad para hablar español porque era el idioma que se hablaba en casa. Comenzó a trabajar a los 15 años para ayudar a mantener a su familia, que incluía a su madre y dos hermanas pequeñas. Su padre llegó a Estados Unidos para vivir con la familia, pero los padres de Martínez se separaron cuando él tenía 17 años.

Siguieron años de dificultades. Tras la separación, su padre fue deportado y su madre se volvió a casar y regresó a México, dejando a Martínez con sus dos hermanas, que ahora dependían de él. El abandono, la presión económica, problemas en pasadas relaciones y su situación migratoria le llevaron a una

época muy oscura en dónde sufrió con una depresión y pensamientos suicidas.

Durante esta temporada de la vida de Martínez, un hombre llamado Carlos, quien es el encargado del mantenimiento de la iglesia de su abuela, Iglesia Bautista West Brownsville, vino a visitarlo. Él compartió el evangelio con Martínez, de 18 años, quien entregó su vida a Cristo. En West Brownsville, Martínez fue discipulado por el pastor Carlos Navarro y comenzó a sentir que el Señor lo llamaba al ministerio.

“Sentí en mi corazón que Dios me iba a usar como pastor, aunque no sabía lo que eso significaba,” dijo Martínez.

Con el tiempo, Martínez comenzó a servir en el ministerio juvenil, donde conoció a su esposa y ayuda idónea, Karla. Participó activamente en la evangelización de su comunidad y dirigió la adoración en la iglesia. También sirvió como maestro de Biblia para jóvenes y evangelista de jóvenes, predicando en varios eventos.

Debido a que estuvo muy involucrado con los jóvenes, Martínez vio repetidamente que las generaciones más jóvenes de hispanos se desconectaban de la iglesia después de dejar el grupo de jóvenes. Parte del problema, reconoció, era que las generaciones más jóvenes se encontraban en medio de dos culturas, sin pertenecer plenamente a ninguna de ellas. No podían identificarse con la cultura estadounidense y, al mismo tiempo, les resultaba difícil conectar con la cultura hispana porque no hablaban el idioma con fluidez.

“Vi a muchas familias rotas como la mía y a muchos jóvenes sufriendo como yo,” afirma Martínez.



Con la inquietud de cerrar esa brecha que vio entre los hispanos más jóvenes creciendo alrededor de él, Martínez pasó cinco años apoyando los comienzos de plantación de la Iglesia Bautista Jericó, ayudando en el área evangelismo, adoración y discipulado mientras continuaba trabajando con los jóvenes de West Brownsville. En el 2018, Navarro bendijo el deseo de Martínez de comenzar un nuevo ministerio para alcanzar a las generaciones hispanas más jóvenes. Martínez y su esposa comenzaron abriendo su casa para estudios bíblicos a los que asistían estudiantes de secundaria y universitarios. También comenzaron una práctica que continúan hoy: evangelizar a la gente en parques públicos cada semana. Después de un año, el grupo comenzó a celebrar servicios de adoración una vez al mes en un área proporcionada por West Brownsville.

A medida que el grupo continuaba creciendo, comenzaron a orar por un lugar permanente para reunirse. En el 2020, Dios proveyó ese lugar a través de una generosa mujer que les dio las llaves de un pequeño edificio con capacidad para unas 40 personas. Los preparativos para utilizar el edificio estaban en marcha cuando COVID golpeó, reduciendo el número de personas que se estaban preparando para poner en marcha lo que se convertiría en la Iglesia Bautista Logos de 20 personas a seis. Los que quedaban estaban decididos a continuar con el lanzamiento y, tras la cuarentena, reanudaron las reuniones en persona.

Una vez se reanudaron, Martínez y la iglesia descubrieron que algunos de los jóvenes que estaban llegando traían a sus padres y a otros miembros de la familia. Aunque acogieron este hecho con entusiasmo, esto trajo un reto con el que Martínez se había familiarizado: ahora tenían una generación mayor de hispanos a los que les costaba conectar porque los servicios eran en inglés. Eso llevó a Logos a iniciar

un servicio adicional en español. Martínez dijo que alrededor de 45 personas asisten regularmente a los servicios.

Logos es una iglesia apasionada por las misiones. El año pasado destinó el 18% de su presupuesto anual a las misiones, lo que incluyó el apoyo a dos misioneros en España y el envío de estudiantes universitarios a viajes misioneros. Uno de esos viajes fue a Dallas, donde atendieron a una comunidad de inmigrantes de Afganistán. Como resultado, varios inmigrantes renunciaron al islam y entregaron sus vidas a Cristo. La iglesia también ministra en el campus de la Universidad de Texas Rio Grande Valley en Brownsville, donde los miembros llevan a cabo estudios bíblicos que han llevado a tres estudiantes a aceptar a Cristo y ser bautizados.

También se han unido a Navarro para ministrar a los inmigrantes que llegan al centro de Brownsville, alimentándoles, dándoles mantas y predicando el Evangelio.

Martínez, que sirve y trabaja bivocacionalmente, sigue orando por más obreros que ayuden a discipular a las personas que están alcanzando. La iglesia también está pidiendo en oración a Dios que provea un nuevo edificio que pueda sostener el crecimiento que está experimentando. Aunque Logos está situada en uno de los condados más pobres de Texas, y con una ofrenda semanal media de 130 dólares, la iglesia sigue confiando en que Dios proveerá a sus necesidades para que puedan expandir Su reino.

“La historia de Logos ha sido una de Dios haciendo abundantemente más de lo que pedimos o esperamos,” dijo Martínez. “Su bondad derramada sobre nuestras vidas nos impulsa hacia adelante mientras buscamos conocer a Jesús y darlo a conocer. Por la gracia de Dios, continuaremos haciendo eso en el Valle del Río Grande, en Texas y en el mundo.”

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## MARTY COLLIER



Marty Collier became lead pastor of Arlington's Rush Creek Church in 2019, following Russ Barksdale's 25-year tenure. Collier was no stranger to the multi-campus Rush Creek, which he has served for two decades, beginning as a student minister and then as pastor of the church's second campus for 15 years. Collier and his wife, Stephanie, have three children: Anna-Kate, 20; Cole, 18; and Davis, 16.

### **What is something you've been able to celebrate at your church recently?**

In 2022, we baptized more people than we have ever baptized in a one-year period. Rush Creek has been in existence since 1984. To come out of 2020 and 2021 and break our yearly record ... was just a real encouragement to my heart and to our church, reminding us that God is still at work.

### **What have been some of the biggest challenges in your ministry lately?**

I would have to say that after the pandemic, the culture of staffing has changed so drastically that it has taken me a little while to figure it out. ... So many staff have wanted to go part time or work from home that it changes the vibe and the culture of your staff and affects how we lead. Before, I could walk down the hall of our campus and talk to any one of our staff any time all day, every day. That's just not the case anymore. Now we have staff who work part time from home or are present on campus a few days a week. That forces leaders to become more intentional in their communication.

### **What's one lesson you've learned to this point of your ministry that you know you'll never forget?**

One that I've learned over and over and that I keep reminding myself of is that there is no such thing as over-communicating vision. This is where it bleeds into the previous question. I have had to become a lot more intentional with making sure everyone knows why we are doing what we are doing. You cannot let off the gas and just coast. With people attending church less often, and more staff working remotely or part time, you have to be creative and consistent in making sure everyone is on the same page.

### **What's one thing you want to see God do specifically in your church this year?**

To increase our prayer culture. We are incorporating more times of intentional prayer and fasting and have seen God do some amazing things in the lives of our people. I'd like to see increased prayer at Rush Creek at all of our campuses.

### **How can the other SBTC churches be praying for you?**

I would love for the SBTC to pray that I—as a leader, pastor, husband, and father—would stay hungry and humble: hungry for God's Word and the vision He's put in my heart, and humble, never thinking that what He's doing is about me.

# Developing a rhythm of rest

About three years ago, God convicted me about my work schedule. At the time, I was working seven days a week. He revealed to me that I must obey His Word—the fourth of the 10 Commandments, to be exact: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

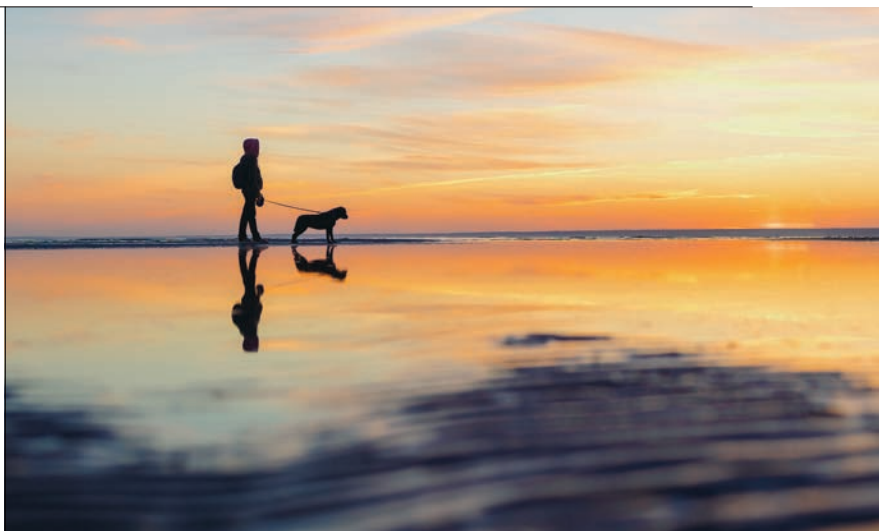
Interestingly, of all the 10 Commandments, the Lord gave more explanation regarding this one than all the others. In Exodus 20:11, God uses a personal illustration to get His point across to His people: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

After reading several books detailing the importance of rest, it became very clear that I needed to make a seismic change in my weekly schedule. So I decided to obey God’s Word, follow His personal example, and do what Chick-Fil-A has been doing for decades—I decided to take a day off each week. I have chosen to take Saturdays off to rest and recharge, and it has been a major blessing and game-changer for me.

What about you? How are you doing? Being maxed out will lead to burn out, and when you are burned out in ministry, you are unhealthy. Allow me to offer three practical tips to help you make some changes in your schedule so you can at least take one day off a week:

## 1. Obey God.

God’s Word is very clear about taking a day off and resting. I had multiple people offer books to me on the importance of resting. So I had a choice to make: Would I obey



**God loves you and wants you to be strong so you can serve Him and others to the best of your ability.**

God or not? Would I listen to friends who were trying to help me or not? I am so grateful to God that He impressed upon me to make the change.

## 2. Do yourself a favor.

Proverbs 11:17 says, “The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.” One of the best things you can do for your soul is rest. It will take some discipline to make the change. Turning off the computer, not checking emails, and unplugging from work will take effort. People may judge you and tempt you to get back in the mode of working all the time. Don’t do it! For the sake of your health and your family, keep your commitment to obey God and help yourself.

## 3. Enjoy the benefits of rest.

One of the books I read in my quest to learn more about rest is *Leading on Empty*. Leading from a place of strength is far preferable, and the only way to do that is to develop a rhythm of rest. On your day off, do things you enjoy. Read. Go for a walk. Hang out with family and friends. You get the idea: anything fun, but no work.

God loves you and wants you to be strong so you can serve Him and others to the best of your ability. He also desires for you to enjoy the life He has given you. So rest in Jesus, my friend. Relax. Take at least one day off. Trust me—you will love the results!



Danny Forshee is lead pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin and president of the Danny Forshee Evangelistic Association.



# 25 years

of answered prayer

— with Byron McWilliams —

In November, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention will mark 25 years of answered prayer at its annual meeting at Cross City Church in Euless. Each month until then, the Texan will feature a brief conversation with past SBTC presidents about how they have seen God answer their prayers for the convention over the past quarter century and how they are praying God will bless the convention moving forward. This month, we feature past SBTC president Byron McWilliams (2009-2011).



**“May we not lose our effectiveness in linking arms and loving this world to Jesus Christ as we evangelize the lost.”**

#### **What were some of your earliest prayers for the SBTC?**

From the earliest days of the SBTC I have prayed for growth. Whenever I would receive the Texan [newspaper] and witness the growing number of churches affiliating, I felt like this prayer was being answered. I have also prayed for our convention to maintain a pristine biblical fidelity that aligned with what it meant to be a New Testament gathering of churches. God has continually answered this prayer, as the SBTC is a confessional fellowship of churches that are likeminded in faith and practice and stand on the inerrancy of Scripture as the basis of all we do.

#### **How have you seen God answer some of your prayers regarding the convention?**

We have grown in ways I could not have imagined 25 years ago. We are now a convention of thousands of churches uniting with one mind and heart for the purpose of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, things are different in many ways. Leadership has changed, strategies have come and gone, cooperative giving has continually increased, founding fathers have gone to glory, but the call and stance upon inerrancy that drew me to the SBTC from the start remains the same.

#### **During your service as president, how were you praying for the convention?**

The SBTC, under the tremendous guidance of Jim Richards [who now serves as executive director emeritus], has always been top shelf. This leadership strength continues today with Nathan Lorick. As SBTC president, I gladly received wisdom and tutelage from Dr. Richards, praying for him and the rest of the SBTC staff regularly. The SBTC was growing rapidly, and my prayers continued to center around biblical fidelity and faithful practice. I also prayed for myself, as did others—of which I am eternally grateful—because the last thing I wanted to do was drop the ball in leading the convention with what I prayed would be integrity of heart and skillfulness of hand (Psalm 78:72).

#### **What is your prayer for the next 25 years of the SBTC?**

My prayer for the next 25 years is that we [as Southern Baptists] would once again adopt the missional embrace of William Carey and that we would, “Enlarge the place of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread about to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities” (Isaiah 54:2-3). May we never compromise on the inerrancy of Scripture. May we not lose our effectiveness in linking arms and loving this world to Jesus Christ as we evangelize the lost. May we recapture Carey’s encouragement to expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.

## KINKEADE RETIRES FROM FBC SPRINGTOWN AFTER 30 YEARS

**SPRINGTOWN** Pastor Hal Kinkeade retired from First Baptist Church Springtown in May after serving 30 years at the church. In his final sermon on May 7, Kinkeade preached on Isaiah 41:10, 14 and John 3:16, reminding the congregation of God's faithfulness and love.

The church honored Kinkeade, who was called by the church in 1993, during the morning service, including the presentation of a plaque following remarks by deacon Robert Burnett.

"He's served the Lord all his life, and he's going to continue to serve the Lord," Burnett said. "When you were in need, he was there. When you were hurting, he hurt with you."



"We've been together through some horrible times ... some great times," Kinkeade said. "God honored me by bringing me here 30 years ago."

—JANE RODGERS

## SIGNUPS FOR NEXT ROUND OF REGENESIS UNDERWAY

**GRAPEVINE** Applications are being accepted for churches interested in participating in the next round of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Regenesi church health process.

The SBTC offers coaching and consultation through the Regenesi process, helping churches identify barriers to growth, ministry struggles, and other issues. Regenesi trainers lead cohorts of eight to 10 churches from the same region through an eight-month process of evaluation and coaching, helping churches discover where they are and where God is calling them in the future.

The inaugural Regenesi cohorts completed their eighth and final meeting in May. "This



session challenged the churches to realize their unique disciple-making vision for the next three years," said Anthony Svajda, pastoral ministries associate for the SBTC's Church Health & Leadership department.

For more information, or to apply, visit [sbtexas.com/regenesi](http://sbtexas.com/regenesi).

—TEXAN STAFF

## VINDICATION SET FOR SEPTEMBER RETURN

### BURLESON

The producers of the PureFlix original series Vindication announced that season three, consisting of eight episodes, will begin airing this September on the subscription streaming service.

Vindication, a production of FlyRock Media and Retta Vision, is a ministry of Burleson's Retta Baptist Church, whose members are involved as volunteers and extras,

complementing the professional cast and crew. Vindication is a procedural drama highlighting the professional, personal, and spiritual journey of Sgt. Gary Travis, his family, and colleagues in fictional East Bank, Texas. Since its premiere in 2019, the series has garnered more than 1 million views on streaming platforms nationally and internationally.

Seasons one and two are available on PureFlix and Redeem TV, a donation-based streaming service. Plans are in the works for season four.

—JANE RODGERS

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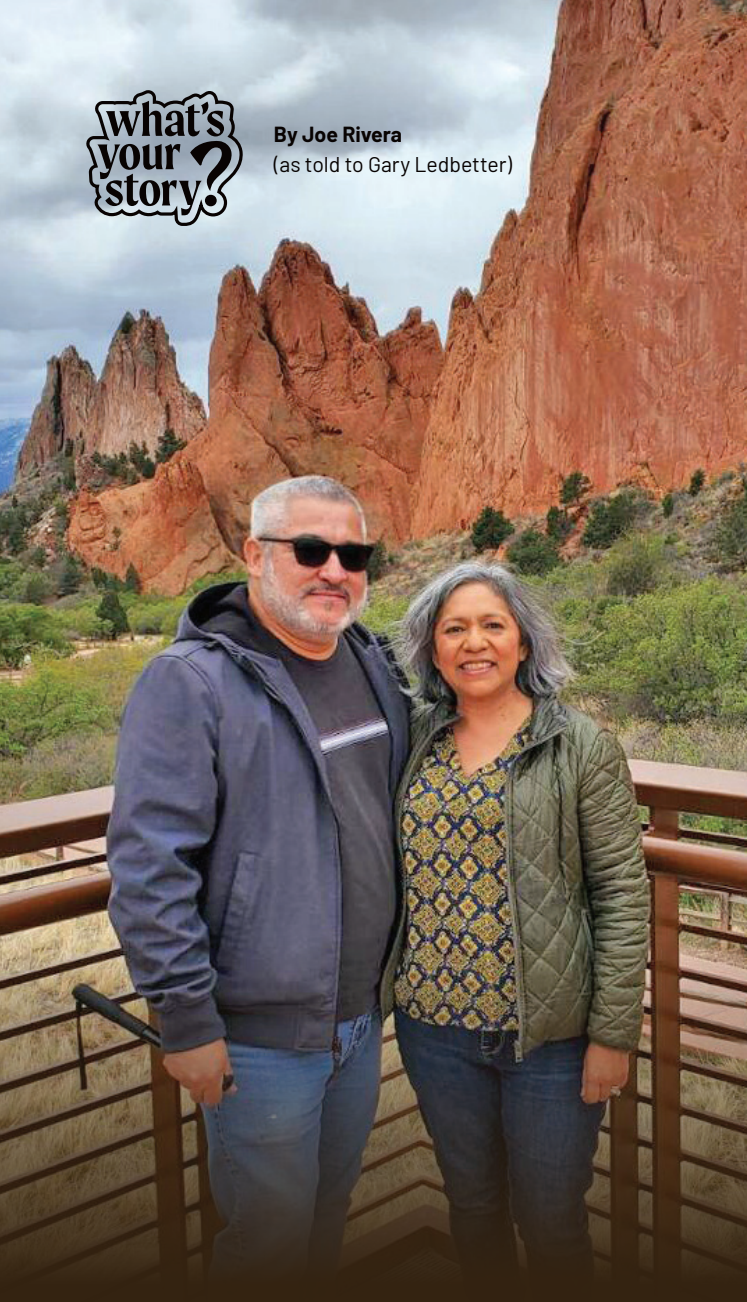


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By Joe Rivera  
(as told to Gary Ledbetter)



## HIS WILL IS PERFECT FOR MY LIFE

I never thought I'd be a pastor. I'd grown up in a pastor's home and we moved around Texas. In fact, the first question my wife, Nancy, asked me before we got married was, "Are you going to be a pastor like your dad?" I said, "No, I know what he's gone through. I'll work at the church, I'll serve the Lord there, but I don't want to be a pastor." I had a good job that paid well. My intention was to live in Dallas and make money.

Growing up in a pastor's home, I thought salvation was a family package. My brothers and I went up at the invitation and I thought we were saved. It wasn't until I was 11 years old that I realized that it's an individual decision that I had to make. At age 11, I was baptized and came to know the Lord.

After college I was living in Dallas and doing OK when my dad called me. He said, "What are you doing in Dallas?" I told him, "Well, working and living." He said, "No, no. What are you doing? Are you going to church? Are you serving?" I said, "Yeah, I'm going to church." And he says, "Well, what are you doing [at church]?" I said, "I go to Sunday school, I go to the service, to the prayer service." He said, "But you're not serving." And I wasn't.

He got me in touch with a friend's son and soon I was teaching a Sunday school class, but still didn't plan to be a pastor.

It was a little later, soon after Nancy and I married, that I understood that God did want me to be a pastor. We prayed together about it and soon I was serving as a children's minister in Grand Prairie. Those children became like our children, and we've been blessed to follow some of them through the years.

After 10 years of that, the pastor said he was going to retire. He asked if I felt the Lord calling me to step into the pastorate in the church. I said, "Well, I would love to serve the Lord in that way." I told him that it would be up to the Lord first of all, and then the congregation. He brought it up to the congregation and they accepted me as pastor. I had already been ordained, so I became the pastor in 2008. I've now been pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista Grand Prairie for 15 years—bivocationally at first and then full time.

The transition went well. We had good attendance, then we saw it increase. So we were thanking God for



Want to share a story of what God is doing in your life or your church?  
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**What's my story? God is sovereign over my life and His will is perfect for my life. I have to learn not just to accept His will, but to embrace it and walk where He leads me.**

that, that we were seeing more people coming—more people listening to the message and making decisions. We saw that as God's approval of what we were doing.

About two years after becoming the pastor, in 2010, was when Nancy got a cancer diagnosis. Her mother had died of cancer and now she was facing surgery and treatment for the same disease. Five of her family members got cancer. I think Nancy was the second to be diagnosed and go through treatment. Her mom's testimony during her fight was strong, and this was an encouragement to Nancy. We saw it as a growing opportunity for ourselves and for our

church because our church just teamed up around us and prayed and held us up as she went through all this.

Nancy had some difficulties with her treatment and the Lord worked through that as well. I was amazed also at Nancy's testimony because right after surgery, I remember one Sunday morning I was getting ready to go to church and my intent was to leave Nancy at home with her niece, who was going to come stay with her. When I went downstairs, Nancy was dressing for church. I said, "What are you doing?" She's like, "I have to go to church. I have to go to Sunday school." I said, "No, you don't. You're going to stay home." She said, "No, I already told her [her niece] that I'm going to go to church."

It means a lot to the pastor. Yes, it does, and it encouraged me. She constantly encourages me with what the Lord is doing in our lives. Nancy's doing well now but is working through diabetes. I get concerned about her because she's the type to say, "No, let's keep going. I'm OK."

What's my story? God is sovereign over my life and His will is perfect for my life. I have to learn not just to accept His will, but to embrace it and walk where He leads me. I think that's what drives me in the ministry right now—that it's not what I do, but what the Lord does in spite of me through our church.

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# Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

## PASTOR

**West End Baptist Church in Beaumont** seeks a FT or bivocational pastor. We are a financially secure, loving congregation that enjoys traditional worship. Send resume to WEBC, 8180 Phelan Blvd., Beaumont, Texas 77706 or email [webcbeaumont@gmail.com](mailto:webcbeaumont@gmail.com).

**Crescent Valley Baptist Church in Victoria** is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. Send resume to CVBCPastorSearch@gmail.com or mail to CVBC Pastor Search Committee, 6679 State Hwy. 185, Victoria, Texas 77905.

**North Bay Fellowship** is seeking a FT pastor. Church is located at 3530 N. Main Street, Ingleside, Texas 78362. 361-776-3076. [www.northbayfellowship.com](http://www.northbayfellowship.com). Resumes can be sent to [NBFresumes@gmail.com](mailto:NBFresumes@gmail.com).

**Adamsville Baptist Church** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Candidate should be a Scripture-based preacher/teacher with a calling to a rural community. Send resumes to search committee chair TJ Callis at [tjc8th1@gmail.com](mailto:tjc8th1@gmail.com). 254-462-0998.

**West Conroe Baptist Church**, located at 1855 Longmire Road in Conroe, is seeking a FT senior pastor. Send resumes to [psc@wcbc.us](mailto:psc@wcbc.us). Visit our website at [www.wcbc.us/psc](http://www.wcbc.us/psc) for more information regarding the position.

**FBC Rocksprings** seeks God's man as our FT senior pastor, with the hope that the Lord will continue to bless and grow our church. Bivocational pastor will be considered. Pastoral package includes parsonage and household utilities. Send questions and resume to [fbc@swtexas.net](mailto:fbc@swtexas.net) or call 830-683-5186.

**FBC Grapeland** is seeking a FT pastor committed to the Bible's authority. He will walk closely with the Lord, be devoted to prayer, be a text-driven expositor, and be intentional in building relationships with people in the community. Send resumes to [fbcgrapeland.pastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:fbcgrapeland.pastorsearch@gmail.com).

**Philippine-American Baptist Church in Spring** is seeking a FT senior pastor. We are requesting resumes, a sample video, and a short essay about why you wish to apply by July 15. Email to [seabuster@gmail.com](mailto:seabuster@gmail.com).

**FBC Sutherland Springs** is seeking a FT lead pastor. Applications can be sent to [jobs@sutherlandspringsfbc.org](mailto:jobs@sutherlandspringsfbc.org).

**FBC Haskell** is seeking a FT pastor. Email resume to [haskellpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:haskellpastorsearch@gmail.com).

**FBC La Porte** is seeking a FT or bivocational senior pastor. If interested, send resume to Bronwyn Dobbins at [bronwyn.dobbins@firstlaporte.org](mailto:bronwyn.dobbins@firstlaporte.org).

**Highland Terrace Baptist Church in Greenville** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send resumes to [PastorSearch@HighlandTerrace.org](mailto:PastorSearch@HighlandTerrace.org).

**FBC Magnolia** is seeking a FT senior pastor to provide leadership and ensure effective ministries through personal Bible study, biblically sound preaching and teaching, discipleship, and prayer. Send resume to [pastorsearch@mlbc.org](mailto:pastorsearch@mlbc.org). For more info, visit [mlbc.org](http://mlbc.org).

**FBC Iraan** is seeking a FT pastor. We are a small West Texas church running about 45-50 in morning worship and ministering to about 60 children and youth midweek. Email resume to [theparmers@att.net](mailto:theparmers@att.net).

**Trinity Hills Baptist Church in Benbrook** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Email resume to [pastorsearch@trinityhills.org](mailto:pastorsearch@trinityhills.org).

**Sunnyside Baptist Church in Wichita Falls** is a small congregation seeking a bivocational pastor with the vision to grow the church. Looking for a Bible-based

preacher with experience over education. Send resume to [sunnysidebaptistwfv@yahoo.com](mailto:sunnysidebaptistwfv@yahoo.com).

**Silver Lake Baptist Church in Grand Saline** is seeking a bivocational pastor to lift our church in spirit and service to God. We look to serve Christ first in all things. Contact Douglas Scott at 903-253-5553.

**Second Baptist Church of Jacinto City**, located in Houston, seeks a bilingual (English/Spanish) bivocational pastor to shepherd our church to its next chapter of God's plan. Please respond by submitting resume to [SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com](mailto:SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com).

**Lamar Street Baptist in Sweetwater** seeks God's man as our bivocational senior pastor, with the hope that as God continues to bless and grow us it can become full time. Send resume to our search committee at [lamarstreetbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:lamarstreetbaptist@gmail.com).

**Eastside Baptist Church in New Braunfels** is seeking a bivocational pastor with a vision to grow the church and live in this fast-growing community. Parsonage is provided. EBC is affiliated with the SBTC and adheres to the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. Please email resumes to Kathy Lehmann at [kmllehmann@satsr.com](mailto:kmllehmann@satsr.com).

**Greenfield Acres Baptist Church** (2114 West Yukon, Odessa) is seeking a bivocational SBTC pastor. Email resume to Jimmy Skiles at [jimmy.skiles@becn.com](mailto:jimmy.skiles@becn.com).

**Lakeview Baptist Church in Vidor** is accepting applications for a bivocational pastor. LBC will accept applications through July via email to [lakeviewbaptistchurchvidor@gmail.com](mailto:lakeviewbaptistchurchvidor@gmail.com) or mailed to Lakeview Baptist Church, 3280 Hwy. 1131, Vidor, Texas 77662.

**Malone Baptist in Malone** is looking for a bivocational pastor. Responsibilities include preaching and teaching biblical truths, providing spiritual guidance and counseling to members of the congregation, and providing pastoral care for members of the congregation in times of need. Send resumes to [skruse@windstream.net](mailto:skruse@windstream.net).

## MUSIC

**Restoration Church in Bryan** is seeking a FT longterm worship minister to lead a young, growing, gospel-centered church. We are looking for someone who can commit to 7-10 years to help Restoration navigate our new season of growth and expansion. Apply by emailing your resume to [apply@restorationbryan.com](mailto:apply@restorationbryan.com).

**First Baptist Church in Atlanta** is seeking a FT minister of music. Send resume to P.O. Box 1089/306 Baker Street, Atlanta, Texas 75551. 903-796-7925.

**Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jasper** is seeking a FT minister of music/worship to lead a blended style of music. Experience in audio/visual technology is needed. If interested, send resumes to [debbiereed@hbcjasper.com](mailto:debbiereed@hbcjasper.com). 409-384-3371.

**Windom Baptist Church** is seeking a FT or PT music leader. Email resume to [WindomBaptist@gmail.com](mailto:WindomBaptist@gmail.com).

**FBC Fairfield** seeks FT worship minister, but we will also consider those who prefer a PT opportunity. Send letter of interest and resumes to [worshipsearch@fbcfairfield.org](mailto:worshipsearch@fbcfairfield.org).

**Flint Baptist Church in Flint** is seeking a FT assistant worship minister. Email resume to [dbritt@flintbaptistchurch.net](mailto:dbritt@flintbaptistchurch.net).

**Coastal Oaks Church** in beautiful Rockport prayerfully seeks God's man to lead in a contemporary/modern worship ministry. Secondary ministry opportunity based on your experience and giftedness. Submit your resume to [cirving@coastaloakschurch.org](mailto:cirving@coastaloakschurch.org).

[coastaloakschurch.org](mailto:coastaloakschurch.org).

**FBC Mount Enterprise** is seeking a PT music/worship minister. Contact Karen Risinger at [karenrisinger1951@gmail.com](mailto:karenrisinger1951@gmail.com).

**Clay Road Baptist Church in Houston** seeks a PT worship minister. Our worship services are a blend of contemporary music and traditional hymns. Compensation will be based on experience and ability. Please submit your resume and salvation testimony to [rex@clayroad.org](mailto:rex@clayroad.org).

**Trinity Baptist Church in Boyd** is seeking a bivocational music minister. This position is open to those who meet the character qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3 & Titus 1. Salary is \$10K-\$18K annually DOE. Email resumes to [tbc.offices@gmail.com](mailto:tbc.offices@gmail.com).

## STUDENTS

**FBC Pearlland/Parkway Church** is seeking a FT student pastor. Address: 3005 Pearland Parkway, Pearland, Texas 77581. [www.parkwaychurch.com](http://www.parkwaychurch.com). Email resume to [smsearch@parkwaychurch.com](mailto:smsearch@parkwaychurch.com).

**FBC Jacksboro** is seeking a FT youth pastor. Send resumes to [devad@hbrandfeed.com](mailto:devad@hbrandfeed.com) or 200 N. Knox, Jacksboro, Texas 76458.

**FBC Garrison** is seeking a PT youth leader (10-12 hrs/week) to lead our student ministry (7th-12th grade). Candidate must be maturing believer and have some experience working with teens. Duties are mainly Sundays and Wednesdays. College/seminary student is possible. \$13K per year. Interested? Request a detailed job description at [pastorben@fbcgarrison.com](mailto:pastorben@fbcgarrison.com).

**FBC Hamlin** seeks a FT student pastor to lead teenagers toward spiritual maturity by intentionally winning and discipling them to have an intimate and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and equipping them to fulfill the Great Commission to the glory of God. Email resume to [spsearch@fbchamlin.com](mailto:spsearch@fbchamlin.com).

**Somerset Baptist Church** is prayerfully seeking a PT youth pastor who will guide our youth to become disciples of Christ and equip them to share their faith with others. Email resumes to [somersetbctc@gmail.com](mailto:somersetbctc@gmail.com).

**FBC Petrolia** is seeking a PT student pastor with a passion to see students grow. The job would be less than 20 hours weekly and would involve Sunday morning and evening activities, as well as being involved with students at PCISD. Contact Pastor Darius McKay at [darius.sheila@yahoo.com](mailto:darius.sheila@yahoo.com).

**LifePoint Church in Lufkin** is seeking a PT/bivocational youth pastor. Email resume to [scott@lifepointch.org](mailto:scott@lifepointch.org) or call the church office at 936-634-6674 to speak to Pastor Scott Reed.

## CHILDREN

**Redeemer Church in Tomball** is looking to hire a FT children's minister. Email resume to [kevin@makingmuchofjesus.org](mailto:kevin@makingmuchofjesus.org).

**FBC Vidor** is seeking a FT minister/director of children's ministry. Please send questions or resumes to Klem Pruitt at [klem@fbcvidor.org](mailto:klem@fbcvidor.org).

**FBC Murphy** is seeking a PT children and families minister responsible for leading children's ministries (birth-5th grade) and volunteers while equipping parents to be their primary disciple-makers. For more information and to apply, visit [www.fbcmurphy.com/children-and-families-minister](http://www.fbcmurphy.com/children-and-families-minister).

**Restoration Church in Southlake** is seeking a PT Restoration Kids associate who will be responsible for administrative

tasks related to the ministry, assisting with Sunday morning leadership, and managing ministry physical space. Apply at [restorationtx.com/jobs](http://restorationtx.com/jobs).

#### COMBINATION

**FBC Caldwell** is looking for a FT staff person to minister in the area of children and one other area (based on giftedness/experience). The church is located in the rural-but-growing town of Caldwell. Church address: P.O. Box 609, Caldwell, Texas 77836. Email resume to [pastor@fbccaldwell.org](mailto:pastor@fbccaldwell.org).

**Paradise Baptist Church in Caddo Mills** is seeking a FT youth/worship minister. Will be responsible for providing leadership in planning, conducting, and evaluating Christ-centered programs for 7th-12th grade students and helping lead Sunday morning worship services with praise band. Email Pastor Chris at [cblanchett@paradisetx.org](mailto:cblanchett@paradisetx.org).

**Hardin Baptist Church in Hardin** is seeking a FT minister of youth and children to work alongside our pastor, deacons, and congregation to revitalize our youth and children's ministries. If our position interests you, please email [kellynglover@att.net](mailto:kellynglover@att.net) for more detailed information or to send resume.

**South Hills Baptist Church in Fort Worth** is seeking a FT family pastor for its student and children's ministry. Send resumes to [chris@southhillsbc.org](mailto:chris@southhillsbc.org). [www.southhillsbc.org](http://www.southhillsbc.org).

#### OTHER

**Redeemer Church in Lubbock** is seeking a FT

director of sending. Email resume to Marci Cmerek at [marci@redeemerlubbock.org](mailto:marci@redeemerlubbock.org).

**Cibolo Valley Baptist Church** (5500 FM 1103, Schertz) is seeking a FT associate pastor for young Christian development. Resume can be mailed to P.O. Box 703, Cibolo, Texas 78108. Call 210-658-0525, extension 3, for more information.

**Kentuckytown Baptist Church in Whitewright** is searching for a FT pastor of children/youth/families. Please email resumes to [kbcstravis@gmail.com](mailto:kbcstravis@gmail.com).

**FBC Lakeside** is seeking a FT associate pastor of administration to assist pastor with overseeing the business of the church. For further details and to send resume, email [jim@fblakeside.net](mailto:jim@fblakeside.net).

**FBC Keller** is seeking a FT finance director to support its administrative team. Monday-Thursday. Email resume to [abearden@fbckeller.org](mailto:abearden@fbckeller.org).

**Heights Baptist Church in Liberty** is seeking a FT family pastor. Email resume to [youthsearch@heightsliberty.com](mailto:youthsearch@heightsliberty.com).

**FBC Wichita Falls** is seeking a FT young adult pastor. Email resume to Ashley Klein at [aklein@vanderbloemen.com](mailto:aklein@vanderbloemen.com).

**Northeast Houston Baptist in Humble** is seeking a PT (28 hours/week) children's ministry office assistant to assist with planning, record-keeping, ordering, shopping, and communication to parents and volunteers of children birth-6th grade. Send resumes to [kidmin@nehbc.com](mailto:kidmin@nehbc.com). The applicant cannot be a member of Northeast Houston Baptist Church and will not work on Sundays.

## Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings, visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

#### PASTOR

**Forest Home Baptist Church in Kilgore, Texas**, is seeking a full-time pastor. All candidates shall meet all biblical qualifications found in Scripture concerning the call to ministry and the many ministries of a Southern Baptist church. He shall also be in agreement with the Southern Baptist Convention doctrines, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, and the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message of the SBC. Send resume to Committee Chairman Neil Pierce at [npierce4p@gmail.com](mailto:npierce4p@gmail.com).

**Siloam Baptist Church in Louisiana** is seeking a FT pastor. Job posting can be viewed on the Louisiana Southern Baptists Go Serve website. Resumes can be submitted there as well.

**Trinity Baptist Church in Bonham, Texas**, is seeking a FT pastor. He will be responsible for preaching God's Word, being the spiritual leader for the staff and congregation, and giving leadership to the ministry of the church. Please email resume to [trinitybaptist1955@gmail.com](mailto:trinitybaptist1955@gmail.com).

**First Baptist Church, Erick, Okla.**, is seeking a FT or PT pastor in its small, rural community in western Oklahoma. Parsonage provided. Send resume with references to FBC Search Committee, Box 664, Erick, OK 73645 or email to [mdurham@dobsonateleco.com](mailto:mdurham@dobsonateleco.com).

#### OTHER

**FBC Caldwell** is looking for the next administrator for its First Baptist school. The school is 40 years old and located in Caldwell, Texas. This is a FT salaried position. [apply@fbccaldwell.org](mailto:apply@fbccaldwell.org).

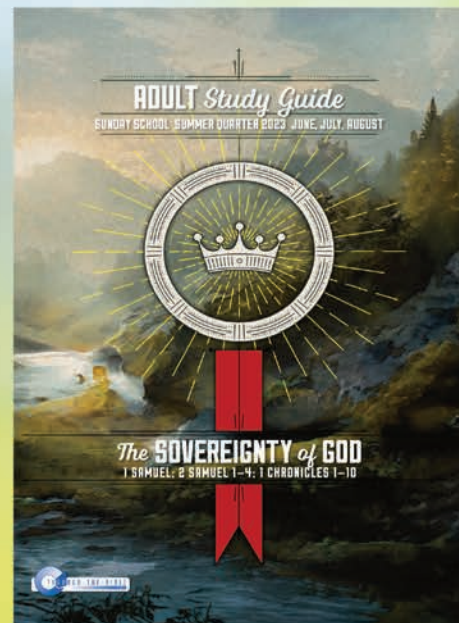
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**FBC Mansfield** has 3 portable buildings for sale: Portable Buildings 1&2: 64x25. Beige and brown trim color. Concrete siding outside material. Used as youth ministry area. Two entrance doors. Windows in unit. Insulated and with lighting. Two HVAC units. Recently remodeled. Entrance ramp and steps. \$14,500 each. Portable Building 3: 90x25. Same attributes as Buildings 1&2. With front and side entrances, 4 locations. Entrance ramp and steps for front and side locations. \$19,500. Please send direct inquiries about all 3 buildings to the facilities director at First Baptist Church Mansfield at [Tray@firstmansfield.com](mailto:Tray@firstmansfield.com) or call 817-463-1161.



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SCAN ME





# What Ravenhill taught me about life and ministry

**“He never stopped praying for the church to experience the next Great Awakening.”**

**T**he privilege of knowing Leonard Ravenhill when I was a teenager was nothing less than a sovereign surprise. Ravenhill was a British evangelist and writer whose statements on prayer and revival frequently pop up in sermons and on social media. God crossed our paths during the most impressionable years of my life.

Here are six lessons I learned from this wonderful man of God:

## 1. Invest in young people.

I was 16 years old in 1981 when I met Leonard, who was 74. The occasion was a prayer meeting he led on Friday nights in the house of the Brown family, just outside of my hometown of Tyler. Ravenhill knew as much about me as I did about him—nada. Yet because of this gritty English evangelist, a bunch of shaggy teenagers were praying while our peers were partying.

## 2. Pray with conviction.

I had only recently accepted God's call into ministry when I started attending the prayer meeting with a few friends. Private and public prayer were still awkward for me at that time. God used Ravenhill's prayers to loosen, then lighten, me up. He prayed with so much intensity that I expected the carpet under his knees to catch on fire. His fire for public prayer was stoked by the many hours of private prayer he had invested between those meetings.

## 3. Pray in unity.

I was a Southern Baptist kid who at first was intimidated by these often raucous prayer meetings, but I eventually got used to people praying out loud and at

the same time. One night the prayer time devolved into noisy chaos and Ravenhill put a hard stop to it. It took several attempts for him to get everyone's attention before he said firmly, “God does not cause the spirit of confusion. We have come to pray together in unity!” I remember wanting to give him a high-five, but had just enough restraint to stand down.

## 4. Great worship trumps great music.

I really enjoyed hearing Ravenhill pray and teach, but he was less than awesome at singing. Keith Green sometimes led worship from his piano, but mostly it was Ravenhill who led us a cappella—at least when I was present. Ravenhill's favorite song was “Holy, Holy, Holy,” which he led at every single meeting. I loved it more each time we sang it.

## 5. Anger is not always a sin.

Most of Ravenhill's books and sermons are prophetic in tone. I suspect he was not so much angry with the culture as he was the church. He never stopped praying for the church to experience the next Great Awakening. There is a righteous anger that leads to more righteousness, as well as an unrighteous anger which can lead to sin (Ephesians 4:26). Ravenhill was both good and angry, which ultimately meant he cared about the things God cared about.

## 6. Prayer is more caught than taught.

My Fridays with Ravenhill ended when I went off to college five hours away. Our last visit was in the Tyler hospital after a stroke left him temporarily speechless. After we prayed together one last time, his nod and smile were a sufficient graduation diploma from what I consider to be my school of prayer. As he is so often quoted as saying, “No man is greater than his prayer life.”

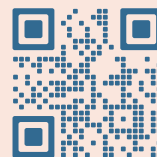


*Mark Dance is director of pastoral wellness for Guidestone Financial Resources.*



# WHAT'S UP NEXT?

2023 CALENDAR



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SBTC EVENTS, VISIT [SBTEXAS.COM/EVENTS](https://sbtexas.com/events) OR SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE



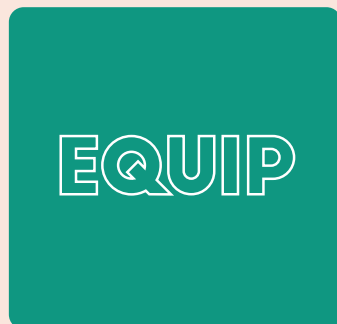
## SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY SUNDAY

**JULY 9**

[sbtexas.com/specialneeds](https://sbtexas.com/specialneeds)

## JULY

<b>3-7</b>	M3 Camp, Highland Lakes, Spicewood
<b>7-8</b>	Campamento Familiar, Denton
<b>10-14</b>	M3 Camp, Highland Lakes, Spicewood
<b>14-18</b>	M3 Camp, Glorieta, N.M.
<b>18-22</b>	Youth Week, Glen Rose
<b>24</b>	Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, San Antonio



## EQUIP CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 5**

[sbtexas.com/equip](https://sbtexas.com/equip)

## AUGUST

<b>4</b>	Interim Pastor Equipping, Houston
<b>4-5</b>	ESL Training, Houston
<b>7</b>	Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
<b>26</b>	She Stands Women's Conference, Amarillo
<b>29</b>	Evangelism Roundtable (online)



## REACH TEXAS STATE MISSIONS OFFERING WEEK OF PRAYER

**SEPTEMBER 17-24**

[sbtexas.com/reachtexas](https://sbtexas.com/reachtexas)

## SEPTEMBER

<b>7</b>	55+ Adults Ministry Training, McAllen
<b>14</b>	55+ Adults Ministry Training, Houston
<b>15</b>	Florence Women's Retreat, Glen Rose
<b>18</b>	Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Grapevine
<b>19</b>	Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Kyle
<b>21</b>	55+ Adults Ministry Training, Abilene
<b>26</b>	Children & Family Ministry Luncheon, SWBTS
<b>29</b>	Hombres de Impacto, Glen Rose

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